

A Natural Fit Shayna Simon welcomes dressage clients at Oakridge Farm in Rancho Santa Fe.

Written by Kim F. Miller

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Shayna Simon has the loftiest of goals as a dressage rider and trainer and she believes that the best place to pursue them is a low-key environment. That's why the up-and-comer chose Oakridge Farm in the rolling hills of the Rancho Santa Fe area's Lake Hodges. The tranquil environment, shady oaks and a menagerie of farm animals create just the right ambiance and opportunities for horses and people to perform at their best.



Owned by active horsewoman Jacqui Grande, Oakridge Farm has every amenity needed for advanced training: two arenas, top quality fiber footing, full mirrors, round pen, turn-outs and grass pastures, plus ample space and shade.

Shayna's horsekeeping priorities include lots of downtime outdoors and in a natural environment. Oakridge's goats and peacocks are part of that, as are turn-outs that her horses spend most of their time in, rather than stalls, and grass paddocks where they enjoy hand grazing time.

"Horses aren't meant to stand in stalls for long periods of time," Shayna asserts. Even fancy dressage horses. "Obviously, you have to introduce any horse to a new environment carefully and tailor it to each horse. But at a certain point, too, you have to accept some risk. I've found, if you introduce pasture time slowly and gradually, my horses have always been OK with it. Horses are a lot happier and more willing to work when they have a more natural lifestyle."

Her own two horses, a Warmblood and a Lusitano, are naturally a little hot in their temperaments and "they've never been more calm since when they settled in here in early July," she reports. Easy access to Rancho Santa Fe's trail network is another Oakridge plus.

