

# FOCUS ON A LOCAL

Interview by: Bridget Ryan

Photo credit: Submitted photo

Joanne Milton, owner of Rustic Meadows in Erin, is a dedicated horse-woman who started her equine journey as a young girl in Northern Ontario. She moved to Toronto to study Equine Studies at Humber College and then worked in the racing industry. Joanne was a licensed Standardbred trainer. She's also a breeder and continues to offer lessons in reining, sidesaddle and general horsemanship. Joanne has shared her hands-on experience and passion for horses with the local community for over 35 years.

Joanne Milton riding side-saddle on Vanna

### Tell us about your first pony:

I got Rusty for \$225 from a friend of the family at age sixteen. This price included the saddle, bridle and all the grooming tools. He was a 12 to 15 year old Quarter Horse.

### What was the most important horse memory for you? Why?

My Grade 10 Englehart Ontario High School teacher, Mr. Lou Marasco. He told me about the Equine Program at Humber College in Toronto. I knew immediately that was what I wanted to study!

### Do you have a favourite equine author?

Author: Alois Podajski, his book 'My Horses, My Teachers'. Podajski was the head of the Spanish Riding School in Austria, and he worked with Lipizzaner Horses.

### Other than riding, what else do you do for physical fitness, and what are your interests or hobbies?

Managing a stable requires a great deal of physical work, everything from mucking out and throwing hay bales to leading and moving horses around. A couple of years ago I wore a pedometer for a month. I averaged 11 miles (17.6 km) per day just doing my daily chores.

### Do you watch horse shows, if so, what?

I don't watch very much TV, I prefer to read books. I read a lot!

### Who is the most interesting horse-person you've ever met?

Barbara Schulte.

Barbara is a Professional Cutting Horse Trainer, Personal Performance Coach, Author, Clinician, and Equine Consultant. Barbara's training includes tips and skills to help riders develop their full potential, perform under pressure, and overcome fear. In 2012, Barbara was inducted into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame, and honoured for her outstanding career accomplishments.

### What disciplines or horse sports do you take part in?

**Coaching:** My mother was a teacher, so it just seemed natural that I would want to educate and pass on my love of learning. I strive to develop 'thinking' students that have the tools to work through problems on their own.

**Reining:** I got into the sport a bit late, but I love the discipline. I am totally immersed in the bio-mechanics and precision needed to lay down a pretty pattern—at speed.

**Breeding:** My goal was to produce great-minded, athletic and sound horses that the pros could show, but who would also be kind and forgiving enough for non-pros and youth to get along with. I was producing horses I liked, but it was an expensive business.

### Is there another equestrian discipline or horse sport you would like to do?

All of them! Especially Dressage and Driving.

### What is your vision, hopes and suggestions for building a strong Erin Horse Community?

I would like to see more equine education in our local schools and more youth engagement. I'd also like to see more local municipal and provincial government support for the equine and agriculture industries and to promote existing programs like 4H.

We need people to step up and get involved, to volunteer for our many different agricultural events, horse groups and organizations. A good example is the Erin Fair.

The community as a whole benefits from volunteer involvement, and community building. Youth awareness and education regarding horse activities and sports is key to engagement.



Joanne Milton and Vanna at McKinnon Timber Mart Christmas event

Photo credit: Supplied by Joanne Milton

### What Equine Associations, and horse organization memberships or affiliations do you have?

- Ontario Reining Horse Association (Secretary, Lifetime Member)
- National Reining Horse Association (Lifetime Member)
- Reining Canada (Lifetime Member)
- Rockwood Trailriders (Director, Past President)
- Ontario Sidesaddle Association (Treasurer, Lifetime Member)
- Equine Canada (Coaching Certification)
- Ontario Equestrian (Stable Member, Coaching)
- International Sidesaddle Associations (Lifetime Member)
- Ontario Trail Riders Association
- Women's Horse Owner's Association