

Photo Credit Vanessa Paterson

As everyone who knows him will attest, Jim Ifko is an incredibly humble, friendly and approachable person with an undeniable love and passion for show jumping.

Jim has been riding for 35 years after beginning at the age of 13. "It became the only thing that I could think about!" Jim beamed. Prior to that, he and his brother (fellow horseman, Joe) played baseball, and the only one that rode horses was their sister. Jim's father started from scratch and



built a house and a stable on property that was completely barren – and that's how it all began.

Though Jim's father was not a rider, he always had an interest in horses, including breeding them. The breeding began with American Saddlebred horses, which benefited Jim greatly because one named Golden Appointment became his first jumping horse. Both Jim and Joe were awarded scholarships to ride at Spruce Meadows and their serious training began there. They were fortunate to train alongside Albert Kley and Jonathan

# Red Hot Jim Blazing Wins

Vanessa P

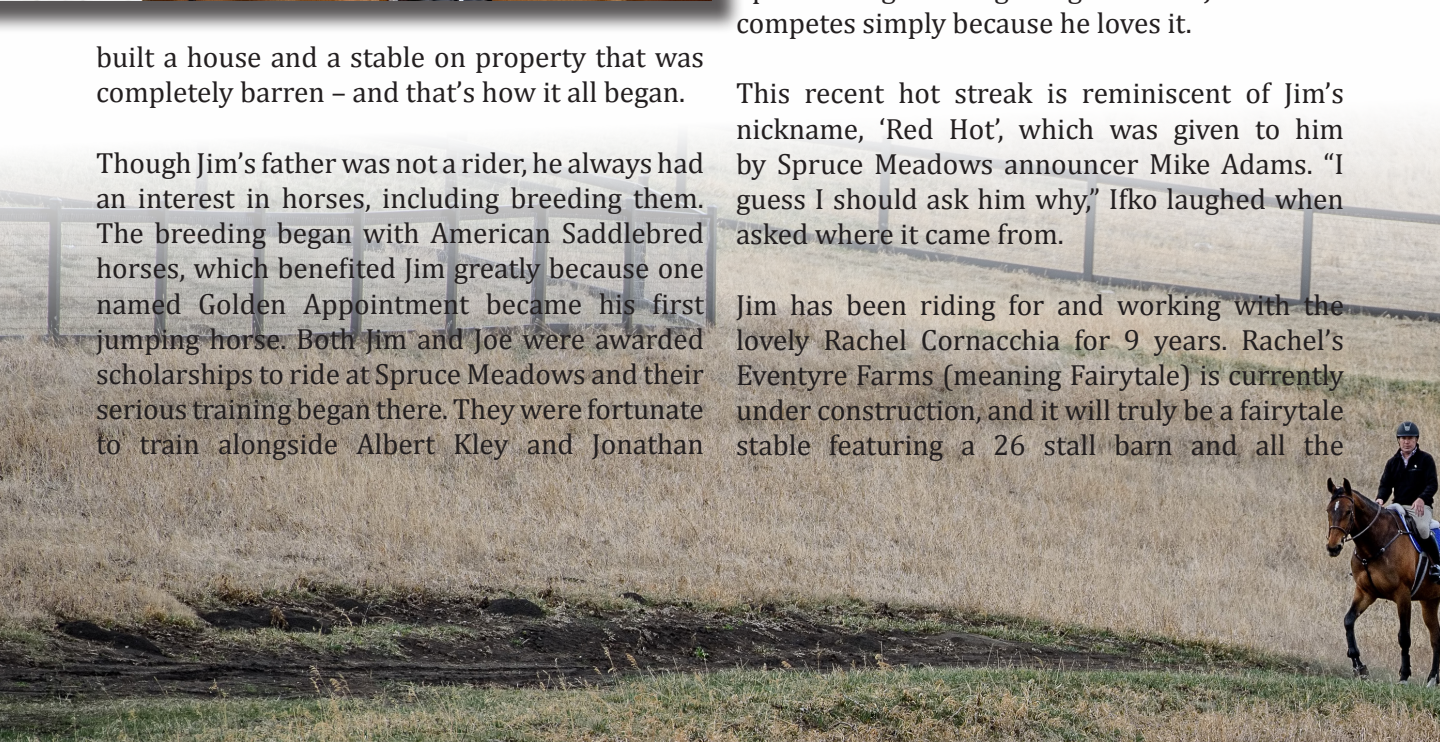
Asselin, as well as many other fantastic, passionate people. Pan American Games gold medalist and Canadian Team member, Norma Meyers, taught their first jumping lesson.

Jim's success over the years is no secret, and he very recently returned from the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair where he was a three-time Open Division winner, taking home the Manitoba Cup, the ATCO Cup, and the MTS Cup Grand Prix. Jim has won many

Grand Prix events over the years and it is obvious upon talking to and getting to know Jim that he competes simply because he loves it.

This recent hot streak is reminiscent of Jim's nickname, 'Red Hot', which was given to him by Spruce Meadows announcer Mike Adams. "I guess I should ask him why," Ifko laughed when asked where it came from.

Jim has been riding for and working with the lovely Rachel Cornacchia for 9 years. Rachel's Eventyre Farms (meaning Fairytale) is currently under construction, and it will truly be a fairytale stable featuring a 26 stall barn and all the





# Jimmy Ifko's Winning Streak

Paterson



amenities necessary to operate a successful breeding and training program. They are hoping to breed eight foals per year and build from there. The goal will be to sell a few young horses and keep a few for training and development along the way. Since it is getting harder to get great horses affordably from Europe, Rachel and Jim's vision is to breed and develop horses so that people in Western Canada have the opportunity to own

quality horses.

Three horses make up Jim's current string of competition horses: Un Diamant des Forets, an 8 year old Selle Francais stallion; Ultrago d'Amy, an 8 year old Selle Francais mare; and Vera de la Roque, a 7 year old Selle Francais mare. These three horses all came over from France in the fall of 2015, and Un Diamant des Forets has really stepped up as the latest winner at the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair. Jim's hope is that all three will develop into Grand Prix level horses.

When asked about his business, Jim shared that a big part of it is working hard and having a



good work ethic. "If you are honest and can do an honest day's work, people will notice that and it opens the doors for opportunities. You need to stick with it through thick and thin."

Jim's advice to young riders who are starting their journey as horse people is to work hard and to do the best job possible every time on a horse. He laughed when he said, "falling off is the hardest part, but getting back on is the best motivation." Rachel appreciates Jim's calm and thoughtful demeanor as well. She added that Jim is always reminding her to "focus on the job at hand" and "don't let it frustrate you", which always eases her in high-tension moments.

People like Jim Ifko – a talented, compassionate and kind rider – are something to aspire to, and ABSJ looks forward to the success of the whole Eventyre Farm team.

