



W I N T E R E Q U E S T R I A N F E S T I V A L

WEEKLY WIRE

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CATCH UP WITH DOUG PAYNE

MEET PALM BEACH EQUINE
CLINIC'S DR. CHRIS ELLIOT

BEHIND THE CAUSE:
GREAT CHARITY CHALLENGE
NON-PROFIT SPOTLIGHT ON
RWB EQUESTRIAN





“We are here to protect the horses; by protecting the horses, we also protect the sport.”

~ Dr. Elliot

BEYOND THE SHOW RING:

Meet Palm Beach Equine Clinic's Dr. Christopher Elliott

Dr. Christopher Elliott has established an impressive resumé as an equine veterinarian. From graduating with first-class honors from the Queensland School of Veterinary Science in 2007 to becoming board-certified in Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, his passion for equine wellness knows no bounds.

Currently residing as a permanent veterinarian at the Palm Beach Equine Clinic and standing as the Veterinary Services Manager for the Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI) at Wellington International, the Australian native compliments the embrace of horse sport of all levels and disciplines within the Wellington equestrian community.

When asked how he found his path to equine veterinary studies, Dr. Elliott

responded, “Like most guys, I had illusions of grandeur that I was going to be playing cricket or rugby for Australia. As I got older, I decided I needed to knuckle down on my studies and veterinary medicine made sense. Since I was about 15, there was nothing else I could possibly imagine I wanted to do. My background in horses from my father’s side and my love of animals from my mother’s side led me to veterinary medicine as the perfect career and lifestyle choice for me.”

In the midst of traveling the world as an FEI vet—Dr. Elliott made his first visit to Wellington’s own Palm Beach Equine Clinic in 2012. He stepped on the grounds during the height of the busy winter season and was captivated.

“My first time at Palm Beach Equine Clinic was a fantastic learning experience and it opened my eyes to the opportunities that working in America could offer,” explained Dr. Elliott. “I had never seen anything like the concentration of elite-level horses and high-class equestrian facilities like in Wellington before. I was keen to return.”

Dr. Elliott has worked three Olympics to date, including 2024’s Paris Games. It was his time spent at the 2016 Rio Olympic Paralympics, however, that was particularly impactful. It was there that he met his now-wife and American dressage rider Kjresten Lance. After pursuing their careers around the globe, she and Dr. Elliott decided to make Wellington their



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permanent residence in 2022.

Coming full circle, 10 years after his initial visit in 2012, Dr. Elliott became a part of the Palm Beach Equine Clinic team and began his role as the Veterinary Services Manager for Wellington International's Winter Equestrian and Adequan® Global Dressage Festivals (WEF and AGDF) at the start of the 2023 season.

"My role as the veterinary services manager is to be that mix between the clinical veterinarians and the regulatory veterinarians," said Dr. Elliott. "You are in the middle. As the veterinary services manager, the name suggests you manage all aspects of the veterinary services. Our number-one priority, whether it be the clinical side or the regulatory side of FEI is horse welfare. We as veterinarians need to uphold the rules, the ethics, and the morals to support these horses through their competitive career, but making sure that their health and welfare comes first."

Dr. Elliott strives to ensure the welfare of every animal in the community, not only through the enactment of his own knowledge but also by leading groups of newer and aspiring veterinarians through the clinical and competitive sides of the job.

"Currently at our clinic, we have American students, Danish students, Australian students, and Irish students all learning from us," said Dr. Elliott. "The number one thing that young vets need to learn is the basics. You've got to build the basics before you can get complicated and follow the advice of those senior veterinarians that have come before you. Follow in their footsteps and learn from them."

Whether it's show jumping or dressage, Dr. Elliott can easily be found ringside at AGDF's 'Friday Night Stars' and WEF's 'Saturday Night Lights', usually with a student learning by his side. Outside of his ringside responsibilities, Dr. Elliott can be found coordinating weekly FEI

arrival exams and horse inspections while maintaining his regular clinical work as a board certified specialist in equine sports medicine and rehabilitation, whilst still finding time to seek out a few travel adventures with Kjersten.

Most of Dr. Elliott's work as a Sports Medicine specialist revolves around orthopedic cases and trying to help horses either prevent, overcome or recuperate from injuries. After working in over 20 countries, Dr. Elliott has come to understand the equestrian sport on a global scale and how it can be shaped to consistently prioritize the health of the horse.

"Regardless of the competition level, each combination of horse and rider has specific aspirations, and it gives me great satisfaction to help achieve those goals," concluded Dr. Elliott. "Whether it be in the pony ring, at the grand prix level, or Olympic level, they all pose their unique challenges and are equally enjoyable."

