

Dressage Clinic with Bereiter Rudolf Rostek  
from the  
Spanish Riding School in Vienna  
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By Renee K. McKinley

I've been very lucky this summer to have had the opportunity to ride with three men who have been educated by the Spanish Riding School of Vienna. In the beginning of June Charles DeKunffy came from California to Wyngate Dressage Center in Walworth, Wisconsin for a four day clinic. I have ridden with Charles for the past four years when he comes to Wisconsin twice a year. This man has amazing insight into the art of dressage, and no one can teach equitation as precisely correct as he. Another well educated classical trainer who has been teaching in Illinois on a regular basis is Wolfgang May. Bereiter May spent a year at the Spanish Riding School (SRS) for intensive training, and again trained with the head rider of the SRS during the time he was employed by Tempel Farms. Both these men have really improved and advanced my riding and understanding of classical dressage.

After seeing the SRS perform in Ohio last January during their tour of America I have to say the highlight of my summer was having the opportunity to ride with one of the bereiters of the SRS, Rudolf Rostek. Herr Rostek joined the SRS as an Eleve in 1991 and quickly earned the title of bereiter in 2001...apparently this can take much longer! If you were able to attend a performance of the SRS when they toured the States with their exotic white stallions, you couldn't have missed Bereiter Rostek. He was the tall, dark elegant young rider who assisted the First Chief Rider with the "Schools above the Ground."

When I first signed up for the clinic with Rudolf Rostek I was somewhat concerned with the fact that each rider was only allotted a half an hour for their ride. I can sometimes take a half an hour to warmup! But I needn't have worried, because once I warmed up and entered the ring, spoke briefly to Herr Rostek, he immediately put me to work on what I needed to improve. During our brief talk I mentioned my foremost concern with my PSG horse, Ben, with the canter pirouette work, and we immediately got to work on the pirouette preparation work. He had a great eye for diagnosis and treatment. My horse, Ben, gets somewhat claustrophobic in the pirouette work to the right, especially if you hold the rein a nanosecond too long, although he is actually lighter to the right. He tends to think rearing is a good way to get out of this work. Herr Rostek was able to give me a few simple techniques to curtail this issue we were having by essentially pushing the horse forward in the instant before the behavior, and collecting slowly during the pirouette preparation exercises. In the end, we were able to get some calm, rhythmic pirouette steps with a proper head and neck carriage.

Any time that you are traveling to a clinic where you really don't know anyone, have never been to the barn, you are always concerned with what you will find when you get there. This clinic was managed very well, everyone was very friendly, and the barn owners really went out of their way to make everyone at home. They also had many sponsors, so there were T-shirts, goody bags and other freebies. There were many riders and auditors from all over the Midwest, and it was nice to meet so many friendly dressage enthusiasts. My horse, my sister and I all had a great time.

Now, coming home on the 90/94 through Indiana in very heavy traffic with sporadic thunderstorms and temperatures reaching 100 degrees, I do not recommend!! But we did survive, thanks to lots of stops to open and close the back doors, fans, and electrolytes!! Clinic on!

