

Tegan Lush (ious)



Story **Chris Hector**
Photos **Roz Neave**

This month's rider of the month, is the Western Australian eventing rider, Tegan Lush, who finished the 2010 season in great style – winning the Young Rider Title at Australian International Horse Trials before going on to take out the CIC*** at Camperdown.

Tell me about your gorgeous horse?

"He's a seven year old Thoroughbred, never raced, but he came 25 metres last in a thousand metre trial. The stud that we picked him up from, used him as a lead pony! He was a three year old, never jumped, never seen a pole on the ground. Now four years later, I've got him doing three star..."

When did you discover he was something special?

"Probably the first day I met him. The first day, I said, this horse is a real gentleman. He's good fun to ride, he had a really cute character. I had bought him to sell him on, and just fell in love with him and said, nah, even if this horse is no good, I couldn't sell him – he's too cute to have around."

He has such a lovely gallop, I was surprised you had time at Camperdown?

"I deliberately went slowly. He had a quick run at Adelaide, and he's the kind of horse that you can't go quick on, in consecutive runs, or he ends up just getting a bit hot headed. The Thoroughbred in him comes out."

Was he tricky with the dressage?

"He was just green. His last dressage was the two star test, so here at Camperdown, he was a little confused by the flying changes being re-introduced. There are no basic problems, he just got exuberant, trying to do changes everywhere, that's normal for a young horse."

Who helps you with him?

"Sonja Johnson mainly. I have had lessons from Megan Jones while we've been over in the east. I've been based in her place in Hahndorf, and managed to grab some lessons while she's been jet-setting around. I have had lessons with Ron Paterson when he comes over from Queensland. It's a whole group of people."

What do you do when you are not riding a horse?

"I study full-time as well. Externally through the University of New England. I'm half way through Criminology."

How ambitious are you?

"The aim next year is to be qualified for the London Olympics and to do Adelaide Four Star, up and on from there."

Do you think you will have to move to the Eastern States to do that, or can you do it out of the West?

"I'm pretty confident that we can do it out of Western Australia. Sonja is a really good example of that. Our events are definitely up to standard – Sonja's had such a big influence on the courses. I don't see why we can't just travel over here to get the qualifications when we need them."

That trip through the water at Camperdown, looked a little Sonja-ish...

"He's very exuberant in water, so I was a little bit scared of that water jump and I thought it might be like that, but he is very good at locking onto the skinnies out of the water, so I am lucky in that respect."

He seems very honest?

"He is, he would jump anything, he's just a gem to ride cross country."

It must have been a big thrill to win in Adelaide?

"It was. To be the first clear round showjumping was so exciting, and to have the WA cheer squad there, just cheering me on, that was really good fun. And then to be able to stand there and watch as I moved up the placings, was something else."

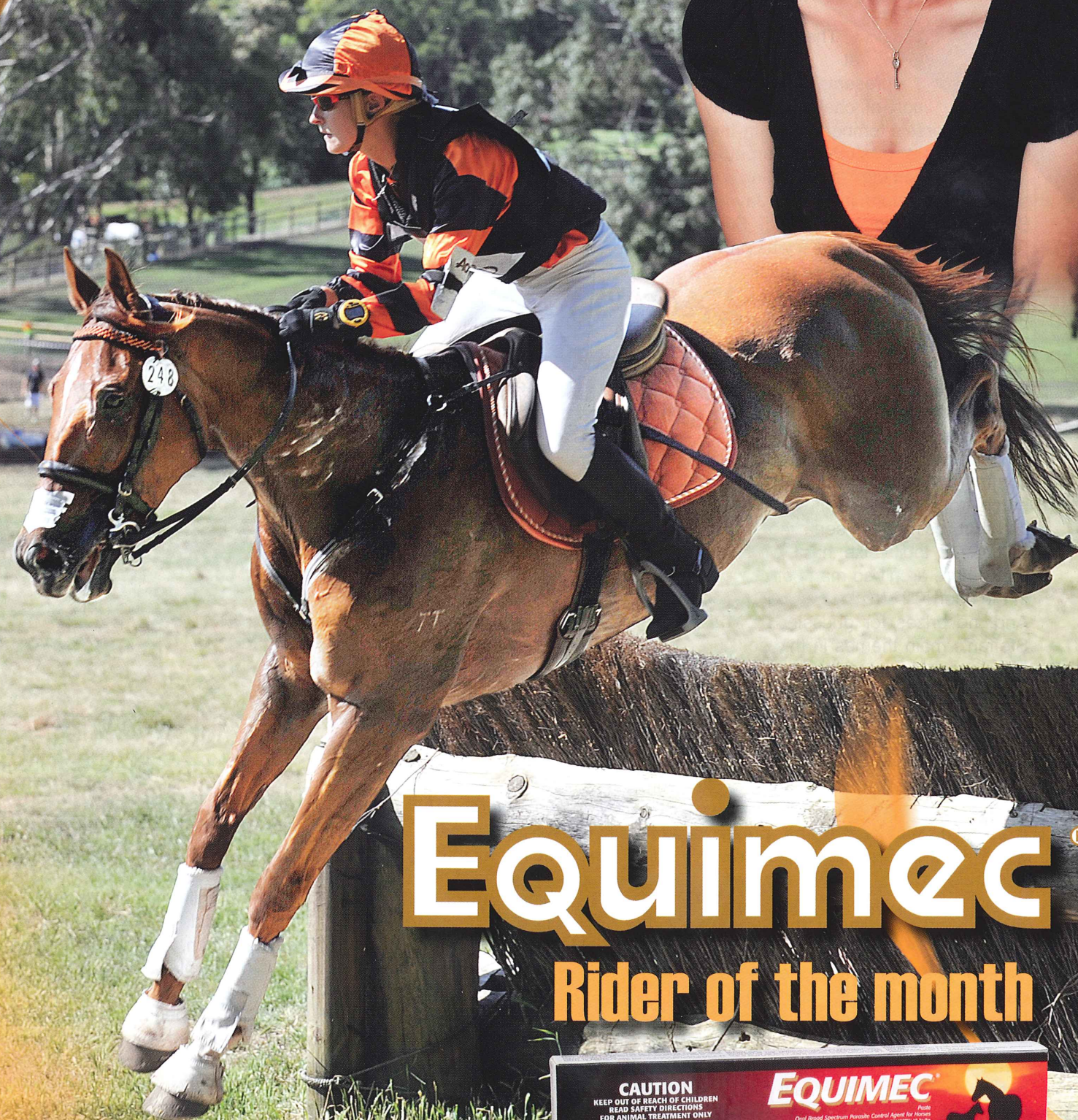
How old are you?

"Twenty one, so it is my last year on the national young riders squad."

And here comes London...

"Hopefully, fingers crossed, that's what we are aiming for."

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