

Alicia Gadban

2021 Canadian Champion

Holly Grayton

Alicia Gadban-Lewis made an international splash this year in Europe with trainer and mentor Tiffany Foster. Since returning she really rose to the occasion when she was crowned the 2021 Canadian Show Jumping Champion at Calgary's Royal West in November.

The story of her Canadian-bred superstar horse 'Beneficial' makes Alicia's rise even more endearing.

We caught up with Alicia following her memorable victory with Beneficial at Royal West to learn a bit more about her horses and her story.

Horsepower

Beneficial – aka Bella
2012 Oldenburg mare
Banderas x Timebreaker
“She's a total queen! She was bred by a dear friend Paula Leweke on Vancouver Island. It's been so special and rewarding to develop her from the beginning as a young horse all the way to the top level. She has the most heart and intelligence I've ever felt in a horse.”

Pesgo Adelheid Z – aka Gatsby
2014 Zangersheide gelding
Priamus x Chardonnay
“He's the biggest personality you could

imagine! I've had him since early 2021, imported from the Netherlands. He's a really brave, careful, scopey horse. I'm really excited about his future!”

Karlijne – aka Karli
2015 KWPN mare
Vigo D'arsouilles x Heartbreaker
“She so sweet, and loves cuddling during nap time. We imported her this summer. Karli is crazy athletic and has all the ingredients to be a top horse. She's the most fun to ride, and a true pleasure to have on my string.”

Comina Z – aka Mina
2015 Zangersheide mare
Comme Il Faut x Acobat II

“She's got such a gentle disposition. She was imported early 2021. Mina has an amazing work ethic and rises to any occasion. She just did her first 1.30m 6 year old classes in Thermal in the fall. I'm looking forward to developing this young mare!”

Alicia's Story

*Top training
I am fortunate to ride and train with Tiffany Foster of Little Creek Equestrian.

*A typical day
Anyone who knows me well, knows I start my day with banana almond butter toast always - anywhere in the world!



Photo Credit: Quinn Saunders and Kim Gaudry



I try to fit in a workout most days and then head to the barn. Some days I start with cleaning stalls, then I get to riding my list of both personal and client horses. We try and get riding done earlier in the day before lessons start. On average I ride between 8-10 horses and teach about 3-6 lessons each day.

*Balancing work and social life
I'm so lucky to have a husband that's supportive of my busy schedule. He tries to pop into the barn to say "hi" or help out if his work schedule permits. At the end of a great day I love to head home to cook something creative for dinner, or meet up with family and friends.

*Big goals from the start
I knew from my early teenage/junior years that I wanted to be a professional in the sport. I had a huge passion for equitation throughout my junior career and that continued to grow as the years went on.

*Hard work does in fact pay off
When I was working for Oz Inc (in Oregon)
Photo Credit: Quinn Saunders and Kim Gaudry

I learned that with the right amount of hard work and thoughtful time spent, opportunities would arise. When working for them I had the opportunity to ride a very talented young mare for a season – we started the winter circuit in the 0.90m and ended in the 1.40m.

For me feeling the growth in a short time really gave me the bug to never stop striving for the top of the sport.

*Reach for the top
I hope to have the privilege of representing my country on Nations Cup teams & ultimately the Olympics.

I'm so blessed to have been able to turn my lifelong passion & lifestyle into a career. No matter how long or tough the day, it never feels like 'work' ... there's never anything else I'd rather be doing.

*It's important to have mentors in the business
I've been so fortunate to work with such exceptional mentors. The biggest influences

on my career have been Oz Inc, Peter Charles, and Tiffany Foster.

*Favourite riders to emulate
Tiffany Foster and McLain Ward.

*Finding inspiration
"If your goals don't scare you, they aren't big enough."
"We are what we repeatedly do; excellence is then not an act but a habit."

*Coach takeaways
Tiffany has really helped me with the specifics & learning to perfect my skill. She puts emphasis on creating a strategic plan and understanding a detailed method of executing it.

Shelley Campf has used the term "guided discovery" for training young horses. I love that idea of learning how to lead your horse to do the right thing, and then letting them learn.

Training a horse is like polishing a stone by running water over rough rocks – it takes

consistency, time and patience.

*What's the secret ingredient?
Working out/cross training is a huge part of my physical training. I've worked with some great personal trainers that have helped me understand my body and what specific strengths I need to focus on for my sport. It's hard to keep yourself sound!

My husband, parents, business partner, staff and family are all huge parts of my support system. I lean on them a lot especially when I'm away showing.

*Classic exercise in training
On the flat I love using shoulder-in. I feel like it helps with so many challenges we face in show jumping. I use it for straightness, suppleness, and getting your horse broke off the leg aids.

I also really like to train the counter canter. We practice holding it on circles and serpentines. I think counter canter helps with true straightness and a correct balance point.