



If Becca can do it, you can do it!!!

Becca has the heart (passion), the head (knowledge), and the hands (skill) to get her horses and riders to the elite level of the equestrian world.

Becca's passion with horses began at a very early age. She started riding at the age of 6, we leased her first pony at 7, and bought her first pony for her eighth birthday. The rest so they say is history. Her father and I encouraged her development with her riding skills because we felt that gaining confidence and having success with a 1200 pound animal would help with most any challenge in life.

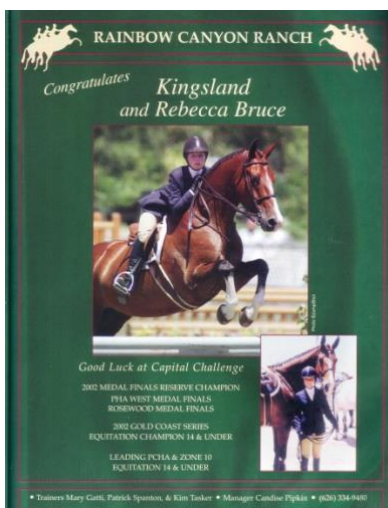
We also felt like the focus, commitment, and connection with horses would benefit Becca in an academic setting. She first fell in love with reading with Pony Club books and her reading passion continues today. There is profound research and findings that horseback riding engages and stimulates more muscles and pathways to the brain than any other sport. Other positive benefits of having her involved with horses were her increased self-esteem and confidence, learning empathy and compassion for the welfare and care of her horse, and not being afraid to get in the dirt and be self-sufficient. The horse shows can also teach you that life isn't always fair and how to deal with this. While it is wonderful to get a blue ribbon there is still much to learn and chances to grow when you don't.



Becca at the age of 8 began competing with her first pony "Happiness Is" on the local Santa Barbara circuit and quickly progressed and wanted to go to the bigger shows in Los Angeles. The most important quality that Becca possessed back then and still does to this day is an incredible work ethic. When things get hard or difficult, Becca would just work harder. If she didn't do well at a show, she would just come home and work harder than anyone else. She would ride as many horses, easy and hard horses, as she could and gain as much knowledge as possible. This quality is what has always set Becca ahead of the competition.



At the age of 10, Becca had her first fancy junior hunter Command Performance. She was Grand Circuit Children's Hunter Champion at Thermal that year but sadly her horse sustained an injury and never fully recovered. Because her horse was injured, Becca's trainer, Mary Gatti of Rainbow Canyon, allowed her to lease the horses that had been donated to Saint Lucy's, a non-profit that Mary had founded. With Becca's hard work and dedication, along with the knowledge and skill of the trainers at Rainbow Canyon, Becca started winning on these donated horses! Becca won many show championships and year-end high point championships on donated horses. Probably her two biggest successes on donated horses was first winning the SFVHJA 17 and under Medal finals in 2001 on a donated horse named Michelangelo, (competing against much fancier and very expensive horses), and her second big success was during her first time competing at the East Coast Indoor Championship Circuit at Capitol Challenge on another donated horse named Kingsland. She was just going back East for the experience of competing in a National Indoor Circuit Championship. She and Kingsland ended up Reserve Champion in the Equitation Division and also Reserve Championship in the Stateline National Medal Final. 2002 was also the year that Becca and Kingsland ended up Overall PCHA Equitation High Point Year End Champion.





You do not need a crystal ball to predict who tomorrow's professional stars will be. Just immerse one eye in the hunter rings and see who is sitting on an untouchable horse, taking notes from trainers, then waiting off to figure out the rules. They will be the horse's number around their waist, then center into the show ring with the hopes and expectations of others riding against on their shoulders.

Sometimes catch riders come about that quickly, and sometimes they are arranged weeks or months in advance. However the expectation arises, this signal a young rider who has earned the approximately 100,000 eye of seasoned professionals looking at the future of their industry. They are offering students at their home barn, riding and schooling different horses every day.

"These riders are usually the ones with great professional prospects," notes Mike Nelson, Pacific Coast Horse Show Association president and vice president of the California Professional Horsemen's Association. The CPHA awarded new awards this year, including the Junior Horseman Award, which while general would go to just such a rider. He notes that catch riders used to be primarily those whose talents outweighed their family ability to keep them competitive mounted, but says that is not so much the case anymore. Riders of every era-



Becca Bruce. "You have to get into the ring, the more you learn."

senior, structure into this great stepping stone to becoming a professional. Catch riders come about for many reasons. Often, the horse or pony needs to be shown off for sale, or some points toward year-end awards or event qualifications. Sometimes it is simply a matter of more show mileage, perhaps in a new division, and often the catch rider is killing in for an owner that is unrepentantly out of commission.

Here we profile four of the country's most celebrated "trial professionals," as some call veteran catch riders: Natalie Rae Medlock, Alexandra Skiffington, Rebecca Bruce, and Madaly Solheim. Whether they will join the ranks of Will and Nicki Simpson, Jane Hinchinson, Bert Black, Rusty Stewart, and the many other contemporary pros who started as stand-in stars remains to be seen. Certainly, they have the know-how and the know-how for the job.

Stand-In Stars

Show Circuit profiles four of the country's most celebrated catch riders, each with great expectations and outstanding professional prospects.

By Kim F. Miller

REBECCA BRUCE

Rebecca Bruce added into the spotlight last year when she helped four of England's Darbys' horses earn top Junior Hunter Indoor circuit awards with big wins while Stephanie was coaxed with a broken collection. Even so, the 16-year-old Rebecca, who wrapped up 2007 by winning the

LANSA Medal Finals, has been a star at Mary Lett's Rainbow Canyon Ranch for some time. Rebecca started riding many different horses when her owner, Michael, Command Performance, pulled a suspension during the last week of July 2006 while having the standing for Grand Circuit champion in the Children's division. "Mary Lett put me on every horse in the barn," Rebecca recalls. "She said, 'Just get out there and ride as many as you can every day.' Rebecca did, and she is grateful for Mary's advice. "The more you get into the ring, the more you learn." While she usually catch-rides for her owner, Andrea Cox, Mike Edick, and other owners have called upon Rebecca's considerable talents.

She started catch riding by competing on amateur ride and rodeo main Junior Hunter classes, Andalus, Second Class, and WANDQ. Showing Second Class and WANDQ in the Children's division helped sell them to other owners.

When she came to the United States, CA, training here about five years ago, Rebecca was quickly taken in, even though Rainbow Canyon's clients are mostly amateur at the time. Rebecca lives at her family's Sunnybrook Ranch in Santa Barbara. There she cares for numerous family horses and 100 head of horses and gives lessons to local students when she is not on the road competing. She had no intention to train at a stable and horse show, but when she met into some trouble with Command Performance, the family might help from Patrick Spurgeon, Rainbow Canyon's main rider. Over time quickly by her to amateur and Rebecca is now a frequent resident at Rainbow Canyon's guest house.

Her catch riding and Sunnybrook Ranch responsibilities make her well prepared for a professional horse career, she should show that path. For now, she is mostly focused on the Equitation division, the USET Finals in particular, and on jumpers. She

STAND-IN STARS



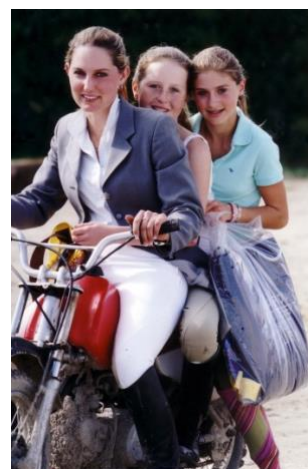
Rebecca Bruce when not competing.

Rebecca spent Thanksgiving week looking at colleges back East. Not enough, she took a special interest in competitive with intercollegiate riding programs, where student money comes on horses owned by the host school. The prospect of earning an athletic scholarship for her riding is appealing, and as a side of getting her catch-riding experience to work for her school of choice. "I'm not going to pick my school just because of the riding program," she says. "But it sure would be fun to ride on their team."

"At the moment, I'm not actively pursuing catch riding," Rebecca says. "But I definitely feel lucky to be able to do it and I hope to continue with it." She is particularly grateful to family friend Jane House, and to Stephanie Darbys and her owner Andrea Cox, for the opportunities they have provided for her. At the top of her thank you list is Rainbow Canyon, Mary Patrick, and Kim Taylor. "They've all been really supportive," she says.



Rebecca Bruce when not competing.



It was also during this time, that Becca at the young age of 14 began taking on her own training clients at her families Sunnybrook ranch. Her clients would follow her from show to show during her junior years as Becca competed as a junior rider. During this time she was also training her clients coaching them to multiple championships and numerous year-end awards and medal final wins throughout the years.



Becca has won countless Championships, Derbies, Medal Finals and Grand Prix's in the hunter, jumper, and equitation rings. One of her most exciting achievements was winning the LAHJA Junior medal finals on her sixteenth birthday on a recently imported horse named Nottingham. Becca had just imported Nottingham from Germany and was very green and had never competed in a medal final before. No one had any expectations for this young horse. This medal final is very challenging taking place over three nights of obstacles and tough courses. Becca and Nottingham were leading the field coming into the Saturday night finals under the lights and set down a brilliant winning round. Her birthday celebration was extra sweet that night. She and Nottingham went on the next year to win several other medal final championships including the National HBO medal final. Becca also won her first Grand Prix on her junior jumper, Square Wheels, at Huntington Beach that year. Her final junior year she competed at Devon, Capitol Challenge, Harrisburg, and the Maclay Medal Finals in New York while having a lead role in a reality T.V. series called "LA Riding Club".

FREE

Vol. 12 Issue 2
17 - 20 January 2006

Montecito JOURNAL

The Voice of the Village

FIREFIGHTER HOUSING

Montecito Fire Chief Tom McCann announces \$200K purchase of \$2.1 million East Valley Road property.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR, P. 12 • CALENDAR OF EVENTS, P. 60 • GUIDE TO MONTECITO EATERIES, P. 64

REBECCA'S REALITY RIDE

At 18, M.U.S. alumna Rebecca Bruce is already an accomplished equestrian and horse dealer. Now she's a featured character on The Learning Channel's new reality show, "L.A. Riding Club," P. 21

PLUS:

The Logical Succession Interview with new President of the Montecito Association Bob Cole

Festival Firsts: Preview of 51st Annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival world premiere of Robert Towne's "Ask the Dust" on opening night, p. 59, 62

COVER PHOTO: Rebecca Bruce with one of her new horses, Blue Cloud, and her Jack Russell, Quinn. Photo by: Sheraton Photo Media

[illegible][illegible][illegible]



As Becca was winning championships, she was also building up an impressive sales business. What began as Becca as a 12 year old buying unbroken ponies out of Canada, training and breaking them, and selling them for a solid profit, has turned into a successful importing business. Becca has been going to Canada and Europe for many years now and has established long term relationships with reputable breeders and agents to ensure top quality horses for our clients.





Becca still travels to Europe on average of 4 times a year to compete and horse shop. In 2016, she took 22 people to Pompadour, France to train for three weeks with Joy Najem, a top international rider. In 2018, Becca took 10 riders over to Ireland to train with Olympic show jumper, Greg Broderick. This gives her clients an insider's view into the International World of Show Jumping.

Rebecca Bruce Takes Home the Top Prize in the \$25,000 Huntington Beach Grand Prix

The action continues Sunday at Huntington Beach Summer Classic

wpem_logo.

Huntington Beach, CA - August 9, 2014 - This week's Huntington Beach Summer Classic showcased some exciting rounds in both the Hunter and Jumper rings.

Saturday evening's highlight was the \$25,000 Grand Prix of Huntington Beach, presented by S&S Bankcard Systems. Two horse and rider combinations returned for the Jump Off. Erika Cooper and Rebecca Bruce seemed to master the first round set by course designer Joe Lombardo. But it was Rebecca Bruce riding her own Pizzazz that battled for the victory with a jump off time of 38.100. Erika Cooper riding her Nelson T with a score of 4 faults and a time of 36.191 took the second place finish. Rebecca Bruce said, "It was an exciting class and my first time back at the Huntington Beach show. It was my favorite show as a kid and I won my first Grand Prix here. It's special to win the Grand Prix tonight because I have a lot of memories here".

GGT™
GERMAN GEO TEXTILE
FOOTING

Rebecca Bruce and Dollar Girl take the win in the \$15,000 GGT-Footing™ Grand Prix

Also pictured, from left: Freddie Lopez, Shane Lezcano, Cynthia Brewster-Keefer of GGT-Footing™, Becca Hendrickson for GGT-Footing™, Dale Harvey, West Palms Events

"Thank you to GGT-Footing™ for sponsoring the Huntington Beach Grand Prix. It's so exciting to have another win here. Especially because we have GGT-Footing™ at home and Tractor Dean takes such wonderful care of us." Rebecca Bruce explained. "Thank you to my entire staff for all you do. Lastly, thank you to Justin Resnick for finding me Dollar Girl."

GGT-Footing Has Three Authorized Arena Consultants and Builders in California
Tractor Dean Hendrickson, Dave Marlin and Danny Austin
Accept NO IMITATIONS!!

Call Cynthia at GGT-Footing™ for arena builders and dealers near you: 864.804.0011
Call Carrie Adams for product purchase without a builder: 864.804.8664

www.GGT-Footing.com Follow us on

Becca enjoys both riding and teaching equally. She loves giving the novice riders a solid foundation of the fundamentals of horsemanship to giving advanced jumpers riders the smallest finesse touches to achieve a victory at the highest level. Becca enjoys bringing young horses and riders along. Several of her successful imports include Pizzazz have won multiple Championships and Grand Prixes in 2014/2015 and Dollar Girl in 2017. Becca has coached the winning Gold Medal Zone 10 children's championship teams in 2013 and 2014. Maud Christal, aboard her recent import Apache van de Los, was Silver Medal Champion in both the individual and the team Zone 10 championships in 2017. Maud was selected for the USHJA Emerging Athletes Program 2018. Several of Becca's past students have gone on to win the USET, CPHA medal final and several big Grand Prixes, giving credit to Becca for the strong foundation she gave them.



Sixteen years after starting Sunnybrook Becca has decided to fine tune the business model and elevate Sunnybrook to an elite, one of a kind, Riding Club. She intends to focus even more on a quality experience. She has broadened her mission statement while still sticking to her original motto of “Having fun while striving for excellence.”



