Riding with **ART**

*Adrienne Ray Training*

My background with horses is extensive and varied. As a young girl I did pony club on the East Coast which included lots of basic equitation, jumping, and spending lazy summer days riding bareback while exploring the Adirondack trail system and the 200 acres of pastureland the Pony Club owned. As a young adult I mostly rode western and broke out horses following the philosophies of John Lyons, Ray Hunt, Mark Rashid, and the Dorance bothers. I’ve spent thousands of hours riding rugged trails all over eastern Oregon and Washington. I even have many hours of cattle work on horseback and have gone on a few “real” cattle roundups.

My interest turned to dressage after I purchased an unbroke Irish Sport horse mare who, due to her large size and challenging nature, led me on an amazing journey of horsemanship. I started learning “traditional” dressage from USDF medal instructors but my whole philosophy regarding riding and horses changed when I was introduced to Légèretéby two amazing Instructors who worked directly with Philippe Karl. This new-to-me way of thinking and riding led me to books written by old and modern masters alike until I had read everything I could find by these authors that was written in the English language. I discovered the more classical French Dressage as practiced by the old masters along the lines of Baucher was often taught by the Portuguese riders and ended up doing many clinic hours over many years with these individuals when they were in the US. All these experiences, along with my personal journeys with my own horses and the many I have trained for others, have led me to a method of riding and training that has been very successful. I ended up switching from dressage competition to Working Equitation Competition as I felt it offered me and my horses more mental stimulation and challenge due to the strategic nature of the sport. Currently, it’s where I continue my journey today along with training horses (mine and others) and giving lessons in riding with classical French dressage principles as understood by the old masters.

Currently I compete my 7-year-old BLM mustang gelding at Intermediate B level, the first of the upper levels recognized Internationally. I have earned my bronze medal in WE and am only a few scores away from my Silver. I have ridden 5 of my own horses in WE competitions, all of whom I’ve trained myself. Several of these I have since sold as seasoned show horses.

My philosophy regarding horse training focuses on education through small, understandable steps and slow work with an emphasis on correct biomechanics for proper muscle development and use. I place an emphasis on the comfort and happiness of the horse along with work that helps relaxation and suppleness. My instruction for students starts with helping them to understand their own biomechanics and physics of their bodies and how that influences a horse’s movement. I spend a lot of time teaching “timing and feel” as this is the crux of good horsemanship. As this is not an easy concept to teach or learn, I use analogies, physical “on-horse” exercises, in-hand work, and basic horse-handling skills to help students find feel and timing. Although it is more time consuming, I feel it is important for students to not only be taught how to do something, but “why” we do it. Explaining the “Why’s” of riding allows people to experience what they do through the lens of what the horse is experiencing.

**Some of my past equestrian experience includes:**

Dressage instruction from the likes of: USDF gold medalist Tracie Bjugan, Kimberly Barker, Jessica Wisdom, and Heather Olsen. Légèretéinstructors include Pippa Callahan & Nadine O’Sullivan. Other instructors and clinicians include: Jeremy Steinberg, Jose Lopes, Carlos Carneiro, Sofia Valencia, Nuno Matos, Michael Godding, David Lichman (5 star Parelli Liberty instructor), Heidi Harriott (5th generation Circus trainer), Steve Rother, Francesca Carson (Liberty instruction), Clay Wright, Arne Koets, and more.

I’ve completed the online Carson James study course (hundreds of hours of video instruction and tests), was certified as a BLM TIP trainer, competed in a 100-day mustang challenge (have worked with completely wild horses), a graduate of the Pedro Torres Academy (for Working Equitation), extensive Dressage and Working Equitation experience, and have 1000’s of hours on rugged mountain trails, beach trips, poker rides, overnight wilderness camping, and cattle drives.



