



Isabelle Luxmoore and Hill Cottage Jazmira competing at the 2022 Victorian Dressage Festival. © Equisoul Photography.

TWO STEPS AT A TIME FOR ISABELLE

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Isabelle Luxmoore is the latest young rider to enter the Australian Big Tour ranks. Runner-up in both the Big Tour and Medium Tour championships at the Victorian Dressage Festival, she's looking forward to the year ahead.



*Isabelle and Hill Cottage Jazmira were the reserve champion Big Tour combination at the 2022 Victorian Dressage Festival.
© Equisoul Photography.*

Young riders have certainly made an impression on the Australian Big Tour circuit recently, and last month's Victorian Dressage Festival at Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre was no exception. The latest young rider to step up the levels with success is 20-year-old Isabelle Luxmoore, who was runner-up in both the Big Tour and Medium Tour championships.

Partnered with Hill Cottage Jazmira, aka Jasmine, Izzy completed her first Big Tour Championship, finishing third in the Inter II with 63.824%, sixth in the Grand Prix with 62.935%, and sixth in the Grand Prix Freestyle with 67.820% to be named overall Reserve Champion. In the Medium Tour, she rode her long-time partner Linus WK to third in the Inter A with 64.657%, second in the Inter B with 65%, and second in the Inter A/B Freestyle with 64.258%, again for Reserve Champion.

"They performed really well, and I was really pleased with them," says Izzy of the two horses. "Of course, there's always room for improvement. But I was really happy to see how much they've progressed over the year, and their improvements were quite promising."

Complete with Christmas décor and a crowd to keep combinations on their toes, the Victorian Dressage Festival provided a very different atmosphere to what competitors usually face at Australian competitions. While this added to the challenge, there were no complaints from Izzy: “The arena looked absolutely fabulous. It's really cool, especially in the Grand Prix, to have an audience watching the test and applauding you at the end. That always feels quite nice. It was the first time I've done the Grand Prix at the Dressage Festival; it was really thrilling.

“It was a real accomplishment to get Hill Cottage Jazmira to produce some good work in an environment like that. She's a little bit of a princess, but I was really happy to see that she settled into it. And as I did test after test, she became more comfortable with everything. Linus is always a real gentleman in those environments, he's not too worried about them, so he took it all his stride. We were also lucky to have the new surface on the arena, which was super. And you know, it's nice, especially with the elements at the moment and unpredictable weather, to be able to compete indoors!”

THE DRESSAGE BUG

“As a kid, my parents were very adamant that my brother and I competed in all different disciplines,” explains Izzy of her childhood in the saddle. “We did Pony Club and therefore all the disciplines like mounted games, eventing, dressage, show jumping... we did lots of different things and that helped shape us as riders.”

Izzy says that during high school she followed her father, veterinarian and five-star eventer Rohan Luxmoore, into the discipline of eventing. “I was on the Australian interschool team for eventing, so I did plenty of it, but I always really loved the dressage – not that I didn't love eventing – but I always felt drawn to dressage. My mum, Kate, is a former Grand Prix dressage rider, so that probably influenced me a little bit. She trained her own horse, Timbertop, all the way from a foal to Grand Prix. I always found that quite impressive. I'm very lucky to have two parents that have competed at the top of their respective disciplines!”

It wasn't just her parents that contributed to Izzy's love of dressage. “Both of my godparents, Jason James and Helen McDonald, are dressage riders. At the Victorian Dressage Festival, James was the Inter I winner (on Florino 48 with 74.118%), a horse he trained himself. Helen's also very involved in the dressage community, so both of them were influential in me being drawn to the sport. And Justine Greer (who was also highly successful at the Victorian Dressage Festival, with placings and all scores over 70% across the three Small Tour classes with Yarramee Fonzie) has always helped us with our horses over the years, and she's been a great mentor for me, I've always found her quite inspiring.”

However, as Izzy explains, the key instigators in igniting her love of dressage were a pony named Rivington Samson, and Grand Prix dressage rider and trainer Charlotte Pedersen. “I had a pony, Rivington Samson – he's very old now, but he's still with us – who I started riding when I was about eight and he was a nice dressage pony. He jumped too, I did everything on him, but he was a very nice dressage pony. It was around that time that I started having lessons with Charlotte. I think that with the lessons and a pony that knew what he was doing, I got a taste of proper dressage at a young age and I really enjoyed it.”

Izzy has been training with Charlotte for 12 years and credits her as the biggest influence on her dressage career. “I think that having a coach that is supportive but also tough on you is important, and I'm very lucky with that. I really respect that she's a great trainer, and that's half the thing about dressage. It's one thing to ride a trained dressage horse, but to learn how to actually train a horse up the levels is another thing.”

ALONG CAME LINUS



Isabelle and Linus WK were the reserve champion Medium Tour combination at the 2022 Victorian Dressage Festival.
© Angie Rickard Photography.

Izzy explains that her Medium Tour horse, Linus WK, came into her life six years ago. “We just heard about him through word of mouth, he was never properly advertised. I had a sit on him and just adored him; the rest is history. He hadn't done much and hadn't really competed when we got him, and so, as we've both grown up, we've been learning together. I've been training him up with the expertise of my coach and my parents. He's been trained up all the way to the Medium Tour now, and he's nearly ready for an Inter II or Grand Prix start; in the next 12 months he'll be doing that.”

Although now 18, the Hanoverian gelding – by Lauries Crusador xx out of a Davignon I mare – still very much loves his work and heading out to competitions. “He loves it,” says Izzy. “You pull out the truck and he comes to the gate and he wants to go. He loves being a part of it, so that's really nice.

“He's a very, very happy individual. When you buy a horse, you don't know what their temperament's going to be like, especially a horse like him that wasn't really trained. But we got extremely lucky with him, he's a great mix, he's nice and sensitive but he's also really willing and trusting. He's been a really fun horse to train up the grades and compete on through interschool classes, and now into the open levels.”

BIG TOUR BECKONS

Riding her first Big Tour Championship at the Victorian Dressage Festival with 15-year-old Jasmine was a career milestone for Izzy. “She's actually owned by Charlotte, and it's quite a funny story because Jasmine was actually bred by my dad. He's been coached by Charlotte for a very long time too. Back in about 2007, Charlotte decided that she wanted to put her mare, Landsborough Savant, in foal to Jazz. Dad did that all for her and we actually kept the mare while she was in foal; Jasmine was born at our house. And then Charlotte has had her for her whole life and trained her up the grades. She was a tricky horse to train; very talented, but definitely tricky. But as you know, Charlotte's very talented and everything goes to Grand Prix for her!

“At the end of 2021, Linus got injured and I didn't have a horse of my own to ride, and so Charlotte was very kind to offer me the ride on Jasmine for the Australian Youth Championships in January last year. She did the Medium Tour there and had a win, and so after that we thought we might as well keep going! It's been nearly a year now and Charlotte was very happy with the arrangement and I'm very happy to ride her, so it's worked out really well.

“She's taken me to my first Grand Prix test and now my first Big Tour Championship. It's not every day you get to sit on a horse like her and I'm very, very grateful to Charlotte for giving me that opportunity.”

BARASTOC BRINGS OUT THE BEST

"Barastoc has sponsored our family for the last seven or eight years now," explains Izzy. "They have been wonderful. All of our horses have definitely benefited from their support. The main feed we use is [Calm Performer](#). It seems to be just the right formula to meet their nutritional needs and keep them happy without them getting too hot! We also supplement their feeds with [Barastoc Groom](#), which is great for their coats; they all look amazing all year round, even through the winter.

"My FEI horses – they're competing at the top level, they work very hard – also get fed [Barastoc Command](#), which is an oat-free muesli feed. With the amount of energy they're burning and with how much work they're doing, I find that Command keeps them fresh and feeling really well. Having the horses fed well and looking great is really important for high-performance equestrian horses.... Linus is 18 and he's probably looking and feeling the best he ever has!"

SUMMER BREAK



*Isabelle riding her father's young event horse, Neat N Tidy.
Image supplied.*

Having just completed her second year in science at Melbourne University, Izzy is looking forward to more time riding at home over summer in the Macedon Ranges. With her father tied up with breeding season commitments at a nearby racehorse stud, she says she'll steal a few of his young eventers to ride. "The one I'm riding the most is probably Neat N Tidy, which is a horse that we bred. He's out of a mare that I rode when I was a young teen. He won the eventing Champion of Champions at Dressage & Jumping with the Stars last year. I've dabbled a bit in the dressage arena with him, and so I'm riding him a lot at the moment and hoping to take him to a few comps this month. I really adore him; if I had the time, I would steal him completely! And I have one other, a three-year-old filly who's getting broken in at the moment. So, between them all I have my hands full!"

Of course, Izzy's summer break also involves riding Linus and Jasmine. "This year, I would like to compete in some Under-25 Grand Prix Championships with Jasmine. I feel like that would be enjoyable, perhaps to even go interstate and compete. When I was 12 or 13, those Under-25 classes were lucky to get one or two competitors... now there are at least half a dozen and they're all amazing quality combinations. It's really competitive and the quality has definitely come a long way. Having an Inter II start or Grand Prix start on Linus would be great too; that's a goal of mine."

However, Izzy's main aim this year is to simply enjoy her riding. "At the moment, this is my hobby, not necessarily my profession, so it is about enjoying it... enjoying the journey, having fun with the horses, my friends, all of that. Just having a good time and learning. So yeah, that's probably what I'll set out to do in 2023."