

CLASSICAL PRINCIPLES UNDERSCORED AT MARIUS SCHREINER CLINIC

"We must let our weight rest, straight down into the deepest part of the saddle. This is the very foundation, the indispensable principle, on which our entire aiding system must be built." - 1999, Eric Herbermann, *Dressage Formula*, J.A. Allen, page 17

"The good instructor will always be a role model to his students, through his knowledge, attitude and correct appearance..." - 2007, Walter Zettl, *The Circle of Trust*, Half Halt Press, page 103

SHELLHAVEN FARM, JULY 30-31

By Jean Rude

When I heard that Spanish Riding School Bereiter, Marius Schreiner, would be giving a clinic at Shellhaven Farm in Mount Vernon, I was so excited to be in town and able to audit the second day. I had just finished reading *Dressage Formula*, by Erik Herbermann, and had been walking around Montana (on foot) trying to form my torso into a capital "D." Here was a chance to learn from a practitioner of the classical methods Herbermann espouses, and that Schreiner's home base, The Spanish Riding School in Vienna, has dedicated itself to preserving for 430 years.

I confess I was hoping Bereiter Schreiner would get *on* a horse so I could witness the famously deep seat, but his focus was on helping each of the horse and rider pairs work through their challenges. His pupils ranged from adult amateurs on handsome sport ponies to FEI professionals on warmbloods in all stages of training. In spite of a heat index over 100, Schreiner kept the positive energy flowing, never complained, and sent each horse and rider out of the arena much improved if drenched in sweat!

Between sessions, Schreiner approached the auditors to invite questions --- a thoughtful and unexpected gesture. He even took a moment during the lunch break to tell us about a typical day at the Spanish Riding School (he works his four Lipizzaners, instructs students, takes a lesson with *his* instructor, and participates in daily public riding exhibitions).

Although the six sessions I audited were tailored to each horse and rider partnership, these were Schreiner's recurring themes:

1. Importance of *rider position*
2. Creating an *active hind end*
3. Maintaining a *connected seat*

Here are some notes from the Sunday session:

BEGINNER / INTERMEDIATE RIDERS

Posting Trot

- Every post should be the *same*. The same when you *sit*; the same when you *rise*.
- Establish a rhythm
- Quiet hands

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Michelle Johnson on "Ironman"



Deb Clinch on "Peaches"



Annie Jones on "Call Mom 'Toddy'"



Sitting Trot

- Don't think up and down, think *forward and back*
- Relax the back muscles
- *Don't look down!* That pulls your stomach in and destroys your seat!

Position

- Shoulders back
- Look between the horse's ears (don't look far into a circle)
- Check to see your seat is connected *before* each transition
- Your leg holds the horse on its line

Downward Transitions

- Sit!
- Relax.
- Breathe.

Contact

- The horse cannot go on the bit when he's *slow*
- Ride him from the hind legs up to the bit *every minute*

ADVANCED RIDERS

Turn on the haunches

- Outside rein says "*slow*"
- Turn the *shoulder* around the haunches
- Inside leg keeps the motor going

Collected Canter

- Outside rein says "*slow*"
- *Activate* the hind end
- *Lengthen* the neck, but he *stays*
- Now you can hold him with your seat
- Sit *uphill*: You can't control the tempo otherwise

Exercises to Establish Outside Rein

Contact

1. Zig-zag half pass down center line (the forehand one step in front of the hindquarters; shoulder in, *then* yield)
2. Transitions through shoulder-in (trot/walk/trot)

Downward Transitions

- Activate the hind, *then* ask
- Don't disconnect the seat!
- Ride the neck up to you until you feel the haunches go down. When you feel him go *up* is the time to ask. You say "*now, sit on the hind legs and transition!*"
- Collect, collect, collect, hind legs under, *then* transition.

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Canter Departures

- *Lengthen* the neck then ask. The neck straight up and not relaxed *isn't* a good time to ask
- Outside leg says "*something is coming*", inside leg says "*canter on*"

Collection

- Slow with the *outside* aids
- Shoulders back
- His back should not be longer than his neck
- *Inside* leg sends him forward

Changes


- Don't think stop and go
- You need tempo, rhythm and a collected canter *before* you can do a flying change
- *Suspension* give the horse *time* to jump through with the hind end in changes

A thank you to Michelle Johnson of Shellhaven Farm for bringing Marius Schreiner to Iowa, and to all the EIDEA members who braved the heat wave to ride for this exemplary clinician. I'll hope for more hospitable temperatures when he returns and a chance to see if my "capital D" has replaced the dreaded "capital C".

PARTICIPATING HORSES AND RIDERS


- Bill Coester on Jeremiah (Dutch Warmblood, 3rd schooling 4th)
- Rose Ambrose on Steinway (Dutch Warmblood, 4th level)
- Deb Clinch on Peaches (Connemara, training level)
- Deb Clinch on Quinn (Connemara, training level)
- Michelle Johnson on Ironman, owned by Vicky Johnson (Friesian, 3rd schooling 4th)
- Michelle Johnson on her horse, Doekele van de Warnahoeve (Friesian, 1st/2nd level)
- Geline St. John on Robin Ballantyne's Clancey (Irish Draught/TB, training level)
- Judy Nauseef on Montreal, (German Sport Pony, 1st, schooling 2nd)
- Lunge session for Michelle Johnson's Sabrina (Holsteiner, green)
- Annie Jones on Call Mom "Toddy" (Thoroughbred, 2nd /3rd level)

Author Jean Rude is a branding and creative consultant and has been an EIDEA member since 2004. She'll never forget seeing the Spanish Riding School perform at the Civic Arena in Pittsburgh in the 1970's -- a birthday surprise. Jean lives in Iowa City with her husband and two children.




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