

Rider of the Month

This month's Eqvalan Rider of the Month is Cammie O'Rourke, who brilliantly led Australia's Young Eventing Riders' team to victory in the Trans Tasman in New Zealand. Cammie was born in California in the USA but moved to Australia when she was eleven...

"We moved to South Australia, that was ten years ago, I'm twenty one now. I started doing showjumping in California when I was seven, all those crazy hunter equitation classes. When I moved here and I decided showjumping wasn't quite what I wanted to do, that's when I started eventing. I guess that I made the move mostly through meeting Megan Jones, started having lessons with her and eventually bought one of her young horses, Kirby Park Jamie which was the horse that took me to New Zealand. When I bought him, he was five and I was 14. He's my best friend – he's going well for me and hopefully we'll get a few more years out of him."

"Then I graduated from High School and for the past four years I have been studying veterinary science in Western Australia."

It's not difficult combining a vet course and top level eventing competition?

"I wouldn't call it easy but I'm coping. I guess I've always done it through high school and everything. I find that it balances out – if I don't have the horse riding to get away from the studies, then I go a bit nuts. It's a good balance between a bit of sport and fun and working at uni. I wouldn't have it any other way..."

So what was it like – riding for Australia at an international competition?

"It was an incredible experience. I enjoyed the team atmosphere. It was a bit of an adjustment – eventing is usually an individual sport, so moving to a team situation is different. But because we've had the Mitsubishi Young Riders Squad for a while, I'd met quite a few of the other young riders, and I'd trained with the coaches – so that made the transition a lot easier. It was a great experience just to go over there and wear the colours, beat the Kiwis. Just going on the plane – I actually got to fly back with the horses. It was good for my riding career and also my veterinary career, I got to work pretty closely with Andrew Hunt..."

You are still based in WA?

"I've got one year left in the course, like a practical year but we have to do it all at Murdoch University. At the end of the year hopefully I'll graduate and come home to live in South Australia."

Ambitions now?

"I'm going to try and do something similar to what Megan is doing with Jester – to select one or two big events a year. Over in Perth he has already run around all the three star tracks over the past three years, and not a lot is changing, so I'll probably focus on dressage and showjumping and then do Sydney or Adelaide, this year."

"Hopefully in 2008, once I have graduated, I'd like to go over to Kentucky, to Lexington. That's my next major goal, to get out of the country and go see an event somewhere else."

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



Photo: Thomson Photos

Cammie O'Rourke



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