

LIFE BETWEEN THE EARS

SEEING THE WORLD WITH
“Life Between The Ears”

Contributors to the “Life Between The Ears” social media accounts transport us to the world’s most interesting and beautiful places—all viewed from the saddle. Each issue, we share a few of their images.



TANIA ROBUSTELLI@SHINEANDRIDE PHOTOS

VAL BADIA, ITALY

Tania Robustelli lives and works as a business consultant in Milan, but she and her boyfriend, Stefano, keep three horses in the Lombardy countryside near Crema.

"My home is where my horses are. For me, Friday is the best day of the week because I will spend all the weekend with them in the small stable in the countryside," Robustelli said.

Their horses are Twom Kaliph, an 11-year-old Arabian; Pitingo, a 12-year-old Cruzado from Andalusia, Spain; and Baito, a 2-year-old Cruzado colt.

Robustelli and Stefano ride with a group of friends called the "Wild Riders."

"We enjoy [riding] in the beautiful country around the stable, a flat area rich in cornfields and natural cold streams perfect for the horses' tendons and legs," Robustelli said. "For the horses, it is very therapeutic walking in these natural springs, especially in the summertime. We like to spend days going through the landscapes of the surrounding country with friends, and often we organize lunches on horseback. During the summer, when it is too hot for horses and there are many insects, we ride at night, and sometimes we dine out on the trails. Riding at night is quite amazing! You can really feel the symbiosis with your horse because the only light we have on our path is the moonlight."

Every few months, the Wild Riders organize a riding trip.

"Italy is the perfect place to go because we have mountains, lakes, country, hills and seaside very close to our stable. Italy is rich of history and gastronomy," Robustelli said.

This photo came from their 2015 journey to the Dolomites, a mountain range in northeastern Italy. "I used to go to this place every year during the winter because it's the best place in Italy for skiing," said Robustelli. "That year we decided to visit in summer with our horses. It was a great adventure for all of us because very few horse riders face these mountain routes that are popular only among bikers and runners."

Robustelli identified the Sella group of mountains, between the four Ladin valleys, as particularly beautiful.

"With our horses we have ridden all the Ladin Valley of Badia, reaching the height of 2,000 meters. The nature here is stunning, and you can enjoy the good food specialties of South Tyrol," she said.



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CHRISTOFFER ADRIANSSON / @CHRISTOFFERADRIANSSON PHOTO

WELLINGTON, FLORIDA

"An early morning as the rising sun met the mist from the night before," is how Christoffer Adriansson described this photo.

"Pretty romantic, if you ask me," he said.

But this view is all in a morning's work for Adriansson, who's a professional freelance rider on the hunter/jumper show circuit.

"Currently I'm studying at university online, working toward a degree in economics," he said. "Being in school, it's hard to have a career showing, but I ride as much as I can, freelancing in Wellington in the winter. In the summer I spend most of my time in Sweden, where I try to catch up with the schoolwork I should have done in the winter when I was riding too much."

Adriansson grew up riding in Sweden. At 14 he started riding professionally for a dealer.

"Since then I've always been doing horses and probably spent most of my waking time in the saddle," he said.

He has worked for and shown with Lisen and Peder Fredricson in Sweden, Markus Beerbaum and Meredith Michaels-Beerbaum in Germany, and Shane Sweetnam in the United States. "Being able to develop my passion for horses into a profession truly is a blessing," he said.

The horse is Great White, or "Bruce," a 9-year-old Holsteiner owned by the Farish family and shown by Daisy Farish in the under-25 grand prix classes.

"I help Daisy, riding Bruce to get him better on the flat and to get him ready for the show," Adriansson said.

"Bruce is a very talented and competitive horse that always comes out from the barn sharp and ready to work. He really is an athlete and very nice to ride."

The Farishes' horses are based at Skara Glen Stables in Wellington when not showing, and this photo was taken over the grass riding field there.

ELLEN FELSENTHAL / @NEWMOONFARMGOATRESCUE PHOTO



GJØVIK, NORWAY

This photo was taken at the top of a forest trail on a hill overlooking the city of Gjøvik, where Betty Camilla Hellum lives.

"I ride here often, and it's a great spot for an amazing view," she said. Gjøvik is on the shores of Mjøsa Lake, the largest lake in Norway.

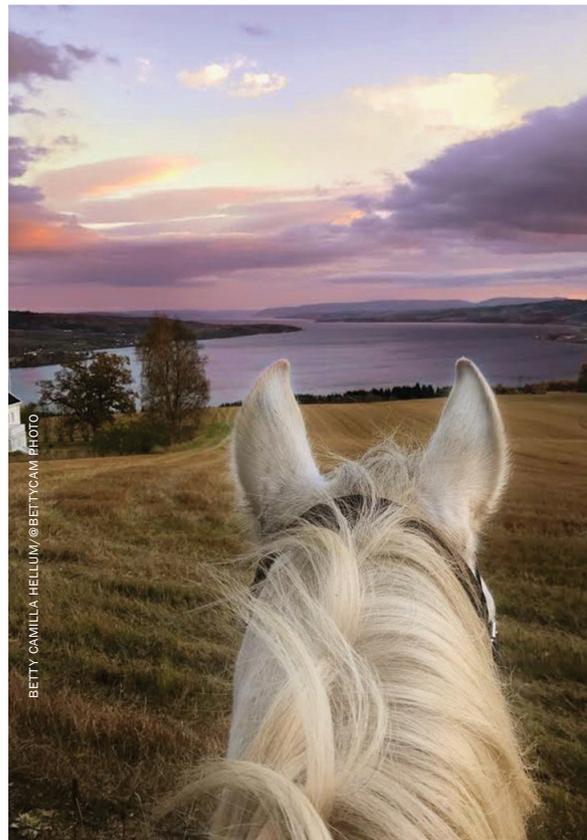
The gray ears belong to Regidor XXXV, the 13-year-old PRE gelding Hellum imported from Spain in 2013.

"It took us over six months to find the right horse. There are so few PRE horses in Norway. We went to Spain, and my daughter and I both fell in love with him. It was really love at first sight," Hellum said. "He is energetic, hardworking and sensitive. He's also very courageous. In Spain these horses are bred for bullfighting, so they stay very calm when other horses might lose control."

Hellum rode as a child and has always loved horses.

"Riding got put on hold when I had children, and then while I studied nursing and started my career," she said. "I am now a full-time nurse with a daughter, 19, and twin boys, 15. My daughter loves riding as much as I do."

Hellum mostly trail rides and does some dressage, but she has played with jumping and some cross-country "just for fun!" she said.



BETTY CAMILLA HELLUM / @BETTYCAM PHOTO



CANNON BEACH, OREGON

"This photo is a childhood fantasy come true—riding my own horse on the beach," Ellen Felsenthal said. "It only took 30 years! My friends tease me that I smile so hard the whole time we're there that my face might freeze."

Cannon Beach is a small town on the Oregon coast, and the large rock formation seen in the photo is Haystack Rock, which has a small cave system and is protected as a marine sanctuary within the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

"I go horse camping at Nehalem Bay (close to Cannon Beach) for a week every summer. This year will be my 18th year," Felsenthal said.

Felsenthal is a tenured college professor in photography, and she also runs a non-profit goat rescue out of her New Moon Farm in Arlington, Wash., about an hour north of Seattle. She's schooling first level dressage but doesn't compete much. Instead, she focuses on trail riding, camping, some mountain packing and extreme obstacle courses alongside her dressage, and she's very interested in working equitation too.

"I make time to take two dressage lessons every week and try to hit the trails as often as possible," she said.

The ears in the photo belong to Eclipse, Felsenthal's 12-year-old PMU rescue who is a Paint-Quarter Horse-Thoroughbred-Percheron cross. Felsenthal adopted her from Canada when the mare was 5 months old.

"She is brave, smart and sassy. She challenges me every ride. She has a lot of opinions! But she takes good care of me. She's a social butterfly and really pretty too," she said.

Felsenthal also has a 25-year-old Paint mare and a retired Percheron plow horse, both rescues.



JACKSON, WYOMING

Tess Cohen is originally from Florida, but she arrived in Wyoming after college for a summer job to work on a guest ranch three years ago, and she's still there. "I can't bring myself to leave; it's too pretty!" she said.

Cohen works as a wrangler on ranches but likes to ride for pleasure as well.

"This photo was taken on the banks of the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park, between the ears of a horse named Wild Card. It has a very dear place in my heart—it is where I fell in love with the mountains of Wyoming," Cohen said. "In the summer I ride here a few days a week with some of my girlfriends. We all have other jobs, so we take the horses out around sunset and come back just before dark."

Cohen captioned this image, "Happy 100th birthday @nationalparkservice, thanks for keeping my Insta game on point," on her Instagram feed.

The Snake River originates in Yellowstone National Park and flows through the Grand Teton National Park, into Idaho and Oregon, and then it feeds into the Columbia River in Washington.



LUXOR, EGYPT

This photo shows the Colossi of Memnon—two massive stone statues of the Pharaoh Amenhotep III, who reigned in Egypt during Dynasty XVIII. For the past 3,400 years, they have stood in the Theban Necropolis, located west of the Nile River in Luxor.

"It's a really special place for me, as Luxor is where I now call home, and the Colossi of Memnon was one of the first places I visited when I moved to Luxor," said Emma Jane Levin, who founded and runs the Ride Egypt riding holiday company. "I was overwhelmed by the history, the grandeur and the peacefulness of this place, so much so that I included it as part of our most popular riding holiday, Adventures of Luxor and Makadi Bay. It's great to see my clients' faces when they see this awe-inspiring view through our horses' ears."

Levin, who grew up in England and show jumped as a child, didn't ride for 13 years before she first traveled to Egypt and decided to get in the saddle again.

"My first ride was in Nabq National Park on a pure Arabian called Belal," she said. "Let's just say Belal taught me to fall in love with riding again and with Egypt's stunning scenery. I'm happy to say not only did he change my life, but he now belongs to me too."

Levin began Ride Egypt six years ago. "Ride Egypt was my dream, and now I'm living it," she said. "I get to ride all day, every day, and take my clients to see the history and beauty that Egypt has to offer. I'm super lucky and blessed to live in such an amazing country and spend my time seeing such awesome places through my horses' ears. I spend a lot of time visiting the sights and sounds of Luxor, Hurghada and Sharm el Sheikh on horseback, swimming with our horses in the Red Sea, and galloping through the vast expanses of sugar cane fields and desert that we have on our doorstep."

The ears in this photo belong to Amira, a 6-year-old Arabian-cross mare whose name means princess in Arabic.

"She's one of my clients' favorites because she's a true confidence giver crossed with a secret speed demon," Levin said. "If you are not a confident rider, she'll be relaxed taking in the scenery and guiding you through Egypt's ancient history. But if, like me, you feel the need for speed, she can really shift and seriously lets loose in the desert—she flies!"



RICK DAHMS PHOTO

Sharing Life Between The Ears

Since 2008, Life Between The Ears founder Kristine Dahms has posted stunning photos shot by riders in all corners of the world with one hand on the reins and the other on the shutter. Dahms mines photos with the hashtag #lifebetweentheears, contacts the original poster of the image, then features the photo, complete with educational details about the place that's portrayed.

Life Between The Ears photos appear on a LBTE Facebook page, an Instagram feed, a dedicated website (lifebetweentheears.com), a Twitter feed and a Pinterest account, all under lifebetweentheears account names.

Dahms—who lives in Vashon, Wash., with her Welsh Cob, mini horse, pygmy goats, two dogs and two cats—rides dressage and takes quite a few photos herself on the picturesque Vashon-Maury Island.

Dahms has taken some of the Life Between The Ears images from cyberspace to print, creating three lines of greeting cards with selected photos from her social media pages. A portion of the proceeds from the card sales goes to the Equine Land Conservation Resource (elcr.org). Cards are available at lifebetweentheears.com/retail.