

Photo: Julie Wilson

CHRISTOPHER BURTON



EQVALAN
GOLD

This month's, Eqvalan Rider of the Month is Christopher Burton who rode Newsprint to a win in the Australian International four star three day event.

Was it your best win so far?

"Absolutely, certainly the most exciting one anyway. Everything just went right on the day. The horse has really matured – aside from not putting in his usual dressage test. He's really good in the showjumping ring now. I guess I've had a little bit more experience at that high pressure showjumping arena too, it was just a fantastic result."

You've been out riding showjumping showjumping?

"Sure, just like Wendy Schaeffer has, I've been doing some of the bigger shows, and just as the horse has matured, I feel I've matured. I find now I can keep my head and ride under pressure, not that I wasn't nervous, I was nervous as hell, I can tell you."

What went wrong in the dressage?

"That was a real shame. The horse worked in fantastically all week. I shouldn't let him fool me again. Half way through in Adelaide, it was quite hot and he felt a bit flat and I thought I'd better back off him a little – by the time dressage day came and having to walk so far away from the stables to a spooky arena... I tried really hard to convince him that despite those jumps he could see, it wasn't the start of the cross country, but he didn't believe me! They know the routine of a three day and he was convinced it was cross country day."

And the next day, the actual cross country rode nicely?

"Very nicely. Wayne Copping builds fantastic fences and I thought it was an international four star track. There were riders very nervous about riding the track, but I thought if it was ridden well, it would ride well. The fences were huge, there were plenty of riders com-

ing back talking about it being a real four star. I was stoked to have such a good round."

Were you even keener to go well at Adelaide after getting so close to a start at the Olympic Games?

"Absolutely – and it's good to say 'I told you so, I can do it' – but it was a very good team that went to Hong Kong. The horse is fantastic, and it was great to go to Adelaide, I love Adelaide, and to be able to win a four star... that's what it is all about. It was incredible."

Is Newsprint your prospect for Lexington and the WEG in 2010?


"I've always thought he was an international horse, really quality. I'm so lucky to have Lou Verwey my sponsor – without Lou, I couldn't be riding the horse. He's good at dressage, beautiful cross country, and a careful showjumper. He's fit and sounder than ever, so we'll wrap him up in cotton wool and if he's around for Lexington who knows?"

There's a real buzz about your young horse, Walk the Line?

"That's a pretty special young horse. Thanks to Tina Stafford for buying him for me, he's a fantastic young horse. He's so exciting, I think he's got much better performance in him, but he is still green. He didn't do much wrong in the dressage but the horse can do much better than that... and score a lot better too. He had just a little unlucky rail in the showjumping because he was jumping fantastically well. But he's a lot of fun."

What's coming up?

"My girlfriend Julia Hargreaves and I have a bit of a busy end to the year. The boys are taking a few of the young horses off in my truck to do a One Day Event this weekend, while I fly to Equitana to watch Julia do the World Cup, then we are going to Sale for a bit more showjumping on our way to Lakes and Craters for the 3DE before coming back to Sydney for the Tempo Showjumping, and after that I can tell you, we'll be putting our heels up."

 *Each Eqvalan Gold Rider of the month receives six syringes of Eqvalan Gold in recognition of their achievement.*