

With a yard full to capacity with top-class show horses, showing supremo Jayne Ross has another bright season ahead of her, as Stephanie Bateman discovers

SHOW STOPPER!



No Moor, no less... Jayne Ross's home at winning base Moor Farm might be in question, but bright times are ahead

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“When it was announced last year that Moor Farm, the base of five-times Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) supreme horse champion Jayne Ross, was to be put on the market, it was all systems go to find new premises. Ever the professional, Jayne didn't allow the news to affect her, and has instead got her teeth firmly into her latest venture.

Although the search is still on, Jayne has since taken over the lease of the yard at Moor Farm, currently still owned by Bill and Carol Bardo. “We're in the same place for the foreseeable future but as much as it's ideal being here, knowing you've got the possibility of it being sold hanging over your head is a slight concern” explains Jayne. “I've got one or two places I could use as a base if the yard is sold, but whatever happens, I have a couple of months notice to move on.

“Ultimately, I'd like to find somewhere to settle long-term along the M4 or M40 corridors because of my husband, Alan, needing to get to work in Harley Street.”

With a great team around her, a fantastic string of proven champions and plenty of future stars climbing the ranks, what's not to be happy about?

“I'm thoroughly enjoying running the yard and am having great fun,” she says. “It's the same routine as before, except I've gained a few extra jobs including the secretarial side, which one of my owners, James Woodington, is now thankfully overseeing. That was the one bit I was most worried about, but with James' invaluable help it's working out fine.”

As is commonplace in the horse world, Jayne's day starts early. “We feed at 7am, followed by the general day-to-day yard duties of mucking out and so on. We try to get all the horses ridden or worked by lunchtime. The afternoons are taken up

with tack cleaning, trimming up horses and show preparation, while I tackle a couple of hours admin with James, (including the very complicated task of entries).”

Jayne believes in giving her horses a varied schedule, which not only keeps them sweet, but also helps with their exposure to new experiences. “Alongside schooling at home, the horses will do a couple of days hacking and go out in the field three or four times a week.

“I like to get all the horses out and about around the countryside as it gets them ready more quickly than being cosseted at home. You get lulled into a false sense of security, and when you get somewhere different, they lose concentration. But once they're all up and going to shows, they get exposure to see new things there.”

“I'm a great believer in horses having freedom of movement, and I love them to go forward and use themselves, so I don't like to use too many gadgets,” Jayne adds. “We do some pole work and jumping for fun, but only if they enjoy it.”

KEY TO SUCCESS

Since 2005, Jayne has produced no fewer than five HOYS supreme horse champions including Soldier Brave, The Philanderer, Comberton Clancy and two-time supreme champion Broadshard Simplicity, as well as five supremes at the Royal International and numerous county show winners.

So, what is the key to Jayne's success? “We treat every horse as an individual,” she says. “We're fastidious about our pre-planning - you have to make a plan and try and keep to it - and allow the horse to guide you along the way. I also don't like to rush my babies. They're all given however long they need, as it makes them good horses in the long-run.”

Is there a secret weapon in Jayne's arsenal? “I only use bits with double joints such as French links with lozenges,” she says. “I don't like the nutcracker action of snaffles, so all our horses go in a lozenge of some sort.”

Talking of tack, Jayne admits to having ‘a bit of a thing’ about her tack. “It's not fair to give anybody else the responsibility of your tack - if my stirrup breaks, or the girth breaks, it's my fault, so I like to keep an eye on it. I love my tackroom and I'm always in there playing, finding new bits and bridles, and new ways of getting horses going.”

When asked what motivates her, Jayne is quick to credit her loyal team - “I do have the best team in the world behind me,” she muses. “I wouldn't want to do it without them because they make it such fun, and that spills out onto the horses. It's such a lovely atmosphere all the time. I don't know how you'd get up and do the hours you do, in the weathers we have to cope with, if you didn't really love it.”

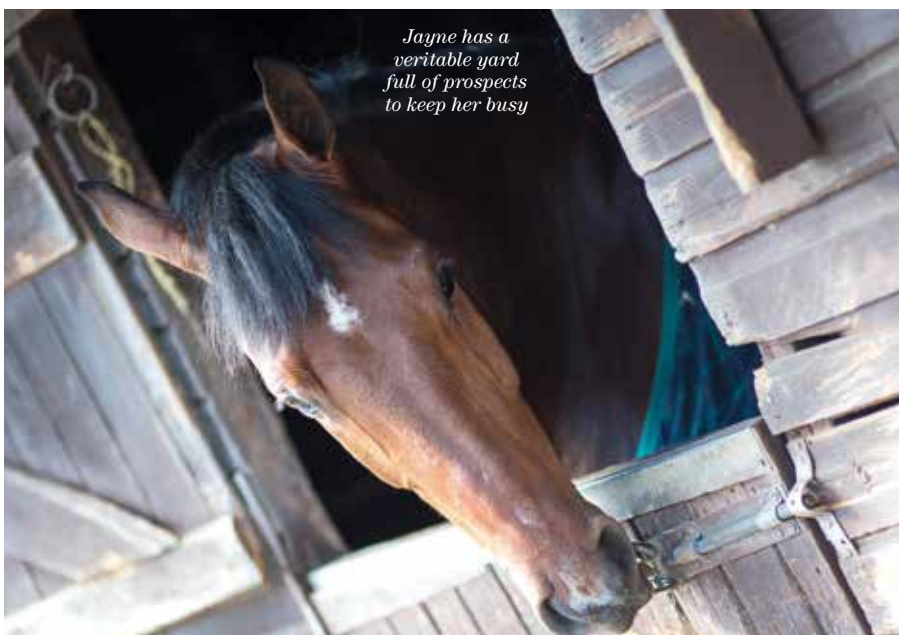
Alongside James, Jayne's team consists of grooms - Mark Chesters who has been with



To the victors, the spoils. Jayne has an enviable hoard of rosettes



Sid, one of the yard's cats



Jayne has a veritable yard full of prospects to keep her busy



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her for eight years (currently off injured); Scott Dixon – recently returned from a trip to Australia; part-time girls Louise Hancock and Kayleigh Withers who've been with her six years; Matt Richardson who both rides and drives the big lorry; and her friend of 35 years Jo Powell who is designated show organiser and attends every show.

"I'm very lucky the team are such great friends and so loyal, and that everyone is just happy to do their bit," she says. "We're a team – there's no employer-employee scenario – I work alongside them and we enjoy the ups and downs together.

"I would also not be able to achieve so much without our fantastic sponsors who've really stepped up their support and enabled us to hit the ground running with this new venture. Absorbine, Derby House, TopSpec, and KBIS to name but a few.

LOOKING AHEAD

Jayne's yard is full to bursting with 22 horses, 16 of which are being primed for Windsor Horse Show in May. Not forgetting her Grandson's beloved Dartmoor pony and yard cats, Sid and Jess.

"I'm lucky we still have the majority of the original horses and owners, plus some new ones for the season," Jayne says. "We have an exciting young coloured called KBF Crescendo that Carol Bardo part-owns with 'the daddies' Tony Reynolds and Michael Cook."

She's also got CSF Cumber Paradise, a five-year-old novice riding horse, as well as reigning HOYS Hunter champion Bloomfield Excelsior who is part owned by the 'Shades of Grey Syndicate'. Owner Rachel McCourt has a new cob called The King's Hand and he joins Cob In Hood and Rockstone Raven who have come back for another season.

Hayley Hyde-Andrews has a new novice heavyweight cob called Randalstown Columbo; small hunter Hello Dolly is going to be campaigned in amateurs by her owner Lucy Cameron; Derwent Eclipse – a lovely hack bred by Julia Topham-Barnes will head to Windsor; and Scott Dixon has got the ride on The Malim Family's Highland, Catriona of Meggernie who's already been out and gone champion, qualifying for the Royal International. That's to name but a few! "We've certainly got plenty to keep us busy," laughs Jayne.

Jayne confesses to being most excited about the hunter classes at this year's Royal Windsor. "We lost the hunter day last year because it got rained off, and Windsor is such a lovely place to ride hunters, so I'm looking forward to that day particularly."

What is the plan after Windsor? "We already have eight Royal International (RI) tickets, so we'll continue getting qualifications for HOYS and RI, then we can relax and continue to enjoy the rest of the season. What happens then, who knows? Watch this space!"



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