

SIDELINES

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Georgina Bloomberg MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Kressa Peterson
SHOW RING TO SHARK TANK

Kayla Kadlubek
RISING THROUGH
THE DRESSAGE RANKS

SIDELINES

April 2020

- 22** Eric Glynn:
A Life With Horses,
From Ireland to America
- 28** Allyson Hall:
Life, Horses and
Huntley Equestrian
- 32** Eventing With Boyd Martin
- 38** Shannagh-Leigh Hartshorn:
Creating Art From
Miniature to Life-Size
- 44** Kressa Peterson
Jumps From the Show Ring
to Success on Shark Tank
- 52** Coursewalk
With Heather Caristo
- 54** Augusta Iwasaki:
Small Horses, Big Victories
- 58** Charity:
The Big Impact of Gentle
Giants Draft Horse Rescue
- 64** Sports Psychology:
How Hypnotherapy
Helps With Riding

96



On the cover:
Georgina Bloomberg, at Gotham South in Wellington,
Florida, with Crown 5. Georgina is wearing a Swanns
Point Lily Tulle Dress from Ella-Rue (@shopellarue).

About this photo:
Georgina, blending high fashion with equestrian wear,
showcases a dress from Ella-Rue (@shopellarue),
leather jacket and jewelry by Fab Finds by Sarah (@
fabfindsbySarah), boots by Der Dou and breeches by Ariat.

Photos by Shawna Simmons,
www.sasequinephotography.com



Georgina Bloomberg at her farm, Gotham South, in Wellington, Florida.



Georgina Bloomberg

IS LIVING HER BEST LIFE AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

By Britney Grover
Portraits by Shawna Simmons

In the show jumping world alone, Georgina Bloomberg's list of accomplishments is impressive — and nowhere near completed. She's both the owner of and rider on the Global Champions League team New York Empire, has a slew of top placings in grand prix and has been instrumental in U.S. victories in multiple Nations Cups. Add to that her long list of other endeavors, including founding The Rider's Closet, writing a series of horse-related novels, supporting the Humane Society and many other philanthropic organizations, adopting dozens of dogs and rescue animals all while raising a son, and it's hard not to be awestruck.

But in talking to Georgina, it's hard not to be inspired.

When the conversation is interrupted two minutes in because a dog — one of seven — is throwing up on the carpet, it's immediately evident that Georgina doesn't just advocate for rescuing animals, she lives it and loves it. She speaks quickly, like the New York City native she is, giving free rein to her passion, determination and down-to-earth personality.

The more she talks about animals, riding and her son, the easier it is to see why she was awarded the 2019 EQUUS Foundation Humanitarian Award at the US Equestrian annual meeting in January.

After listening to her talk about what she's overcome to get where she is and her dedication to making a positive impact, the world looks like a new place: a place where, no matter one's challenges, there is so much good that can be done.

NEVER GIVE UP

Though Georgina started riding when she was just 4 years old, unlike many top riders she had no natural talent. "I was a terrible rider when I was a kid but I wanted to win and had to figure out how to do that without the natural talent that some other kids had," she said. "I think that made me learn to work harder and fight for things more, and I'm so glad things didn't just come naturally or easily to me with riding. Not only did it make me learn how to be a gracious loser, something that is necessary in this sport, and appreciate when I do win, but it also taught me to work

hard, never give up and fight for things."

At her first show with her large pony, Kid You Not, the pony ring was a smaller section of a large sand ring, separated from the junior hunter ring by just a rope.

"My pony didn't get lead changes and after a jump he landed on the outside lead and I tried to force a change out of him," Georgina said. "He stuck his head down, bucked and leapt to the side, straight over the rope and into the junior hunter ring. They had to hold up the jog that was going on for their class, and I had to trot the full length of the ring to the in-gate in front of all the older kids, whom I idolized, trying not to make eye contact with any of the trainers who were staring in disbelief at me. I've never been so embarrassed in my life."

That was a small thing compared to other things Georgina has pushed through to pursue her riding career, many of which would have made others quit — and understandably. Born with a spinal compression issue called spondylolisthesis, she struggled her entire life with horrible back pain as well as an increased risk of fracturing. Despite the pain and the fear, Georgina was committed to riding.



Georgina and Crown 5 share a sweet moment.



Georgina's horses Quibelle, left, and Crown 5

She followed up her success in ponies and child rider classes by focusing on show jumping and winning the USET Talent Derby in 2001, then began training with Jimmy Doyle in 2002. Georgina has trained with Jimmy ever since their initial success, winning team gold at the FEI North American Young Riders Championships in 2002 and individual gold in 2003. In 2005 she competed in her first FEI World Cup Final and started riding — and winning — on Nations Cup teams.

Especially since Georgina had chosen a riding career over art school, she wanted to put her all into it. Her back issues became not just a problem with riding but with her quality of life: She couldn't stand for more than 20 minutes without having to sit down, and she couldn't ride more than three horses and still be able to walk the next day. In order to ride and train more and in the hope of a life without back pain, Georgina had an intensive surgery in 2011 — and she says it was one of the best things she ever did.

Now, Georgina has no back pain. Her riding career has blossomed with Nations Cup and grand prix wins around the world. She's

Georgina supports the Humane Society and many other philanthropic organizations, has adopted dozens of dogs and rescue animals and at the US Equestrian annual meeting in January was honored with the 2019 EQUUS Foundation Humanitarian Award.

focused on riding, with goals to qualify for the World Cup Finals and be a contender for the Olympics. "I have good horses and things are

going well; for me right now I'm trying to put the riding first because I know how fragile that is," she said. "I know that there are times in your career when you have great horses, you're healthy and things are going well. I know you really need to take advantage of that and put your all into it, because it can turn around and change in a moment."

FILLING NEEDS

Throughout her career, Georgina has had many times where things weren't exactly "going well" in her riding, whether it was her back or her horses or just that things didn't seem to fall into place. But she has never been one to sit back and feel sorry for herself. Instead, she throws herself into other pursuits. She's authored young adult novels, founded The Rider's Closet charitable organization, supported many causes including animal rescue and of course been raising her son, Jasper.

Though Georgina has always been careful

not to pressure Jasper into riding, loving and respecting animals is mandatory in her household. Rescue animals who live with her currently include a pig, a goat, a rooster, a pigeon, several horses, a retired New York City carriage horse, two cows, two mules, three minis, “a couple of permanent foster dogs” and Georgina’s five dogs.

“Five is my number that I can take care of the way I know they deserve to be taken care of,” she said. “I always have one or two that are older, sick or have special needs and need more time and effort put in, so five is my usual crew. If one passes away, I immediately go and seek another one — I understand people who need to take time to grieve, but for me, adopting dogs isn’t something I’m doing for myself or my own feelings: I’m doing it because there are animals out there that need me. They need me to put my emotions aside and to open up my home if I have a space for them.”

That same mentality extends to her farm: Any unused space is space that should be used to help an animal in need. “They’ve always come to us in different ways,” Georgina said. “Sometimes we look for them, sometimes people ask us to take them and sometimes they just walk onto the property. Word’s gotten out in the animal kingdom.”

The goat was hit by a car in Charleston and a friend helped Georgina save him from being put down. The pig was at a pound in New

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Jersey after Hurricane Sandy when Georgina was there volunteering. A rescue found a cow at the slaughterhouse who was about to give birth, and her son is now a year old and living on Georgina’s farm, Gotham North in North Salem, New York. “The rooster, I kid you not, actually walked onto our property and decided he was going to live here,” Georgina said. “We didn’t adopt him; he adopted us.”

Georgina surrounded by her rescue dogs at Gotham South in Wellington, Florida.





SETTING AN EXAMPLE

The same rescue group that found the cow called Georgina about a mini who, unlike most minis, could be ridden by Jasper at that time. "I asked Jasper if he wanted a pony for Christmas. He was sitting there playing with a toy monster truck and he said, 'No, I'm ok,'" Georgina laughed. "I told him, 'You're getting a pony for Christmas — you're the only kid in America who doesn't want a pony for Christmas.' So we adopted him."

Despite his momentary fascination with his car, Jasper ended up enjoying Teddy. Now, Jasper has outgrown Teddy and Teddy is semi-retired, but Jasper just may have gotten the horse bug. "Now that he's gotten a taste of it, he wants to learn how to canter and he wants to learn how to jump," Georgina said. "I don't know how long it's going to last and I don't know if he wants to show, but I like the fact that he wants to learn to ride and be around horses."

He has a stellar example. Between showing, taking care of the animals and being a mother, Georgina's life is full — she's focused on taking advantage of where she is with her riding, but works hard to make sure Jasper and the animals get the care and attention they deserve, and helps all she can along the way.

"I will never be remembered as the greatest rider or horseman and that's ok with me," she said. "I want to be remembered as someone who worked hard, did her best and made a difference in the world. If I can inspire some others to realize that they don't need to be like anyone else and that they can do good things in the world no matter what their circumstances, then I have succeeded." **SI**

Photos by Shawna Simmons, www.sasequinephotography.com

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Georgina is wearing dresses from Ella-Rue (@shopellarue). The white gown is a Swanns Point Lily Tulle Dress and the red gown an Alexis Laurel Lace Gown. Georgina is wearing shirts by Nouvelle Palm Beach (@nouvellepalmbeach).

Leather pants, leather jacket and jewelry by Fab Finds by Sarah (@fabfindsbySarah). Riding jacket by Amino, boots by Der Dau and breeches by Ariat. Wardrobe styling by Alexa Johnson and Shawna Simmons.

Photo assistant Madeline Gammill.

Hair and makeup by Gina Simone, [instagram.com/gsaute](https://www.instagram.com/gsaute).

Georgina, blending high fashion with equestrian wear, walks the grounds of Gotham South.