

Young Guns

Justine Cha

Justine Cha
Edmonton, Alberta
Texas
Van de Sar

I am fortunate to be riding two amazing horses.

Texas, or as we sometimes call him, Sexi Texi. He's an 11-year-old gelding who loves to cuddle, trail ride and beg for treats. He likes to be the centre of attention and has a very playful demeanour.

Van de Sar, or Three as we call him in the barn, is a 13-year-old gelding. He loves his job and lets you know he's proud of himself often by squealing with excitement before a round and occasionally after.

I have been training with Gareth Graves from Highbury Show Stables for two years now. He has a great program that I've really been able to grow and flourish in as a rider.

As a child growing up, I always went to Spruce Meadows and always thought it would be such an incredible thing to do the sport, but I never really thought it was possible for me until I went to Thermal, my first A circuit horse show. I had never shown above 2'6," and I remember thinking, wow, if I could jump 3', that would be incredible. My trainer at the time, Lynn



Macyk, opened my eyes to see the sport's opportunities and potential.

Honestly, there are so many riders that inspire me. I love to watch Margie Engle ride as she is petite like me (I'm only 5ft), but she is so strong in her position. Beezie Madden is also a huge inspiration as I think her horsemanship is second to none.

My favourite quote since I was about 14 has been: "Dreams don't work unless you do." -

John Maxwell.

One time I had a less than ideal day. Gareth told me that every time I replayed what I did wrong, I had to say "delete" and focus on the parts I did well. That has helped me not dwell on what mistakes I made but learn from them.

I love to counter canter. I spend almost as much time in the counter canter as I do the proper lead. It helps me get their bodies where I want them, especially since I am not very big. I also like to practice my eye over poles in the arena. I don't usually set poles, but if there are guide rails in the area or something, I like to practice getting to them without changing my canter or doing a tight rollback to them.