

Five minutes with... endurance rider



Rachael Claridge

As Editor Nicky Moffatt joined Rachael on the Golden Horseshoe endurance ride, there was plenty of time to find out what makes this long-distance champ tick

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

Our first pony, Magic, kept dumping me in a showjumping lesson. My mum told me to "get back on that pony and try again!".

What's the most exciting thing you've ever done?

I worked in the Rocky Mountains as a wrangler/cowgirl at Bitter Root Ranch, Wyoming, USA. It was unforgettable.

I keep fit with yoga, pilates, swimming, riding, walking the dog and mucking out – it's great exercise!

What's your biggest achievement to date?

It has to be riding for Team GBR at the World Endurance Championships in Dubai 2005 on Silver Mistrahl, who our family bought as a four-month-old, and who I broke and trained myself. So it was a real family team effort.

Do you get nervous before a ride? If so, how do you cope?

Sometimes nerves can be a good thing. I write lists or verbalise my thoughts to friends, family, work colleagues and my horses, so that I don't forget my goals. It helps to keep me focused and them informed.

Which rider do you admire most?

Jane James, a former Team GBR endurance rider.



Top training tip

When it comes to endurance riding, it should be about quality – not quantity – of training and you should try to make the training fit into your lifestyle. Therefore, if you only have 15 minutes a day free during



Rachael goes the distance on her pure-bred Arab gelding, Maarhabi

Photo: Ian Wigley

How do you relax?

I love to ride across countryside with fabulous views (in nice weather!) with my Labrador, Haya (below). Then I look forward to a relaxing bath, glass of red wine and meal with my boyfriend, Adam.



What's your most hated yard chore?

Dusting the stables after the winter – I hate spiders.

What can't you live without?

All my horses and my beloved dog (sorry Adam!).

Quick-fire...

Bitless or bitted?

Bitted – Western-style

Greys or bays? Close call, but greys tend to be better for endurance in hot weather, although bays are better for keeping cleaner!

Trot or canter? Canter, because it's a more efficient pace and helps build core stability in horse and rider

Britain's Got Talent or X Factor?

Britain's Got Talent, but don't normally find time to watch TV

Indian or Chinese? Chinese

Mares, stallions or geldings? Stallions

Hard ground or soft ground? Soft ground

Brad Pitt or Johnny Depp? Difficult one this, but Johnny Depp

Cats or dogs? Dogs, but like both