



## Juergen; Why you should know who he is

Holly Grayton

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I'm writing about the man known throughout the show jumping community simply as 'Juergen' for a few reasons:

- 1) He is a show jumping legend;
- 2) He has recently been employed by Attaché Stables of Calgary;
- 3) Although born in Germany he's earned status as an Albertan (reasons why will be explained below).

For those who don't know Juergen, you may not be alone – but you should be. He is the magic behind the scenes of many famous partnerships, including none other than Eric Lamaze and Hickstead. When Juergen talks, people listen... but they have to listen closely because he isn't brash, he's not a self-promoter and you won't find him yelling across arenas to get noticed. His style is subtle, his work is in the finer points and a visible difference is noticeable in his students.

In recent weeks Juergen has been coaching at Spruce Meadows and Thunderbird, and what I've noticed is his attention to detail: how a curb chain is done up, or how a boot is sitting. Each time he ever so thoughtfully makes his adjustments he then watches for the small changes in the horses.

Jenna Thompson of Attaché Stables is his most recent protégé, and in addition to some significant changes to her own riding, she says, "He is a really hard worker and doesn't like to settle for just 'good enough.' He has helped to push me to expect more from myself and my horses."

Juergen is an Albertan for a few reasons, mostly because of how proudly he wears his Oilers hat everyday, everywhere he goes... you have to be a truly faithful Edmontonian to have worn that hat for as long as he has been wearing it! Originally, he and his family moved from Germany to Sherwood Park, at 14, speaking not more than a word of English he had to quickly adapt while attending Brentwood's boarding school after which he attended none other than Olds College – another Albertan right of passage. He even tried on bull riding for size for a while!

But back to the part about being a legend. His flatwork fundamentals seem to start and end with straightness. For show jumping it's the most important element, as this article by the extraordinary Carley Sparks details: <https://horsenetwork.com/2015/05/overlooked-fundamental-flat-training/>

And when I asked him the second most important part of show jumping, we somehow circled back to straightness again. The horses should "go and slow" when they are told, and that the most common mistake he sees is when riders use too much inside rein, "So that really brings us back to straightness," he laughs.

Over the years he has worked for numerous professionals at the top of the sport, in he travels with just a tack trunk and a bit box, ready to be based wherever the job takes him.



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What struck me most after I met him and did some follow up research is his total lack of ego. In fact when I Google image-searched for him almost no photos of him came up! Mostly people he has been associated with. It doesn't seem to matter who you are – amateur, professional, or making a bid for the Olympics – he is the same. He believes in the same fundamentals for all levels, he invests himself wholly in the project at hand. There are not many people that you can speak with that you feel like you have their entire attention like you do when you speak with Juergen.

You may wonder who influences him? He says quite simply, "Everyone." Watch the warm up ring, watch what people are doing, what's working and what isn't. Never stop watching and learning. Then add the things that resonate for you to your program.