

HIDDEN TALENT

A Love of horses

Christine Ferland talks about her passion for horses.



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A Love for Horses



Horses have always been a passion for Washington, D.C. Practice Assistant Christiane Ferland.

She grew up in the Montreal area of Canada and, while she didn't ride until her early 20s, her love of horses began at the age of five.

"I blame my friend, Celine," she jokes, "because she had lots of horse stuff that we'd play with all the time. I got hooked and that continued as we grew up."

Owning a horse or riding regularly wasn't an option because there were no stables close to Christiane's childhood home in the suburbs, but that all changed when she approached her 20s and learned to drive.

She says: "Celine and I took a joint lease of two horses before I moved to the United States in 1997."

Christiane took a short break from horses, but it didn't last long. She says: "I realized I had to have horses in my life, so I started taking lessons at the local stables for around a year before deciding that wasn't enough."

"I wanted to learn to care for a horse, so leased an Arab-cross called Lee. He was quite a character but was able to get me off his back too easily!"

"It was like one of those cartoons where the horse disappears from under the rider. I was holding on in the air before eventually dropping to the ground. That was me and Lee."

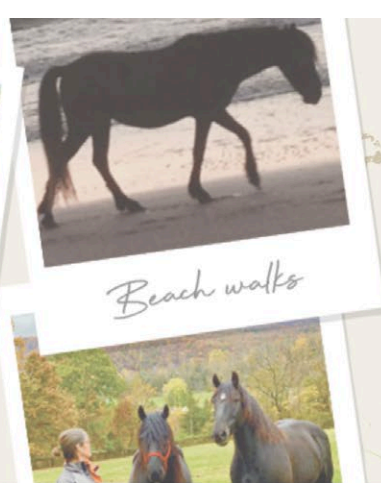
Keen to find a less painful ride, Christiane bought her first horse, Kalumet (Kal for short), a four-year-old Canadian horse, a rare breed from the Quebec area, in 2004.

"I grew up with Canadian horses and love their nature, so I bought a trailer and made the 600-mile trip to pick him up," she says. "It was my first drive towing a trailer, so it was a bit nerve-wracking, but it was worth the effort, because Kal is a wonderful horse and I still have him."



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PRACTICE ASSISTANT**



Christiane bought a second Canadian horse, Djaran (DJ), and travelled up to Canada to collect him in early 2020 just before the Covid-19 pandemic struck. She keeps both horses at home in her run-in barn and backyard.

She says: "Canadian horses are known for having a great temperament, are built solidly, tend to stay healthy and have strong feet, which is important."

"There are some great, beautiful trails around my home, so I love getting out and riding them with my friends, something that was particularly enjoyable during lockdown."

While the pandemic restricted Christiane's riding to the trails around her house, she did use the lockdown to good effect.

She says: "I completed an apprenticeship with a farrier, which was fascinating and has taught me how to trim my horses' feet – something that will be really useful going forward."

When not restricted by the pandemic, Christiane often takes her horses to horse expos and judged pleasure rides, where horses and riders compete to negotiate trails with obstacles under the watchful eye of judges.

"I don't do anything competitively or to win ribbons," she says, "but it's fun to be involved and good socially."

Christiane mostly enjoys taking her horses to expo events in Maryland, Virginia and as far away as the Equine Affaire in Massachusetts, New England, which gives 'non-horsey' people the chance to interact with horses and learn more about them.

She says: "I love those events, not only do I get to share my horses with others, but I get to meet other horse owners with similar interests."

"In Massachusetts, I remember one moment when a young mother and her two-year-old child came to see Kal and it was so touching to see their connection. The baby would cry every time Kal pulled away and there was an amazing bond between them almost immediately."

"I've also had several people around to my house, including attorneys and their kids, to see the horses and learn a bit more about them."

"I've got so much joy from my horses over the years and it's good to try to pass that on. I think it's just amazing that these huge, beautiful animals allow you to build a relationship with them and look after them."



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