

ABDERRY EQUINE

... when it comes to education they're no different from children

As far as South Auckland horsewoman Cheski Brown is concerned, equine education is based on identical principles no matter what destiny may hold for any individual horse.

Brown operates Abderry Equine near Pukekohe where she and her team of equine educators apply their egalitarian philosophy to all types of horses.

"We share the concept that a horse is a horse no matter what its intended discipline," she says. "When it comes to education they're no different from children; it doesn't make any difference what they might end up doing in life, they all need the same basic grounding.

"We put in front of them all the things that life can throw up at them. That way they're conditioned not just to listen and take notice of what you want them to do, but they're also able to cope with situations."

Brown has a lifetime of experience to qualify for the role of equine educator to a growing clientele. She grew up in Singapore where her father was head of the apprentice jockey training school. From those early days she developed an empathy with horses and in her teens mixed showjumping with amateur race riding.

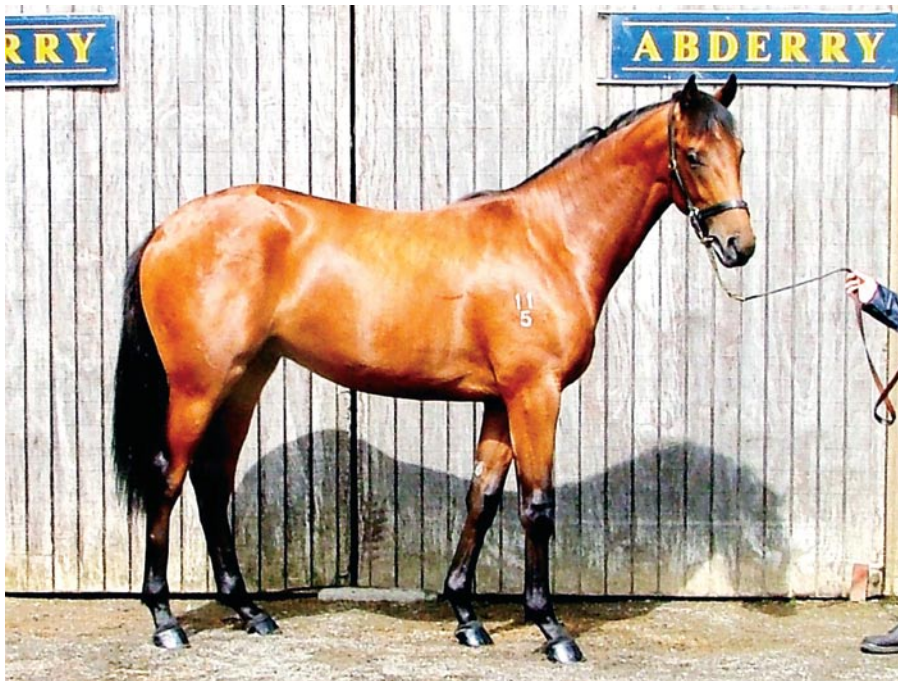
In the mid-1970s when known by her maiden name Tibbatts she first visited New Zealand as the Singapore-Malaysia representative in an international female jockey series organised by the Rotorua Racing Club. She returned the following year to again be part of the movement that soon afterwards resulted in Canadian Joan Phipps becoming the first female to win a race as a professional jockey in New Zealand, opening the floodgates for Linda Jones et al to cement their presence in this country's jockey ranks.

Brown was married to her husband Desmond, a committee member of the Singapore Turf Club, when they decided in 1984 to settle permanently in New Zealand. The same 120-acre block of land in Franklin county north-west of Pukekohe that they bought then is still the base that Brown, since widowed, operates from.

Innovation was a key to Abderry back then too, with the Browns establishing a horse sea charter business servicing Asia and taking on the contract to supply horses to the growing Korean market.

Several years ago Brown thought long and hard about where she wanted to direct her energies and came up with





the idea of redeveloping Abderry Farm into what she now has, a comprehensive, fully appointed centre for horse education.

Anywhere from 40 to 60 horses are housed on the property, some of them simply being agisted but most of them undergoing handling and education. For that purpose there are 26 boxes, an exercise track, an indoor lunging arena and starting gates, all complemented by more than 60 paddocks of varying sizes.

Brown and her team of five or six like-minded people provide everything from weaning to breaking-in, schooling, pre-training and, if necessary, re-education for all types of horses. Their breaking-in service is based on a flat fee with an end of breaking guarantee.

"It all depends on where the horse is going when it leaves us as to what stage we will take it," she explains. "In a potential racehorse situation we want to see that the horse will canter in the direction you ask it. Taking it further into the pre-training stage requires more fitness work.

"For those people who could be described as hobby riders, we have to take into consideration that the horse must be delivered back to them in a more developed state, so that no matter what level of riding ability the individual owner may have the horse is manageable."

Abderry's thoroughbred facility has been extended to cater for yearling preparation, while at the other end of that equation major sales company New Zealand Bloodstock is a regular client, sending yearlings direct from its Karaka complex for handling and care before they embark on overseas flights to their new owners.

"It's great to receive that recognition and be able to provide a service to such a significant organisation," says Brown, who also numbers respected trainers John Wheeler and Stephen McKee on her client list.

"But no matter who the client might be, we know we're dealing with people's hopes and dreams. When the hammer falls or however someone becomes the proud owner of a horse, we take very seriously our part in realising the hopes they have for that horse.

"It's hard work requiring dedication and responsibility, but it's also a great buzz when you see horses leave here ready for what challenges lie ahead."



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