

January news
Greetings from Florida!

The Florida Dressage Experience Program is in full swing this season. Participants have arrived so far from South Carolina, Minnesota, Long Island, New York, Maine, Massachusetts and Oklahoma and as the weeks go on more will be rolling in. The weather has been mild and cooperative. Most days 75 to 80 with a light breeze. The grass is very green and the flowers are in full bloom.

This year we have been able to offer the opportunity for participants to join the school for a week and several participants requested to focus exclusively on Classical Long Lining. The leather surcingles and lines that we sell are great and the focus of their week began right at the beginning about all the great benefits of how to use classical long Lining in your program and progresses from the basics of how to adjust the equipment to the horse and how to set the lines to begin, to advanced long lining with alternate rein positions to achieve collection, straightness and thoroughness.

In addition to their program daily in long lining we were also progressing with our daily under saddle work with the other horses so the participants could see, and observe the integration of the long lining and participate in the training of the horses towards FEI.

Some of the clients this year have competition goals to meet and we are refining tests between training. We will be attending shows so that I can go with participants to coach and to watch other rides and for the opportunity to practice test watching together. It is always exciting! This year is special as there are so many notables in Florida from all over the world trying to get to London for the Olympics. There are more CDI's this year in Florida than we have ever experienced.

Elton John TL who will turn four in June attended his very first show ever the weekend of January 7/8. He was quiet and amenable. He made friends cheerfully with the horse in the stall next door (a Grand Prix horse named Travolta from British Columbia who has London aspirations.... We wish him the best ☺) He never batted an eye about the environment and went out to do his first test ever of Training level test 3 and achieved a 66%. His second test of the first day I knew would be a stretch for his skills and he showed slight fatigue on the footing of sand but accomplished First level test one with no breaks, errors or resistances and received 63%. Certainly workman-like for a horse that had not been to a horse show at all. The ladies at the food vendor tent loved him. While out for our early morning stroll, I stopped for a cup of Joe. He was rewarded with a fresh banana free from the food vendor ladies for being so amenable and hanging around so quietly while we all enjoyed a morning chat and coffee.

In addition to our regular sessions Of the Florida Dressage Experience program I also do a few clinics while I am down here and I am off to Homestead Florida this week for a day at Becky Lamas' Ride-Away Farm—always a favorite place to be.

The palm trees are blowing and the horses are waiting! Please keep in touch and let me know how you all are. From all of us at the Florida Dressage Experience program Best regards for the New Year!

Fondly,
Ida and Mark