

11 July 2016

Yard visit to Laura Tomlinson, 2012 Olympic gold medallist

To say we were lucky to be invited to see Laura at her home in Gloucestershire would be an understatement. We were made to feel so welcome by the whole team including the horses and dogs.

The yard is beautiful, clean, tidy and above all a very happy one. They work as a team with a dash of humour thrown in. Laura is world class, beautiful, trim and fit. It is easy to see why Laura is one of the most respected riders in the world today. There was no pushing, shoving, kicking, pulling – infact she made it all seem so effortless. She has lovely hands and the horses are happy in the mouth. The relationship with each horse was one of harmony. The picture in one's mind of the "happy athlete".

Dr B. worked with Laura in an easy and relaxed manner with a sense of humour thrown in for good measure. There were lots of walk breaks and rewards as they allow the horses muscles to relax and reduce fatigue.

Dr B is the master of diet and weight with each horse looking in tip top condition under his watchful eye.

We could have listened for hours and hours to Dr B's funny stories and training methods. He says young horses are like young children – they have a limited attention span, understand this and you will learn to work with them.

We studied horses turning from regular paces to that of international super stars literally in seconds.

Evident for all to see is the love the Bechtolsheimer family have for their horses, after all they're part of their family. Laura's Mum Ursula can recite the birthdays of each horse. She spoke with knowledge and kindness about the strengths and weaknesses of each horse and with sadness about the passing of the older ones particularly Douglas Dorsey.

It was a treat to witness Alf and Andretti, two very wise gentlemen, head down, grazing, happy in retirement but still living the life of a king.

There are no short cuts on this yard. They are in for the long haul. Horses are not sold, they're family after all.

This yard visit is one that will never be forgotten. To Laura and her team, thank you all very much.