

2015 Victorian Dressage Festival Report from Leanne Moore

When Sheldene Benallen won Tasmanian Small Show Hunter Galloway at 2015 EA HOY, I decided to do both EA Saddle Horse Nationals and stay on for the Victorian Saddle World Dressage Festival.

We departed Hobart on Tuesday 1st December and after his 4 1/2hr float trip in high winds I rested Ben at the Radford's for 2hrs before boarding the boat. The Bass Strait crossing was very rough, the ship was listing, rolling & groaning. I was concerned all night for Ben's welfare and wondered if I should have put him through this.

It was relief to arrive at Werribee on Wednesday and find Ben was ok but my fat show pony had tucked up with lots of walking, electrolytes and grass nibbling he picked up. We briefly attended Tassie's Team practice at 4pm for walk around indoor after 10min we excused ourselves as were both a little lethargic. The next day we had both recovered and he was a treasure in the indoor and worked a treat unfazed by all the decorations, including; coloured glowing tents, Ribbons, massive banner and dining area.

On Saturday Ben & I were first to compete in SHNGOY, the atmosphere was electric; Ben was not happy on circle as he got boxed in on wall and got the grumps up. But when he entered for his solo work out he responded to atmosphere & music and lifted up and did a super soft balanced work out for me that showed his education.

I have to thank both Tania Hay for fixing Ben's toilet brush rubbed Tail and fine tuning my workout & Fiona Fehlberg for guidance, advice, keeping me calm and Nicole LeFevre for keeping me clean by attending to Ben not allowing him to share his make over me which is his usual game.

Sunday morning we had early trip to Catherine Davies lovely Queens Park at Romsey. Ben was extremely keen to get to his paddock and lost his manners towed me down lane to green grass as it is rare find at Werribee and it was nice to get him out of dust and grime of Werribee. I flew home and Ben stayed with Catherine till Wednesday when we returned to Werribee.

Thursday first day of competition was a relaxing day for me but not for Catherine as she had her lovely young very big mare in the 4y.o it was very interesting and informative to watch and hot in the indoor. I worked Ben in the cool evening as we had the place to ourselves, we had lovely gallop around outside arenas. I thought they really should have twilight Dressage to avoid heat and fly's.

Friday I worked Ben early around the park luckily prior to Werribee Dust storm and then watched Caitlyn, Amy, Meagan and Abbie O'Brien and her lovely Rajahs Rave cope well in wind and dust. I manage to include horse & riders shopping, meeting many fellow DAT members on a shopping spree.

Saturday I woke early and noted how relaxed it was at DF compared to Nationals, no horses being lunged or doing laps of park, just horses & ponies having Breakfast. My 1st test was 3.2 and Ben became a bit strong in parts and his rider under shot centre line but he worked well enough, thanks to Tassie Team mates for encouragement and support. The 3.3 I was pushed out of my time slot as the ponies wear miniature numbers on their bridles this caused a bit of Chaos for judges and

frustration for me as Ben was over it. Thanks to Megan and Amy for support and help. Ben & I under pressure did a better test, I was happy with both my test & scores.

Saturday evening with Tassie team mates we watched the Grand Prix Freestyle CDI in the indoor with a knowledgeable but respectful audience. We were on the edge of our seats watching the amazing combinations, especially Maree Tompkinson's beautiful mare Diamantina IV perform an amazing dynamic test only just piped by Mary Hanna's precise performance on Umbro and 3rd place was DP Weltmieser & Brett Prabery who's riding skills and invisible aids made his test a pleasure to watch. It was remarkable to watch the amazing skills of these riders work in partnership with their horses overcome and ride through any difficulties to produce some lovely performances.

Sunday both Megan & I had our novice test. Ben worked well in 2.2 but was a little bit stiff and tight but was obedient and willing we achieved a good score. The 2.3 he tried for me, but he felt flat and stiff and I tried to sit light on him to stay off his back. The comments from all the Judges were very positive & encouraging. I was very proud that his performances & scores were consistent and he tried so hard for me even when he was tired from travelling and having too many longer warm ups.

I got to meet some lovely competitors and got to see some lovely German Riding Ponies stallions. Kennedy WE was stable opposite Ben, Jenny Gibson & I were admiring this stunning stallion and I was informed that he is available for AI Looks like Toff may have another AI baby soon!

Thanks to all who helped me achieve getting a creditable performance at Werribee; Coaches (Kerrie, Catherine & Abigail) and DAT for your support from Judges and official and volunteers & Thanks again to Tania, Fiona, Nicole & My Tassie Team mates for help and support during an enjoyable but exhausting trip. Biggest thank you to my wonderful pony who is such a great willing, safe pony who is now enjoying a well-deserved holiday till the New Year. It was a great learning experience and has given me more motivation to improve.

Leanne Moore

Photo By OZ Photography Derek O Leary at 2013 Nationals I am waiting for order for 2015 Photos .

