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Volume 9 Issue 3

SPECIAL FEATURES

Happy Tenth Birthday, Equine Touch!

Interview with Jock Ruddock



HAPPY 10th BIRTHDAY, EQUINE TOUCH!

The Equine Touch is now ten years old and we have asked Jock Ruddock, who pioneered it, to bring us up to date on this unique, horse-friendly and user-friendly modality.

NHM: When you look back over the past 10 years of teaching Equine Touch to horse caregivers, veterinarians, bodyworkers, trainers, and others, what have YOU learned?

Jock: I have learned the good and the bad about the horse world; the honesty and the hypocrisy. I have learned the difference between people who shout out they love horses, and those who can prove it.

And I have found more and more people throughout the world are starting to listen to the horse's needs, not just taking what the 'stars' of the equine world market as gospel. As Ray Hunt said, "Caring about your horse is not about keeping it in a cell for 23 hours a day and taking it out to torture it for one." (exact quote August 2006 UK). The horse's world is changing, and owners and riders are starting to realize that the horse is an athlete that must be cared for at all levels - physical through emotional - and regular gentle bodywork is just one of the important tools for this task.

I have also learned there is no such thing as a horse that cannot be helped to some degree. The Equine Touch may not be the answer for every horse and every problem, but it is a way to help, just as proper nutrition, foot care, dentistry, training, and correct environment are. I have learned that there is no such thing as 'the way', but if you care enough to learn at least some of the 'ways', you might just save your horse someday.



Jock demonstrates the Equine Touch forehead release.

NHM: We understand that Equine Touch has been awarded "UK accreditation" - what does that mean, and what does it mean to Equine Touch?

Jock: Accreditation means quite simply that students of the Equine Touch in the UK will earn formal Educational Credits for each course they attend, which will go toward them getting degrees or accumulating them to earn sufficient points to enter colleges

or universities. The fact that The Equine Touch was the first, and as far as we know the only, equine bodywork discipline to achieve this status gives great credibility to ET, and to its practitioners and students - as well as a mountain of extra paperwork for the instructors to complete.

NHM: In regards to performing ET and teaching it, who has had the most influence on you?

Jock: I have to say without a doubt my wife Ivana. Her consummate desire to study and research into that which I developed intuitively is what, more than anything else, has turned ET into the world-accepted discipline that it now is. There are times when I slip off into some weird place I cannot describe when a problem is presented to me, and my inner voice tells me how to address what I am feeling under my hands. After debating with me what I had done, she - as a veterinarian and former lecturer in anatomy - then takes it and with her outstanding anatomical knowledge makes sense of it, systematically records it, checks its safety and hazard potential in my teaching it to students as well as the possible reason for using it from an allopathic point of view, and then locks it in for research and ultimately teaching.



Jock with some Equine Touch fans in Australia

NHM: How has ET been of help to horses around the world?

Jock: Our mission statement is simple: "To help horses by educating humans". We have been doing that for ten years now. Before we came along there was really nothing out there that concentrated on giving horse owners an affordable system that was teachable, recognizable, critiqueable, and correctable which they could perform on their horses, and which worked. I am not certain how many thousand students have taken at least the Foundation Clinic, but I do know we are teaching in 18 countries around the world and the list is growing annually. Several of these countries have no vet services to speak of, yet we continue daily to get positive feedback from students, practitioners as well as horse owners, reporting reduction of pain, changes in behavior, improvement in motion and performance, as well as the unbelievable incidents where horses virtually at the last moment have an amazing reprieve from death.

NHM: What amazing things have you seen and experienced with this bodywork?



Jock and Ivana with Ray Hunt

Jock: We have had some pretty amazing reports of recovery from a cobra strike in Africa, to complete relief from chronic sciatica in Australia, to a total recovery from cancer in Texas. However my favorite story, sad thought it may be, comes from England. One of my students went to catch her horse only to find it literally screaming in pain and hobbling in the field with a severely broken leg. The vet was at least an hour away, and the horse was in agony, the leg broken in two places. My student could think of nothing else to do so she started to perform the basic Equine Touch and slowly but surely her horse started to calm down. When the vet arrived the horse showed no sign of pain, stress or anxiety and was grazing quite calmly. It then came to its owner, rested its head nuzzling deeply into her chest, as if preparing itself for receiving the final injection. The vet was so astounded by this that the next week he started to refer his clients to the owner, who at that time was only a Level 2 student.

NHM: How has the veterinary community viewed Equine Touch?

Jock: As you know ET was originally only taught to veterinarians in Europe and it was they who told me to go out and teach it to horse owners. Since then we have had the support of every vet that has come across our work anywhere in the world. Two equine specialists, Dr Judith Shoemaker in PA (the first American veterinarian to see ET in action and a firm and loyal supporter of ET ever since), and Dr Luann Groves in San Marcos, Texas (who not only attended the courses herself but has built an ET Center where Ivana and I base ourselves when we are in the USA) actually recommend their clients to learn Equine Touch to maintain the health of their horses. We who perform Equine Touch do not diagnose; we are non invasive; we do not call what we do a therapy; we do not treat diseases or injuries; we only perform a 'discipline' which experience has shown has a positive effect in relaxing the horse and assisting it to attain the state of local and holistic homeostasis. When in this state, the horse's own extremely powerful healing system can kick in at its maximum potential,

and so remedial results which were never deemed possible are often achieved by the actual horse itself. The vets appreciate this and many of our practitioners now work in conjunction with, and have work referred to them by, veterinarians world wide.



Jock gets a lick of thanks for a limb stretch ET style.

NHM: As a horse-friendly and user-friendly practice, ET has proven to be very helpful in the care and maintenance of horses. What common horse practices do you see as detrimental to horses, and have you found ET to help un-do their ill-effects?

Jock: Unfortunately ET cannot overcome much of what egotism, stupidity and greed can cause - but we are educating humans to help horses, and these caring humans may be un-doing a lot of wrongs in their own way before they get out of control. I suppose these are harsh words, but I am passionate about caring for the horse. When I saw the injury to Barbaro I was sickened. What a beautiful animal - the muscles developed to their prime, but the bones totally no where near ready to undergo such concussion and stress. Two-year-old races are criminal; the horses are not ready, and while ET can help the horse's recovery, and though we have many recorded cases of this happening, we cannot perform miracles. The system has to change for the protection of these magnificent animals.

When I first came to the United States seven years ago, the 'natural' horse community was in a frenzy over a particular style of barefoot trimming. I became one of the first people to speak out against it, as I saw sound horses founder, coffin bones rotate, and hooves collapse as owners and amateur trimmers tried to make all horses'

hooves look the same, and like fanatical surgeons carve out the inner sole as well as everything else that is supposed to bear the weight of the horse. ET tried to educate people and I made many enemies, and still do, as I speak out about these well meaning people who were innocently and blindly following along, crippling and in some cases killing their horses. Thankfully now people like Pete Ramey and KC La Pierre are providing good solid practical information regarding the hoof, in their clinics and through magazines like Natural Horse. As a result we have noticed a great improvement in barefoot hoof care both in the USA and overseas.

NHM: Where do you see Equine Touch going over the next ten years?



Jock demonstrates a 'hip release'.

Jock: I think without a doubt that by 2017 ET could be the most commonly used equine bodywork discipline in the world practiced by horse owners. In May this year we are holding our first Instructors Clinic. This is a big and somewhat scary step forward. But our mission statement is "To help horses by educating humans". To continue to educate, we need educators. After over seven years of being on the road teaching clinics, Ivana and I feel the time is right and that we are ready to teach instructors and so the finest of the finest have been selected and hopefully by the 1st of June we will have 28 Instructors in 19 countries around the world spreading the teachings of ET.

On top of that we have our own style of mobilization and limb stretching as well as a Canine Touch section. So we are growing every day, and while we may end up teaching classes in every country in the world, our mission statement will always remain the same. The more horse owners that we can teach to care for their horses, to understand their horses' needs, to improve the quality of their lives, the better.

Equine Touch is a continuously evolving discipline based on a solid foundation of soft tissue vibrational bodywork. Five years ago there were no practitioners; now there are over 300 qualified, working away throughout the world. By this summer there will be 30 qualified Instructors; in ten years time, who knows. There are still a lot of countries left to visit, thousands of horse owners left to teach and millions of horses

left to work on. In ten years time there may be no more cars, and maybe every community - and maybe everyone - will be learning and using Equine Touch. 🙏🙏

About Jock:

Jock Ruddock pioneered The Equine Touch, and with his veterinarian wife, Ivana Ruddock, has turned the Equine Touch into a discipline that is now recognized and applauded by all who see or use it, including veterinarians throughout Europe. The Equine Touch, a rebalancing, retraining, and some would say healing modality for the horse, is the first non-diagnostic, non-invasive, energy and connective soft-tissue discipline in the world to be awarded national accreditation status in the United Kingdom. Visit www.theequinetouch.com.