

EQVALAN
GOLD

Rider of the Month

Heath Ryan talks about the chestnut Thoroughbred gelding who won him the Rider of the Month Award – Adelaide four-star winner, Flame:

"I took some Thai riders to look at Flame, he was owned by Vicky Brydon who'd bought him for her kids. He was just too green at the time for them; he was too green for the Thais as well. I didn't buy him. I saw him, liked him and passed on. But Vicky was really keen to sell him and kept ringing me. I was specifically looking for a young Thoroughbred horse to come up. I'd sold Scribble and a couple of other advanced horses – I had some Warmblood horses, but I wanted a Thoroughbred. I was looking for something that moved a bit better than him, bigger and scopier. But I'd really really liked him, anyway Vicky just kept pestering, pestering, pestering and in the end. I said 'oh yeah, right on' because in the meantime I hadn't found anything like what I was looking for..."

"And it went from there. Of course it is pretty funny that the big thing I was worried about was that he didn't have any trot, that's an irony! He is a wonderful little horse. He's really tricky to get right because he's so hot and sensitive to atmosphere, it makes it difficult to get a top performance out of him on the flat and in the showjumping. He's becoming more and more a good dressage horse – he's won the dressage at both his last three-day event starts. He is a fabulous showjumper, if I go to the jumping shows he is almost unbeatable. But as soon as you step into a big arena – like Adelaide – he is bloody awful!"

"That's my problem, I've got to learn to cope with that, but if I can nurture those sorts of performances out of him, he is a great horse. He is just tricky to get him to produce what he is capable of, that's his only short-fall."

"He'd raced before I got him. He's by Sanction and there are a couple of good Sanction horses. He was born at Woodlands in the Hunter Valley. Most of the Sanctions are big and rangey, he is the only small Polo Pony type Sanction that I've seen, but there are at least two other Advanced eventers by Sanction. I don't have a Sanction mare. Usually when I've had a performer as good as Flame, I usually have the genetics tucked away in my breeding program. This time I don't. But he is a fantastic horse."

"In the cross country at Adelaide, he felt like he was giving the bird to the world in terms of endurance and gravity. He just is the most amazing little horse – he just travelled so fast to get up on the time in the last three minutes. I just threw the watch away and went for it, he galloped like mad but he wasn't just handling it, he was locking in on the rhythm. I just kept going for the doctor and he just kept responding. It was amazing to be a part of it – he roared through the finish line, eight seconds up on time."

"He is an amazing horse – it's just whether I am good enough to be able to let the world see how good he is – that's the question..."

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



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