

A MAGICAL YEAR

In a two-part story, **GEORGINA BLOOMBERG** and her son, **JASPER**, journey to remote locations to share the extreme wonders of nature and return to **WELLINGTON, FLORIDA**, to welcome a new member into their family.

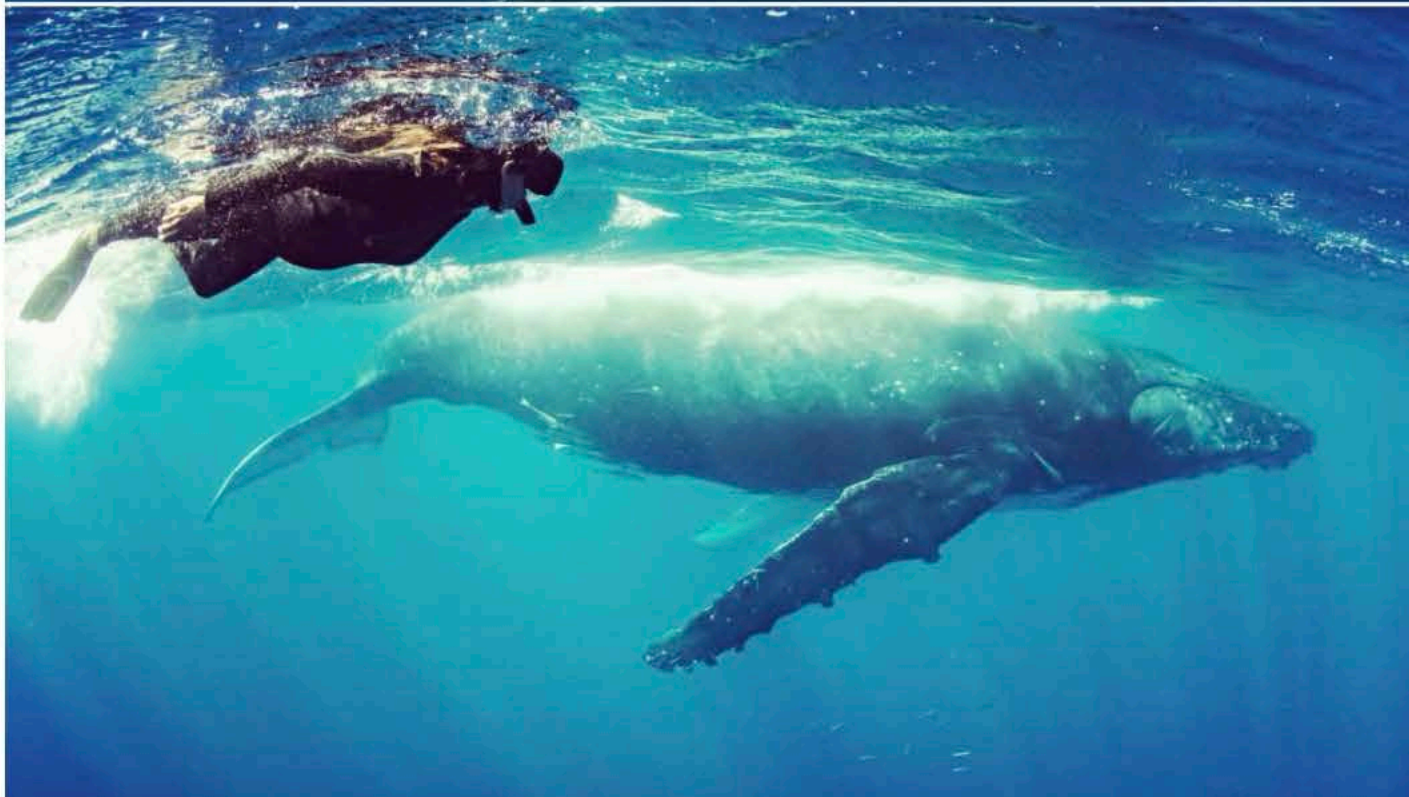
BY **STEPHANIE PETERS** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **GEORGE KAMPER**
TRAVEL PHOTOS | COURTESY **GEORGINA BLOOMBERG**



Jasper on Georgina's shoulders on the expansive salt flats in Uyuni, Bolivia.

ALTHOUGH I AM NOT ONE to bandy about mathematical peculiarities, it's worth highlighting that this, Equestrian Living's third interview with Georgina Bloomberg, published six years after our second, which published six years after our first. To put it simply, unknowingly, we have checked in with Georgina at precisely six-year intervals, affording us a unique window into her ever-evolving journey of life.

Now 41 years old with two children, Jasper, 10, and Sebastian, approaching 1, Georgina has evolved in remarkable ways in this last six-year span, just as she had on our prior visit. Never one to rest on her laurels or be deterred by a demanding schedule, Georgina's animal advocacy and environmental causes, among countless other charitable projects, continue to expand significantly in scale and focus. And the horses? They remain an integral part of her life.



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Our interest in meeting with Georgina was twofold. She had recently welcomed her second child into the family and was enjoying a relaxed winter competition season at her Wellington, Florida, home. However, prior to the birth of her new baby, she and Jasper embarked on two extraordinary journeys, forging indelible bonds through shared experiences that were visually impactful and profoundly inspiring.

A YEAR OF UNPARALLELED TRAVEL AND DISCOVERY

During a recorded session of our two-part interview, Georgina, the doyenne of multi-tasking, took me on a virtual, rigorous dog walk as she efficiently huffed and puffed her responses to my questions, simultaneously building stamina and racking up her step count.

Her responses were brimming with enthusiasm and reflection. Plans for her year away from the rigors of training and showing during her pregnancy with Sebastian in 2023 extended beyond the expectant addition to her family to how she could maximize the time for herself and Jasper.



I really love doing, especially with him, and trying to see the world. Sort of randomly we came up with the idea of going to Antarctica and traveling a little bit [in South America] on the way down there. I thought, “What better way to be able to bring in 40 than being somewhere that I’ve never seen and be able to check off the last continent on my list.”

Georgina has traveled extensively through Europe, particularly for horse shows, for 20-plus years, but she admits to venturing off the beaten path a

little. “One of my favorite things about riding is that you don’t necessarily just travel to Paris, London, and Stockholm, but you get to go to some smaller towns that are interesting and just as beautiful and places that I might never have gone to,” she says.

Antarctica was a life-changing trip for her, not just for its beauty but also because it reflects the importance of learning about climate change and the environment. “To see the impact of it down there and how important the place is for the rest of the world, and how the [researchers] can gauge climate change and measure the effects on the environment was interesting for me,

Above: Jasper on the lookout for whales prevalent in the deep waters of Tonga. **Opposite, top:** Jasper at ease while swimming side by side with mother whales and their calves. **Below:** Georgina joins Jasper in the unforgettable experience of jumping off the side of a boat into water thousands of feet deep to swim alongside Jasper and the whales.

Her time away from the show ring also coincided with her 40th birthday. She wanted to use the time to do something special and celebrate in a memorable way. “Instead of having a party, I wanted to do something with Jasper that we would both remember,” she muses. “Travel is something that

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but especially impactful for Jasper. It was beneficial to see all these amazing things and to learn about the facts,” Georgina explains.

“I think it’s important for kids to see it to be able to care about it,” she adds. “For example, I’m a huge animal lover, and people always say, ‘Oh, you have to be against zoos and aquariums and things like that.’ I disagree because unless kids see things, they won’t care about them. You can’t expect kids to care about animals if they never get exposure to them or see them. I think for Jasper to be able to go and see things and to not just hear about why you should do something but to think about it and care about it himself was extremely important to me.”

Eight months after their trip to South America and Antarctica, Georgina and Jasper joined her sister and niece on a journey to Tonga, an archipelago of more than 35 islands in the South Pacific Ocean. It was during the period when the whales travel from Antarctica to the deep waters of Tonga to give birth and raise their young for a year before returning.

“It was kind of why Tonga was an appealing trip for us; because Jasper

Above: Georgina and Jasper stop in South America to take in the landscape en route to Antarctica. **Opposite,** Georgina celebrates reaching her seventh continent objective. Learning about and seeing firsthand the impact of climate change on the environment was a life-changing experience for both her and Jasper.

had been really interested in whales in Antarctica,” Georgina notes. Only One, a marine-life-focused organization based in Tonga’s volcanic islands, invited them to see their work and to demonstrate how they protect the whales from environmental change and human predators. “I was hesitant to go because I was seven months pregnant and thought it was a

really bad idea, but I decided I wanted to take that risk because I didn’t want Jasper to miss out on it.” So, after a 24-hour trip to get there, Georgina found herself jumping off the side of a boat into narrow strips of water thousands of feet deep to swim with the whales and their calves. And they did this for five days.

“I’ll never forget jumping into the water and opening my eyes,” she exclaims. “I’m looking at Jasper, and he’s basically motioning under the water to say, ‘whale,’ ‘whale,’ ‘whale.’ Well, looking to my right and seeing a whale was one of those

things that I’ll never forget. These days, we watch a lot of *National Geographic* shows, and it took a moment to realize this isn’t a TV screen; this is real!” Georgina described it as one of the most amazing experiences; to see mother whales and their babies swimming just a few feet away, and for Jasper to gain a greater knowledge and first-hand respect for the oceans.

“It was such an amazing bonding experience for us, especially because it was right before he was going to become a big brother and some attention was going to be taken away from him,” she reflects. “It was amazing to have a trip where we





Georgina, Jasper, and new baby Sebastian relaxing at their Wellington, Florida, home. Joining the family is Clyde, a rescue from rural Georgia who Georgina met while doing rescue work for Animal Aid.

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got to spend a lot of time with each other and to do something memorable together. But it was also a chance to push me out of my comfort zone. I'm so glad that we got to do it at a time when I didn't have to prioritize horse shows, and I could take that time away to do something different and something I'll remember much more than any win I'm ever going to get."

Her trips to Antarctica and Tonga heightened Georgina's awareness of environmental issues. She admits it's very easy to get comfortable in the horse show bubble, but after taking a step away from that and taking a trip to Antarctica, you care about the environment more, and become more passionate about it. She admitted transitioning back into the "real world" was challenging.

"How do you go back to South Florida, ordering dinner on the phone and picking it up in Styrofoam take-out containers?" she asks metaphorically. "It's difficult to go back to the real world, but obviously, you have to. The best thing you can do is go back and try to make a difference."

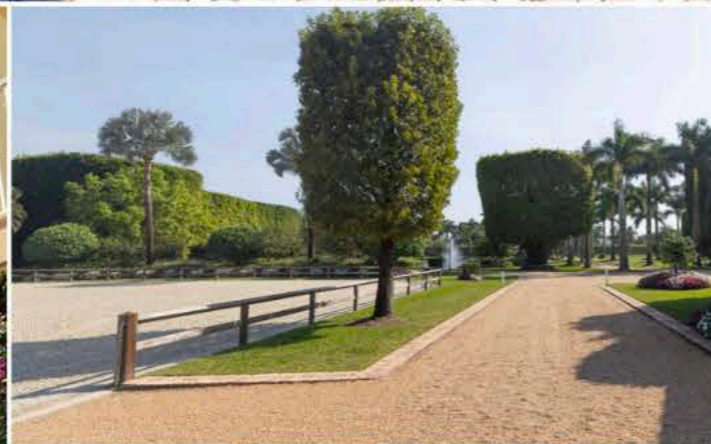
She made small inroads at reducing the use of plastics at Wellington International during the Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) 2024 season. "I've spoken to some great people at WEF who want to make a difference and who want to help make changes. We've been working on generating some great ideas, and everybody's on board with doing it," she says. "That's one of my big projects for the summer. To help them come up with ways that we can change WEF and be more sustainable as much as we possibly can."

A QUIET WINTER COMPETITION SEASON

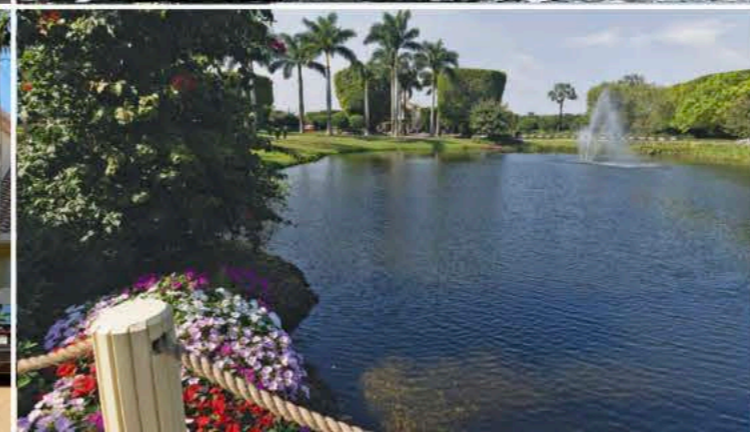
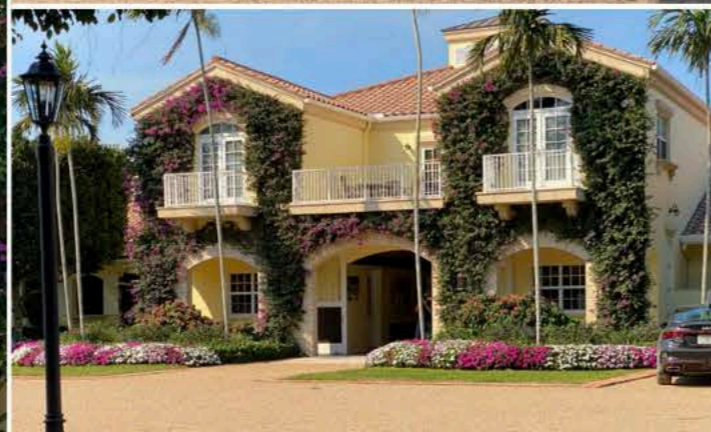
We also had a chance to visit Georgina at her Wellington, Florida, home shortly after having Sebastian. Synonymous with visiting the world-class champion show jumper, a slew of rescue and foster dogs of varying shapes and sizes met us with boundless fervor. Friendly and well-behaved, they exuded the comfort of knowing they had hit the motherlode of good fortune.

We migrated towards the buttery yellow barn ablaze with bougainvillea and well-tended impatiens. With Georgina's vision and input, she and the late Denis Quinlan of Tara Management

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Clockwise, from opposite page top: The quiet entrance to the property's home; the 16-stall yellow barn is wrapped in bougainvillea and surrounded by mature plantings and vivid flowers; the jumping ring a few trots from the barn; the redesigned pond; front views of the barn; generous paths wend around the property.







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built the 16-stall structure from the ground up. "I wanted something that was really close to the horse show but that also felt private," says Georgina. "The barn in Florida is very different than our farm in [North Salem,] New York. In New York, I kind of wanted a sanctuary and to be able to get away from the horse shows and crowds.

"In Wellington, it's very different. Every week is a horse show week. Pretty much our entire life down there is about horse shows. I actually love walking around the horse show on the day off, and I enjoy the fact that I can hear the announcing in the pony ring when I'm riding on the weekends, yet it still feels quite separate. The best thing for me now with being a mom is the proximity to the show. I can go and show in an 8 a.m. class and still have time to take Jasper to school. Or, if I have a break between classes, I can pop home and see the baby for an hour. I can actually do it all," she admits.

Georgina also plied her creative skills with Hadden Landscape to create the property's lush landscape populated with gazebos, towering trees and hedges, and a grand pond. Aside from the staggering beauty, the result is an uncanny sensation



PHOTO: SHEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Opposite: Georgina enjoys a shady spot in one of the Wellington property's gazebos.

Above: Jasper on Rico Suave celebrating a great competition and reaching their all-time high score at Old Salem Farm during the 2024 Spring Show Series.

of being far removed from the din of the horse show located merely steps away.

FAMILY MATTERS

Back on *terra firma*, Jasper embraces his role as older brother with wild abandon. The natural athlete and ribboned pony rider is smitten with Sebastian and loves spending time with him. "He loves being around him," Georgina laughs. "He tries to sleep in his crib, and he waits

anxiously for Sebastian to wake up in the morning. He's incredibly sweet."

Jasper excels at riding. "In the beginning, I was concerned that he was just doing it because he thought that I wanted him to, but I can see he really loves the sport," Georgina smiles. "That's nice for me because it obviously means that we get to share that, and it gives us more time together and makes my life easier."

Georgina is easing her way back into showing but being realistic about it and avoiding setting end-of-year goals. She hasn't done

that for the last couple of years, but she foresees setting those types of objectives again sometime in the future. "I don't want to set a goal without really trying to accomplish it," she explains. "I love the riding and working hard at it, and I love when it goes well, but for me, it's just not my priority right now."

Those who know Georgina are aware of her unwavering focus and commitment to numerous causes. Pondering whether she could assume more responsibilities, spearhead challenging initiatives, or return to world-class competition would be a futile endeavor. If our six-year interview tradition persists, we can expect to find out in 2030. 