

Pippa Hattan Equestrian

B.H.S.I. Registered
International Equestrian
Passport Level 3



Working in the Equestrian Industry Overseas: Hong Kong, Part 1 **Equitrader: January Edition 2011**

Pippa Hattan Equestrian has been formulated through a life time of equestrian experiences which originated on the Wirral and has taken Pippa all over the world to Australia, Ireland, (nursing in Saudi Arabia which is another story for another day!), Spain, Jordan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and now the circle is complete and Pippa has finally come home and is based for the long haul, back in Cheshire!!

It all started from the early age of 11 when her father Geoffrey Hattan FBHS became the Riding Master at The Wirral Riding and Saddlery Centre which set the precedent for an equestrian career. There is much to be said for working in warmer climates – especially after the December that the UK has just experienced, but equally there is much to be said about being based once again in the UK (apart from the weather).

Let's start with Hong Kong!..... Pippa arrived in September 2006 to blue skies and a balmy 25 degrees! She worked as Club Manager at Lo Wu Saddle Club which is a non profit independent riding centre that is steeped in Hong Kong history. The initial part of her duties, was to help to relocate the horses and riders and settle them into brand new premises which then went on to gain BHS Approval and Where To Train status. She ran popular BHS courses for students wanting to take their Stages examinations being renowned for its international status. Last year saw the first BHS Stage 4 taking place in HK at HKJC Beas River Country Club with amongst others one of her staff members passing his riding section of the Stage 4.

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With the Beijing Olympic Games looming on the horizon, Hong Kong was chosen to host the Equestrian Games which necessitated a Test Event – “The Good Luck Beijing HKSAR 10th Anniversary Cup Test Event 2007”! Pippa was amongst 20 selected riders who went ahead to ride and take part in this prestigious event where all of the pre Olympic facilities were tested out in dressage, cross country and show jumping. It also enabled the closer examination regarding the main concern for all nations’ riders, coaches and trainers; that of the testing humidity, heat and unpredictable weather conditions in Hong Kong during the month of August.

It was on this part of her journey that Pippa – who was already pretty convinced that upon her arrival to Hong Kong, her competition days were over, met up with D’Or Win an ex-race horse, based at Lo Wu although owned by the HKJC, and true to say they have competed successfully together ever since. She would now vouch that her riding has probably never been better than at this moment in time; we never stop learning as long as we never stop trying!

Pippa and D’Or Win went on to win the FEI World Dressage Challenge at Novice and Medium level and were preparing for the Advanced test just prior to leaving HK. They were also second in the FEI World Jumping Challenge Cat. B only pipped at the post by 3.4 seconds after jumping 4 consecutive clear rounds over 2 days, and Pippa was also the guinea pig reserve rider at the 2008 Olympic Three Day Event Dressage (FEI CCI4* Dressage Test B) on D’Or Win. This year they successfully completed the first CIC1* horse trials ever to be held in Hong Kong as part of the qualifier for the Asian Games and could have won it if Pippa hadn’t locked on to the wrong x/c fence 4 from home..... well, you never stop learning, right!?

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It has to be said that this journey would not have been possible without the opportunities and help of so many people and organisations along the way – too many to mention and the risk of missing someone out!... but you know who you are and Thank You All!!!

Needless to say Pippa has bought D'Or Win back to the UK with her and he is settling well into his new environment. She envisages the partnership continuing on in order to demonstrate the versatility and diversity that the ex-race horses have to offer through a series of lectures, demonstrations, workshops and indeed more competitions later in the year.

In addition, Pippa will coach riders and train horses through their own personal journey, helping to identify goals, whilst progressively planning and implementing those steps that lead onto the next level; empathetically encouraging riders to step forward from that comfort zone and onto the next rung of the ladder.

As with the development of any sport related body and mind, be it 2 or 4 legged, it is very much a team effort to achieve the end result. Pippa envisages as part of a developing workshop, to present an over view of how ancillary professionals dovetail in order to ensure that the horse maximises his or her true potential in any given discipline that is happy and healthy with the emphasis on education, feedback and of paramount importance – the welfare of the horse.

This is a brief cameo to highlight the opportunities that presented themselves while Pippa was working in Hong Kong. In Part 2 next month, still staying with Hong Kong, she plans to look more closely at how the ex race horses are rehabilitated into different careers whilst working alongside the thoroughbred temperament and the preparation of competition horses in such diverse weather conditions with different resources to that of the UK.