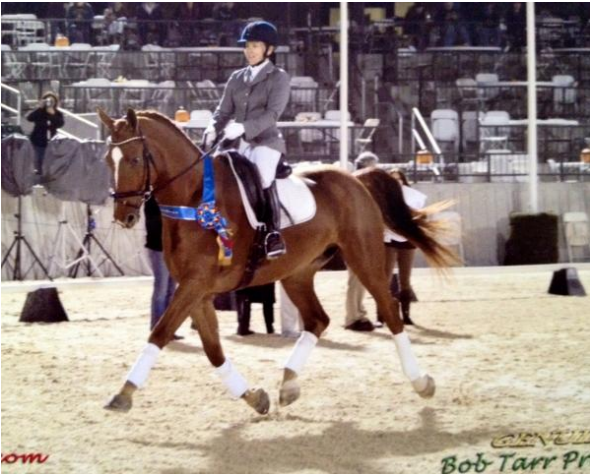


# The Pine Knoll Experience

By Laura Corsentino



My horses are very different from each other and Mr. Poulin was able to work with me to bring each one's strengths out. He gave specific exercises to encourage each to work through their weaker moments and the results were some positive and dramatic changes. Changes without compromising the mental confidence of the horses or our performances that would happen the following week.

It has been several years since I had last ridden with Mr. Poulin. And the horses I brought to the October clinic he had not seen before. I signed up for the clinic as a way to get some last minute, on point instruction before Regional Championships. I realize that most people won't look to change things right before a major competition, but my past experience, with Mr. Poulin, had taught me that he would give me the subtle tools and directives to be able to ride the best tests possible on my horses.

Mr. Poulin is also very adept at teaching to the auditors simultaneous with teaching the rider in front of him. He effortlessly explained what was happening with the rider, why they would be performing the exercise, and the results he was expecting. He strived to make sure the auditors were able to see the changes and the progress of the horse and rider while it was occurring. He does this without detracting from the lesson being taught. And on top of this, since my rides were being videoed, he would have me execute the exercises on lines where I got the additional benefit of seeing what he was explaining to the auditors as well. So later when I watch the replay, it gives me the true benefit of a lesson from the sideline point of view!

Now, I think I may have cramped Mr. Poulin's teaching thought process when I let him know I was riding so close to a major competition. Like I previously mentioned, not many see this as a positive thing to do. However, if results of the completion are to be seen as whether intent of the clinic was accomplished, then let's put it this way. The scores at Regional Championships were as good as or better than they had been all year. The freestyle scores were significantly better (Gravitas' was 7+% points higher than anything he had earned previously). And we earned 1 Champion, 2 Reserve Champions, and a 5th out of 5 rides in championship classes. In our book, it was an huge success. Even if Mr. Poulin didn't make drastic changes, he made the right ones, and he gave me a big boost of confidence. This confidence, and the peace and blessings of the entire week made for an absolutely amazing weekend of competition.

