



20 QUESTIONS

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There's more than one letter in the alphabet.

David Shoobridge goes through our 20 questions test, and passes with flying colours!



David on Lady Sinclair - he believes in riding his dressage horses out to relax them. Photo: Jessica Atkins, JA Studios.

Q: Do you have any foods you eat, or don't eat, before a competition?

A: Bananas – loaded with fibre, good energy. It's just a quirky habit I've got into.

Q: Do you have a current favourite competition horse?

A: Toto Nation de Jeu – my new youngster. He's by Toto Junior (Totilas x Desperados) and out of a Negro mare (Negro is the father of Valegro).

Q: What time does your day start, and end?

A: Usually around 6.30 with the horses being fed at 7am; I start riding at nine once Annabel is at school. Once all the outside jobs are done (riding, teaching, farm work) the inside jobs are started! I collapse into bed around 10.30.

Q: What do you think are things that can give you an edge as a competitive rider – rider fitness for example?

A: Mindset is incredibly important. Not only the ability to stay calm and rationalise, but also the ability to accurately and truthfully analyse your own performance. From here you can find 'gaps' in your training and riding to work on.

Q: When you're not riding, how do you relax?

A: Skiing, taking my daughter Annabel to her various sports which include swimming, tennis and netball. Oh yes, and eating. I love eating!

Q: Who was your very first horse?

A: Meg! She was a liver chestnut Welsh x Arabian and owned by my aunt.

Q: Who do you most look up to in the equestrian world?

A: Many people!! Those who are good riders, but also – and much more importantly – those who are good people. If someone was to say: 'If you could sit on the side of anyone's arena today... who would it be?' The answer would definitely be Edward Gal the Dutch dressage rider who, with his stallion Totilas were the first ever partnership to collect the three available dressage gold medals at a single FEI World Equestrian Games.

Q: If you could have, or breed, your dream horse what would it be?

A: I think I have him – Toto Nation de Jeu!! He has the most amazing brain. There are horses out there with bigger trots than him, but his canter, trainability and walk leave me buzzing.

Q: What is the highest level of dressage you compete in?

A: Grand Prix.

Q: What are your short-term goals?

A: Improve on a daily basis. Get my team of horses gradually increasing their personal best in the tests.



David and his daughter Annabel with two of their broodmares. Photo: Jessica Atkins, JA Studios.

Q: What are your long-term goals?

A: With my riding, to train more of my young horses to Grand Prix – especially those I have bred. With my business, sustainability – both mental and financial. This industry can be unrelenting at times, but it can also be incredibly rewarding. Finding a balance!

Q: Do you have a few favourite riding apparel brands?

A: Cavalleria Toscana clothing and Tucci riding boots!

Q: If you had to switch disciplines, what would you choose?

A: Eventing, because it's exciting.

Q: If you had to stop riding completely, what would you do?

A: It's always been a dream of mine to have a property with a paddock-to-plate ethos. A vineyard with cellar door, wine bar, easy, delicious and sustainable food and great atmosphere that could be a social meeting point.

Q: What is the wisest piece of advice you've ever received?

A: The late, great dressage and driving coach Edgar Lichtwark once said (actually, he said it more than once!) "David, remember there are 26 letters in the alphabet. If 'Plan A' doesn't work, there are 25 other options to look at." That's advice I always remember.

Q: What are you most looking forward to in 2020?

A: Life! Being able to have dreams, goals and ambition. Being

the best father I can be. Improving my riding, improving my horses, improving those around me.

Q: What are the things you like most about yourself?

A: Resilience – I'm not sure if it's something I like most about myself or something I have learned to develop.

Q: What are the things you like least about yourself?

A: My OCD. I like everything to be 'just right' even when it doesn't really matter.

Q: If you could change one thing in your life what would it be?

A: I've learnt that things happen throughout life that are often out of our control... but these moments lead into other moments creating memories, new friendships and opportunities. It's what we do with these situations or opportunities that define us as people more than changing one thing.

Q: What is your go-to motto, to keep you going?

A: 'Small steps are often more powerful than big leaps' and 'Be the best version of yourself you can possibly be.' 🍷