



24

HOURS IN THE LIFE of

Terriigan GLUCH



Pursuing the Dream

by Jennifer Wood
JUMP MEDIA



Photos by
Q2 Photography

A serendipitous meeting in 2011 set young rider Kerrigan Gluch on the path to being a top, international-level dressage athlete, thanks to a confluence of well-known names in the sport. As a 15-year-old aspiring rider from Mount

Pleasant, Michigan, Kerrigan was able to participate in the Dressage4Kids clinic with founder Lendon Gray when the program was just getting started in the Midwest. From there, Kerrigan was introduced to Kim Van Kampen of Hampton Green Farm (HGF), based in Fruitport, Michigan. Kim had a thriving breeding business for Pure Spanish Horses (PRE) and supported Spanish Olympic rider Jose Martin Daniel Dockx, who rode her stallion, Grandioso.

Not coming from an equestrian family, Kerrigan started in 4-H clubs and riding when she was 5 years old. With her paint pony "Powder," she participated in a variety of disciplines, but by the time she was a teenager she knew dressage was her calling. By working with Lendon, Kerrigan started focusing more on the competitive side of the sport.

Through Lendon and Dressage4Kids, Kerrigan participated in the prestigious Robert Dover Horsemastership Clinic in Wellington, Florida, in the winter of 2012, where she borrowed a PRE stallion donated by Kim.

"Kim was generous enough to allow the kids who couldn't bring their own horse to ride one of hers in the clinic," recalled Kerrigan. "She really liked how I rode him. That summer, when I was 15, I started at her farm in Michigan as a working student. I packed up my bags and didn't leave! That's how Kim always explains it."

What Kim saw in Kerrigan at that clinic was determination, a willingness to learn, and talent.

"I wanted to contribute to the sport of dressage in the U.S., and the youth categories were a natural fit," said Kim. "I also had young daughters coming up riding, and I got a real passion for supporting young riders. It came from getting to know Lendon, her influence in my life, and her influence in young people's lives."



Kerrigan continued as a working student at Hampton Green Farm and her role grew to earn the ride on more horses in competition. Success for Kerrigan and Hampton Green Farms horses included an individual bronze medal at the 2015 FEI North American Young Rider Championships, competing on a European tour in 2016, and riding on U25 Nations Cup teams with such horses as Vaquero HGF, Bolero CLXVII and HGF Brio.

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7 THINGS to KNOW

about the

“little round BALL of ENERGY,” Mejorano HGF

While a working student and riding in these prestigious competitions for Hampton Green Farm, Kerrigan finished her last three years of high school online and went on to graduate from Florida Atlantic University in 2020.

Kerrigan is now a full-time rider for Hampton Green Farm and works alongside head trainer Maria Lithander, Kim's daughters Nina (17) and Justine (15), barn staff, and a team of working students, as well as Corie Bannon, the HGF office manager and her fiancée.

The team was based in Wellington in the winter and Michigan in the summer, until 2021, when they moved to Goldmark Farm in Ocala, Florida,

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a beautiful Thoroughbred training facility that also houses hunters and jumpers during the winter.

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Learn more about Kerrigan Gluch's grand prix mount, Mejorano HGF, an 11-year-old grey PRE gelding that stands 16 hands high.

1 He was born at Hampton Green Farm in Michigan and is by Kim van Kampen's Olympic horse Grandioso III.

2 His current rider, Kerrigan Gluch, started him as a 3 year old and was the first person to sit on him. “I basically got him to walk, trot, canter on the lunge line and that was it. I didn't get a whole lot of time with him,” said Kerrigan. “Then, he went to Europe. I felt like there was a lot of power in there. He has always had a very loud personality. That was there from day one. He's super talented and insanely athletic.”

3 When Mejorano returned to the U.S., he had to adjust to Kerrigan and her “short legs.” She noted, “Kim's previous rider, Danny, was pretty tall, so Mejorano was just used to longer legs. It took a moment for him to feel what I was doing and to trust me. Trusting a new person when you're used to another person your entire life takes some time.”

4 He has a “real talent” for piaffe and passage movements. “I think, naturally, he has a very expressive front end. To get that sort of expression with a good hind leg is really special,” said Kerrigan.

5 He has a “playful angry face.” Kerrigan laughed, “He wants you to touch him, but his ears are pinned at the same time. But then you walk away from him, and he gets very upset when you walk away from him.”

6 Turnout time is his fave, “He loves to be outside, and he'll stay out there all day if you let him!” said Kerrigan.

7 He and Kerrigan work with Olympic team bronze medalist Charlotte Bredahl. Kim said, “Charlotte has trained Kerrigan to present and ride the horse correctly in a frame that the judges recognize as classical and correct. That picture is getting better and better all the time.”



Kerrigan and the team at Hampton Green Farm have set high goals of being on a European tour again, competing on a Nations Cup team and representing the U.S. at the highest levels. In the past two years at WEC, Kerrigan and her top mount Mejorano (see our sidebar for more information!), have had six top 3 finishes in CDI Grand Prix competition, including second place in the Grand Prix Freestyle in September 2022.



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While Kerrigan noted she’s been told she is “too serious for her age,” her sense of maturity and the responsibilities that Kim has given her have helped her advance quickly in a sport that takes total dedication.

For Kim, that mindset is something that she saw in Kerrigan from the beginning and it has translated to the show arena.

“When she goes in the ring, she’s focused, and if trouble happens – which it sometimes does when you’re riding a live animal – she keeps her head, and she holds it together,” noted Kim. “She had that from the time she was 15 years old. She’s always had the choice to do what she wants, and I’m



thrilled that she’s staying with me and showing the PRE breed as well as she does. She’s such a good spokesman for it. We need to be a farm that makes horses to the FEI level and does it correctly.”

The “super” relationship between Kim and Kerrigan extends to the rest of their barn family. “We’re very lucky that we have a very good team,” said Kim. Kerrigan added, “Everyone is very supportive of one another. We’re all here for everyone’s success whether it be at Juniors, Young Riders, U25, or senior level, which I think is really special. To have the group of people and the owner, of course, being 100% behind that type of atmosphere here is one of the biggest keys to our success thus far.

“I’m really grateful,” Kerrigan continued. “I’m super close with Kim and her family. I think it’s an incredible situation, and I’m very lucky.”

*Special thanks to Goldmark Farm for hosting our beautiful photo shoot! ☺