



ON THE HOOF

with Deborah Smith

The region's best



The days are shorter, the clippers are out and winter is certainly in sight. We barely seem to have got going this year and now 2021 is just around the corner. I'm determined to remain upbeat; it's been a funny old year, but I'm keen to make the most of the brilliant winter training we have available across the whole region. So, here's my own personal celebration of the best northern coaches who go that extra mile for clients and their horses...



THE BEST... Winter all-round training

Charlotte Ridley has something of a go-to destination at Park End Equestrian for those cold winter days. Having stepped back from her own very successful competitive career as a rider, Charlotte now concentrates on helping the rest of us get on and have fun - and win lots of rosettes, of course. She runs her legendary grid sessions throughout the winter and there's usually flat, jumps and indoor XC going on as well. They don't start until December, but I'm already checking the booking page on her website. Everyone comes away feeling motivated and all the horses seem to grow an extra hand in height after one of her lessons. Charlotte is always encouraging, cheerful and a master at teaching mixed groups. Always busy - so get booked up early.

Park End Equestrian Centre, Simonburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 3AA
Tel: 01434 230 394
Email: charlotte@parkendequestrian.co.uk



THE BEST... Regular coaching

I've been having lessons with Paul Langford for two years now; he must have the patience of a saint. Recently achieving his British Dressage Level 3 coaching qualification, Paul offers thoughtful and well-structured lessons. I'm fortunate to train with Paul twice a week and Oli and Strider have really come on under his discerning eye. He does work us hard, but I like his calm demeanour and his quiet determination to do things properly. We have learnt so much and Paul is excellent as a regular coach,

as he is always working towards long-term goals, so you feel like there is a well mapped out journey ahead. Because I see Paul so often, he is always there to help with training questions: the what, the why and the how... and he really is a font of all knowledge.

Paul is based at Hole House Farm with two lovely arenas inside and out. He has had a great year himself with his horses, and his 19-year-old, Felix, has been super-smart at PSG, with an outing to the Premier League show in March at Myerscough. So well-deserved and what a great partnership they have.

Paul Langford Equestrian Services, Hole House Farm, Lanchester, County Durham, DH7 0SY
Tel: 07788 594051 E
mail: paulangford22@hotmail.com



THE BEST... Intensive dressage / individual camp

If you want to have some focused, intensive dressage training, then a two-day 'individual camp' with Vikki Hayton is hard to beat. With two under my belt and a third in the diary, I can't recommend them enough. BD Northern Region Chair, Vikki, is a hugely experienced rider, coach and judge. After a general assessment and goal setting discussion, the sessions are tailored and productive. With two horses, both very different, I have come away with a much clearer idea of how to ride each to progress and develop. The whole atmosphere at College Farm Equestrian Centre is so friendly and welcoming. It is convenient to get to, the facilities are super and everything is on-hand so even in winter it's perfect.

College Farm Equestrian Centre, West Markham, Tuxford, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG22 0GT
Tel: 01777 870 886
Mobile: 07860 276 578



THE BEST... Pre-competition sparkle

John Hill is always good value and what I love about his teaching is that he is so enthusiastic about every horse. He always finds something good about what he sees in front of him. Hairy cobs, sports horses, badminton hopefuls - John loves them all. All horses seem to go really well in front of him - in some ways it's a shame he isn't a judge, then we would all get 80%. He is a great confidence giver just before a competition. John has been whizzing up the levels this year with Ailsa Trafford's lovely Polly, who is now out at Advanced Level. What a talented mare she is. Apparently, he has been wearing the same Mears tailcoat for 32 years and it still fits.

John Hill Equestrian Training
Facebook: @Johnhillequestrian Email: John.horse@btinternet.com



THE BEST... Up-to-date show jumping

The more BS I do, the more I realise how show jumping course building follows different trends. Sarah Tubbs is both a Level 4 British Showjumping Coach and a Coach Educator for British Showjumping. Sarah makes a real effort to keep up-to-date with what style courses are being built at the big show jumping venues, so your training is current and you are as well prepared as possible. So this year, we have trained with Sarah over more technical courses and practiced combinations she has met herself while competing with her super mare, Aurora. Oli and Strider love their jumping and although we haven't managed to do as much this year, our lessons with Sarah are so much fun and a welcome change for the boys to keep them on top form. Sarah has a super 50x30 indoor arena, perfect for those chilly Teesdale winter days.

Marwood Equestrian Centre, Travellers Rest, Marwood, Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 8SR
Tel: 07886 485201 Email: sarah@sarahtubbscoaching.co.uk

So there you have it, my five of the best. I know there are many more excellent coaches, and in a year when times have been especially tough for small businesses and the self-employed, it's such good news that we have so much coaching talent still around to tap into here in the North.