



## Buying horses with Frank Selinger

Holly Grayton

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Frank Selinger is a Calgary-based coach and trainer, with several decades of experience training horses and riders to elite levels. From his family's history breeding horses for sport to finding some of North America's best show jumping horses, Frank is well-respected for his intuition and skills selecting horses for riders. ABSJ caught up with Frank and found out a bit about his process finding horses.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN YOU ARE FINDING A HORSE FOR A JUNIOR RIDER?

Suitability is key, and it's preferable to find a horse that is slightly over qualified so that it can take the joke during the learning curve.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A TOP GRAND PRIX PROSPECT?

Conformation, canter stride, and impulsion. Self-impulsion, really. I don't like lazy horses they are not motivated. I look for a horse with great grassroots basics – you want to start with all the ducks in a row by nature, otherwise you are trying to train the exception to the rule. I like tall horses with a little bit of blood.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A YOUNG PROSPECT?

Mostly the same as in the Grand Prix horse. I hope every one of them is going to be a Grand Prix horse! But specifically for the young horses, I'm looking for character – a horse that wants to work with you, because all the talent in the world is no good to you if it's a contrary animal.

IT CAN BE TOUGH SOMETIMES WHEN TRYING HORSES TO GET A COMPLETE PICTURE OF THE HORSE IN SUCH A SHORT TIMEFRAME AND CONTROLLED SETTING. WHAT ARE THINGS THAT YOU THINK YOU CAN REALLY FIND OUT WHEN YOU ARE TRYING A HORSE?

You're hoping that the horse hasn't been overly prepared for your tryout, that's the first thing! You are looking for a horse that will work with you and doesn't require you to change your entire ride for it. And if you like the horse well enough on the first trial, it is only going to get better as you mesh with the animal. Mostly you hope to just find a horse that will work with you and doesn't remind you of any bad horses you have had before.

MANY PEOPLE LOOK FOR HORSES IN EUROPE. DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR PEOPLE SHOPPING IN EUROPE NOWADAYS?

Take someone you trust with you, and someone that has to live with the decisions made on the trip. It's hard enough to buy a horse from your neighbor; it's ever harder in Europe.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT SHOPPING IN EUROPE VERSUS SHOPPING LOCALLY?

It makes sense to shop locally first. For starters, if the horse is misrepresented you have some leverage to make things right, which you don't always have in Europe. It just makes sense to look here first. There are



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enough people here breeding and training horses that you should scour through those ones first, and then go to Europe – again, with somebody you trust – if you haven't found anything.