

Move to Arroyo Del Mar is latest step in young trainer's ascent.

In her 13 years of United States Dressage Federation competition, Shayna Simon has established a solid reputation as an up and coming rider and trainer. For a stretch of that time, she became particularly well regarded for her work with Iberian horses, owing to her success starting and developing horses for the Brookside Equestrian Lusitanos, including her own, Darquetto.



In competitive dressage circles, Shayna is equally well known for her success with Warmbloods, her own Harley Davidson being the most prominent case in point. Shayna started the now 10-year-old Hanoverian when he was 3, and has brought him up patiently and successfully to start their first year of CDI competition, specifically the Medium tour that incorporates Intermediare A movements.

With her recent relocation to Arroyo Del Mar stables in Del Mar, Shayna intends to grow her presence on the upper level dressage circuit. She adores the Spanish horses she and her clients have had the privilege of working with for several years. She looks forward to complementing those with more Warmbloods, who are, as a general rule, better suited to win at the highest levels of the sport.

Basing her training program at Arroyo Del Mar puts her in the hub of Olympic level dressage pursuits. With Steffen and Shannon Peters as Arroyo's anchor riders and trainers, the level of horsemanship, riding and training is the highest possible and that benefits everybody around them. "Everybody here, the horses and the riders, is very competitive on the dressage circuit, yet also very friendly and supportive of each other," Shayna says. "It's a good place to be if you want to keep growing."

She'll continue working with Guenter Seidel to advance her own abilities and she looks forward

to absorbing and sharing the many learning opportunities that arise simply by being at Arroyo every day. Her current learning builds upon a strong foundation established during four years riding with Willy Arts at DG Bar Ranch, the top breeding and training program in Central California. An “intense” year with longtime USET dressage coach Klaus Balkenhol deepened her understanding and daily application of classical dressage principals. Clinicing with superstar Charlotte Dujardin was icing on the cake.

A Conduit For Knowledge

Shayna prides herself on being a conduit for sharing the knowledge and savvy she’s gained with her own students. They range from ambitious juniors and amateurs who aspire to becoming professionals to those who are serious about dressage but have varying levels of intensity when it comes to competing. She considers herself a tough taskmaster in that she expects top effort from students, but her sensitive coaching approach is one that has helped several timid amateurs overcome various fears and learn to advance, while enjoying their time with their horses.

Shayna has a firm foundation with young horses and a knack for working through problematic issues with talented horses. Most recently, she’s worked three horses through different issues. All had the talent to be very competitive, she says, but one would not adopt a round frame, one was a bolter and the third had what Shayna considers the most dangerous habit: rearing. (“It’s the worst because there is no forward movement to work with,” she explains. “At least with bolting, there’s forward movement that you can do something with, like turn the horse.”)

All three challenges required different techniques to fix, but the solutions had common ground in Shayna spending a lot of time with each horse. She worked with each, in multiple ways, several times a day. The goal was “to get rid of that initial ‘no’ by getting them to the point where they’re tired of saying ‘no’.” None of the techniques involved endless repetitions, but rather brief sessions in which it was demonstrated that doing the right thing was easier than doing the wrong thing.

That’s a generalized explanation, Shayna notes, but the happy results in all cases show her ability and willingness to work with difficult horses that more veteran trainers might not want to spend the time on or take the risks with.

With room now to take on more horses and riders, Shayna plans to build up her stable and eventually hire a rider and groom.

Smartly, part of her business plan is developing several FEI level horses to make available for lease. She currently has two Lusitano stallions on leases and looks forward to developing Warmblood counterparts. "A lot of people can't afford to buy a six-figure horse," she observes. Her own Harley Davidson may be the trailblazer in this regard, as Shayna foresees that he'll be an ideal mount for a talented young rider in the near future.

For more information on Shayna Simon Dressage, visit her Facebook page or call 916-342-4442.