



HT EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH BEEZIE MADDEN

By Nermin Marwan

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OUR MEETING THIS TIME IS WITH THE FOUR-TIME OLYMPIC EQUESTRIAN CHAMPION, THE SUPERSTAR SHOW JUMPER; BEEZIE MADDEN

First of all, Horse Times is really delighted to meet you, and I believe we have a lot to discuss together. Let's start with your childhood, when it all started.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED AS AN EQUESTRIAN?

My parents, Joe and Kathy Patton, owned a horse farm near Milwaukee, Wisconsin. My brother and I grew up riding horses and at age 4, I was given a pony for Christmas.

WHEN DID YOU START RIDING COMPETITIVELY?

I started when I was around the age of 6 with my first pony, Flicka.

BEING SUCH A PROMINENT RIDER; YOU MUST HAVE A PARTICULAR ROUTINE, WHAT DO YOU FOLLOW WITH YOUR HORSES?

Each horse is different with different needs, but generally we set annual goals for each horse and work back from there to formulate the best plan for their development both at home and in competition. On a day-to-day basis we make sure that all of our horses get turned out, go on the walker to move some and get varying types of exercise from trail riding and flat work to gymnastics and jumping.



WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA BY WHICH YOU CHOOSE YOUR HORSES? HOW DO YOU TEST IT? AND WOULD YOU MIND BUY A HORSE THAT WAS RIDDEN BY ANOTHER TOP RIDER AND WAS ALREADY SUCCESSFUL?

We generally try each horse at least twice and evaluate their athletic ability as well as a veterinary evaluation, but temperament is a big factor, as well. Ultimately, though, it really comes down to my feeling when riding the horse and John's impressions and feelings when watching me ride the horse. I would not discount a horse ridden by another top rider, but generally we look for younger horses to develop.

IS THERE A HORSE THAT MADE YOU BECOME A BETTER RIDER, AND WHY?

Each horse and each relationship with each horse is very different. I would say that I have learned something new from every horse I have ridden that has made me better. In our sport you are constantly learning and working to improve.



“There is no key, trick, or short cut to success, The key is actually hard work”.

TELL US ABOUT THE MOST CHALLENGING TIME IN YOUR CAREER, AND HOW DID YOU GET THROUGH IT?

One of the most challenging times was when Judgement ISF first came to us. He was a big and powerful stallion, and he had a fear of the water jumps. John and I really took our time with him and utilized positive reinforcement clicker training, which had been used quite a bit with marine animals, but not as much with horses at the time. Thinking outside the box and taking our time really paid off, as he went on to have an incredible career in show jumping.

YOU’VE BEEN AN OLYMPIC MEDALIST 4 TIMES TILL NOW, HOW DO YOU PREPARE YOURSELF FOR SUCH EVENT EVERY TIME? AND HOW DID YOU CHANGE SINCE YOUR FIRST WIN TILL NOW?

My first Olympics was very much a first-time experience, and I really didn’t know fully what to expect. Certainly, now with experience and multiple games, I know what to expect and at the end of one we are already planning for the next putting competition schedules together etc. so that we have horses that have the

experience horse need to be ready for the Olympics at the right time. However, one thing never changes and that is the feeling you get from the honor of representing and riding for your team and your country.

YOU HAVE COMPETED ALL AROUND THE WORLD; TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE ARENA AND WHY DO YOU FIND IT SPECIAL?

There are many great arenas, but one of my favorites is Aachen. The atmosphere and competition are like no other in the world.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS THE KEY TO BEING A SUCCESSFUL RIDER?

There is no key, trick, or shortcut to success. The key is actually hard work and taking the time to do things right even if it takes a little longer one small decision at a time and eventually the totality of those decisions results in success. You must also be diligent in your pursuit of your goals and not view setbacks or obstacles as barriers but instead learning opportunities to teach you and make you better so that you can progress to the next level. Talent is helpful but it is not everything, having a passion for the sport and the horses and doing what is right for your horses is necessary to be successful for a long period of time.

WHO WERE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL COACHES IN YOUR CAREER?

I had many different trainers through my junior years, but I was very fortunate to work with Katie Prudent and then my husband John. I would say that he has definitely been the most influential coach in my career.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE EQUESTRIAN SHOWJUMPING SPORT DEVELOPING FROM BEING A SPORT TO BEING AN INDUSTRY? ARE WE ON A POSITIVE ROUTE OR ARE WE GOING TO SUFFER FROM SOME CHANGES TO THE FACT THAT THE SPORT IS BECOMING INDUSTRIALIZED?

I think there are positive and negatives to the way the sport is growing and developing. There are more and more people participating in the sport on an international level, and I think more and more countries have riders that can be competitive at a high level. I think on an average, the level of riding is better, and this benefits the sport and our horses. The growth has led to more prize money which helps our riders and owners and makes our sport more important in some ways. All of this has also raised the price of horses which is good for



dealers but not as good for involving more people into the sport. I also think that event though it's difficult to find top horses, there are more good horses being bred and developed.

The biggest challenge in our sport is going to be sorting out what events are considered the top-level events, and for the riders to be able to schedule their horses to peak at these events and also have some down time.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SPONSORS.

I have an incredible team that I am fortunate to work with everyday that includes owners, sponsors, and barn staff. Most of my commercial sponsors have been with our team for over 10 years. I think this has a lot to do with the fact that we will not entertain a sponsorship with any company unless we truly believe in and use the products. Maintaining good relationships with your sponsors and supporters is critical as no one is successful all on their own. Everyone plays a critical role.

WHO IS THE ONE YOU GO TO FOR ADVICE IN REGARDS OF RIDING?

My husband John.



WHO WAS MADDEN'S IDOL AS A YOUNG RIDER?

Katie Prudent, I was fortunate to be able to train with her and work for her and be a part of her team for a period of time.

AS BEEZIE MADDEN, WHO WHO GAVE SO MUCH TIME DEVELOPING HER TECHNICAL & RIDING SKILLS, HER WINNING CAPACITY, NOW WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO?

I look forward everyday to being able to do what I love to do as a job. We have some great young horses and riders we are working with to develop, and I am looking forward to competing with them and working towards the goals we set for each horse and rider. 🐾

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