

EQVALAN
GOLD



Edwina Alexander

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Rider of the Month

What makes Edwina tick? It's desperately competitive on the European showjumping circuit, you are an awful long way from home, why do you do it?

She laughs... "Because it is so difficult. It's such a challenge and such a thrill. I think if it was all too easy we wouldn't want to do it. It's a combination of so many things, the ability to learn from previous experiences, to know what went wrong, then what you have to work on now. It's like a puzzle, it's the biggest challenge in my life. I get bored pretty easily... it's about having a goal in life and working towards that goal. For me, after riding for 25 years, you hope that you get somewhere. It's a lot of work you've put in, more or less your whole life, and if I do something I want to do it really well. With showjumping, you've got to give it more than 100% or it's not worth it, because there are too many costs and too many risks and too many sacrifices."

"That's probably the reason I decided to come to Europe in the first place, I just felt that home is a good place to start and get yourself going, and it is a very nice environment, but once you are in Europe that's where you test yourself against the best. It's easier for me now because I have been a while, and I can get a start at the big shows, and when you are riding always at that level, and you have success, then that is great for your confidence, and you feel good."

George Sanna said to me that when he started working with you, you were the most driven person he had met – the amount of time you would put into training and working with your horses, and your own fitness – were you driven as a little girl, did you have to win primary school sports?

"Yeah, I have always been competitive, and always trying to do everything. That's probably why I decided I should stick to one thing, because I couldn't do everything as good as I wanted. I did piano, I did gymnastics for ten years, I did running, and I did tennis and swimming, and riding. Riding you have a much longer career, gymnastics I knew I was never going to be good enough. Piano, I knew that my mum was a real talent, and I knew I didn't have that talent... the same with the swimming, I was good but not good enough. I knew where my limits were,

and the only sport where I didn't know where my limits were, was my riding. Gymnastics you've got to stop when you are twenty, that's your life gone – riding you can go into your 50s..."

So we are going to see you out there in the blue rinse?

"I certainly don't want to be riding over the age of 50, 55. I think you've really got to set your goals, and especially now I've got one of the best horses I will ever have. I hope I'll have another one as good as Pialotta, but that would be really hard to find – so I've got to make the most of what I have right now. We are looking every day for another but to find one like her is not so easy, it's almost impossible. She is a freaky horse, and there are a handful of top horses in the world, and I am lucky enough to be riding one of them."

"We were half thinking this year of taking some embryos but we decided, what do you get out of that? At the end of the day, you'd be hard pressed to get a horse as good as her, and the most important thing is – is it worth risking upsetting her whole system? This year, we've really managed her – the WEG at Aachen was only her seventh show all year, so that's one show a month. It has been a matter of keeping her fit – and keeping me fit."

"I've been keeping myself fit more by riding, riding a lot of horses. If I only ride two or three horses a day and jump once a week, it's not enough. I think that is a problem when riders come over to Europe from Australia – like the team was in the run-up to the WEG, five weeks with just one horse each to do a day, this is tough, especially if you are used to riding. I'd go crazy..."

"I ride six to nine horses a day. Pialotta

gets ridden two times a day... I don't jump my top horses much, maybe once a week, but I jump others..."

"I hope that some of the younger Australian riders can see that you can make it over here, you just have to find your own way. I had to work bloody hard when I started. When I was at Ludo Philippearts I was riding ten to 15 a day, jumping ten a day – crazy. I learnt a lot at university about fitness and nutrition and all that, but I wish I had been over here in Europe for those four years."

"I think you've got to make a decision in life – if you want to compete at the top level, then you have to be here in Europe. And in that case, you've just got to sacrifice your life – that's what it's about,"

"I don't care what anyone says, if you stay in Australia you are just not going to make it. I think you could definitely do it a different way, do the European summer, go back and do the Australian summer... it's a lot of travelling. I'm not saying you have to live here and be here for your whole life like I am, but I think it is necessary to get experience and to be continuously in this rhythm, especially as a build up to a big competition like the WEG. But it is difficult, you need money, you need guidance."

"When I came I had no expectations. I just thought I'm going to take my horse to Europe. I thought I would stay six months... that was seven years ago."

Each EQVALAN GOLD Rider of the Month receives 6 syringes of EQVALAN GOLD in recognition of their achievement.

