

Mid-South Horse Review

News

Southern Blues Equestrian Center



(Left) McKrell_Chris.jpg: McKrell (standing) and Christian Baier (mounted on Pam Hollis' horse Konstantin) are the multi-discipline trainers at Southern Blues Equestrian Center. (Right) Christian Baier schools Konstantin over jumps in the covered arena at Southern Blues Equestrian Center.

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At the Southern Blues Equestrian Center, McKrell and Christian Baier prioritize sound horsemanship in their multi-discipline training program. The stable is located just south of Collierville, TN at 1707 Quinn Road, where they offer hunter, jumper, dressage, and some eventing training. “We can actually help with any discipline” because the “focus is horsemanship,” said McKrell. They show at local hunter shows, “winter in Wellington, Florida,” and plan to start showing at local dressage shows, McKrell explained.

McKrell has been running the boarding and training facility for six years; Chris started May first of this year. McKrell’s background is in hunters/jumpers and equitation. Chris is originally from Sweden and trained as a working horseman in Germany for 12 years. Chris has ridden hunters, jumpers and equitation, as well as other disciplines. “All our horses cross-train,” said McKrell. “We do strength training and conditioning in our 'hill field.' We have woods for trail riding.” The facility has a small cross-country course, a covered arena with stadium jumps, and an area for dressage “so the horses get exposed to everything,” she added. Their daily schedule begins with working the horses in training in the mornings, and their afternoons are filled with riding lessons.

Their training philosophy is: “We want our students to be good horsemen first, and to make the most of their horse. Then we want them to be successful at whatever level of competition they choose. Or if they choose not to compete, we want them to be successful at home. We want them

to be as well educated as possible,” McKrell said. “In our program we include information about horse nutrition, overall fitness, how they function physiologically, so we strengthen the right muscles.”

“We have clinicians come in regularly for additional instruction,” McKrell said. “The latest was Albert Voorn, who won the individual Silver Medal at the 2000 summer Olympics in Sydney. Joe Fargis comes regularly and will be here again in October.” McKrell is also working with Melanie Smith Taylor with the “Emerging Athletes Program” in conjunction with the United States Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA).

For more information, see <http://www.ushja.org/eap/index.shtml>

The facility includes 12 acres of pasture land for riding and turnout; multiple riding areas: large covered, lighted arena; jumping field with natural obstacles; hill riding field for conditioning and strength training; and a guest house and guest rooms. Boarding includes an individualized feeding program; regular visits from specialists such as the farrier, dentist, chiropractor; on site caretakers 24/7; and horse laundry service. Their training/ instruction program welcomes all levels of all disciplines, but specializes in hunter/jumper/equitation, dressage, and 3-day eventing. For students, devise individualized plans based on goals with a comprehensive view of fitness of horse and rider and a realistic level for success for horse and rider. The feeding plan is structured to optimize success at all levels. Their emphasis is on education of rider through theory and history of the sport. They offer instruction in three languages; international travel for competition, training, further education; and regular clinics with world-class clinicians.

Both McKrell and Christian have much experience working with training problems, and they rehabilitate injured horses. McKrell and Christian offer lessons taught off site; clinics and seminars anywhere in the world; and consulting services for feeding, barn management, training/fitness programs, barn/farm construction and design; and course and obstacle design.

Overall, the welfare of the horse is their top priority. For those students who do not have their own horses, lesson and lease horses are available, horses suitable for all levels of riders.

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