

Alison Elliott

What age did you start riding? Why?

I started riding at the age of 40. I had always wanted to learn to ride properly, so signed up for 10 lessons thinking that would be it. I got hooked and have been riding ever since. With a degree in Physical Education, sports have always been part of my life. I can say, without a doubt, that riding Dressage is the most difficult, challenging and captivating sport I have ever participated in! It's also a lifelong sport – my mother is 91 and still rides!

Horse stats?

Izak (Zak) and I have been partners since 2004. He is a Hanovarian/Thoroughbred cross sired by Icarus, a stallion well-known in and around Winnipeg, standing 16.3 hands (each hand is 4 inches) and is turning 9 on May 13, 2009. Zak has a very strong “play drive” which makes him fun to work with, but also quite challenging because he has such spirit. One of his favourite games is “what can I spook at next?”

What is your training regime?

Zak loves his work. We try to train together for one hour 4-5 times a week and preferably 6 times. With grooming beforehand and cooling out afterward, we spend between 2-3 hours together each ride. We are coached twice per week. While we have an agenda for our lessons, these almost always are modified depending on how well Zak “is going” (he might be stiff that day) or how much energy I have that day! We also take advantage of clinics with national and international higher level Dressage riders/coaches which are scheduled two to three times per year.

Achievements?

Due to my health, Zak and I have not shown for the last 3 years, but we started out extremely well in our first show season receiving a mark of 70 in our Walk/Trot test and very positive remarks from the judge. My first horse, Fire 'N Ice (Lexie) and I were 2004 Dressage Winnipeg Adult Amateur Champions in Training Level so Zak and I have a high standard to achieve!

Goals and aspirations?

Zak and I hope to qualify to enter the Manitoba Provincial Dressage Championships in September 2009. We would like to compete in the 2010 Regional Championships in Red Deer, Alberta, but can only do so if we find a sponsor to help us with the costs. Zak and I are currently ready for Training Level in the competition ring and I hope to take him up to Third Level before our riding partnership retires. This will probably take us all of ten years to accomplish, so we are not faint of heart!

