

***California native creates horse source partnership and pursues an Olympic berth.***

*by Kim F. Miller*

Leaps of faith are nothing new for lifelong eventer Liz Halliday-Sharp. The international cross-country courses she tackles regularly as a Britain-based U.S. Olympic hopeful are full of them, of course, but those pale compared to professional leaps she's taken.



Fifteen years ago, the Southern California native and former member of the Fallbrook Pony Club moved to Great Britain to work with William Fox-Pitt. A Preliminary rider at the time, she stayed on to work with William for three years, and another seven with Joe Meyer. Above all, she was in the hub of the international eventing scene and gaining the mileage she felt necessary to reach her goals. That has paid off in the form of steady success at the top levels and a place on the USET Training List that puts her squarely in the hunt for a Rio berth next year.

While continuing her Olympic quest, Liz launched a bi-continental sales venture with Richard Sheane, a well-known broker of mostly Irish-bred sporthorses. Richard's banner is Cooley Sporthorses and his role is indentifying talented young horses. Liz's role is developing them, including European show mileage, for and representing them in the American market. Toward that end, she purchased a second property in Ocala, FL, and now splits her time between that and her England base, Chailey Stud Equestrian Centre in East Sussex.

And that's not to mention her other career as a racecar driver and TV commentator and presenter, the racing side of which she's put on the backburner for now.

“It was a bit stressful,” Liz says of launching the new sales endeavor. Already, she and Richard have a successful first season under their belts. Liz brought four sale horses to Florida last year, in November, and sold three of them. The fourth was withdrawn from sale due to a minor injury.

The partnership is staked on high quality horses. They had a headstart because Cooley Sporthorses is already a well-known brand in the States. “We are honest people with proven results and we’re out to do things the right way,” Liz explains.

She’s currently walking her talk with two top mounts. Fernhill By Night and HHS Cooley are both horses she’s brought along from relatively young ages and they’re now main mounts in her realistic shot at the Olympics.

It helps that Liz and Richard love what they’re doing. “Richard loves sourcing horses and I love producing them,” the rider reports.

### **Letting The Horses Do The Talking**



Liz predicted that all of the horses sold last year had potential for Three Star eventing. A 6-year-old, Cooley Cruise Control, is excelling already with his new owner Lindsay Kelley. The pair finished second and third at Preliminary at two East Coast events this summer and the Virginia rider is thrilled with her horse, Liz relays.

Prospects will include Irish, German and Dutch breeds with critical common denominators. “Horses that move and gallop well, are light on their feet, with a lot of blood, which is necessary for eventing today,” are among those traits. So are “good jump and good paces.” Rideability,

temperament and soundness are just as important. “They’ll be ‘nice people’ who enjoy their jobs and have no vices,” Liz assures.

The horses arrive in the U.S. pre-vetted and with “exceptional x-rays.” All of that is part of the plan for establishing a trustworthy reputation for providing terrific horses, for amateurs and professionals.

“Our rule is to let the horses do the talking,” Liz shares.

The cost of importation is built into price tags that Liz expects to start at about \$60,000. Their sizable target market is buyers who would typically travel to Europe to find horses there, or those who would like to look further afield for a nice horse, but have found it hard to put the trip together. Liz plans to bring eight or nine horses to Florida this year with an ideal average of 10 going forward, including some with potential for the hunter/jumper disciplines as well.

Liz and this year’s crop of prospects will settle in at Ocala in mid-November. Her property, Horsepower Equestrian, is near the HITS showgrounds and not far from the Ocala Horse Park and is a good base for contesting the area’s thriving eventing circuit. The sale horses will likely go onto new owners quickly, but Liz and her international horses will stay on to compete Stateside through Rolex Kentucky Four Star in the spring.

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