

Ali Perkins' Grant for Training With Mica Mabragana

I was given the incredible opportunity to spend the month of December at Hampton Green Farm, in Wellington, Florida, training with Mica Mabragana. I met Mica four years ago when I was a part of Lendon Gray's WIT program. Since then, I have worked and groomed for Mica. This was my first opportunity to ride with her regularly.

We began by focusing on riding suppleness and swing through all of our work and movements. Mica taught me to warm up in "dinky trot." "Dinky trot" is where the trot is small and balanced. I was challenged to ride my horse extra through and truly connected in the dinky trot. I rode this through all of my lateral work. Once the "dinky trot" was easy, we rode the trot with more energy and ground cover while keeping the suppleness. Adding this to my warm-up made a huge difference in the rest of my ride. This degree of suppleness was key to building muscle and flexibility in my older horse, as well.

Another area that we focused on in my lessons was the super collected work (piaffe and pirouettes). Mica really focused on helping me with the transitions in and out of both the piaffe and the pirouettes. Just focusing on the transitions added a whole new degree to quality to the movements. We focused on getting his hind legs more active and on the spot, as well as keeping him better connected and through.

A huge benefit from training with Mica was having her get on and school my horse every so often. Mica has an incredible feel and is able to get the horses very loose. It was very helpful for me to watch Mica school my horse and hear her feedback. After she worked him, I would get on and feel her adjustments. My horse felt great after Mica rode him! As a visual learner, it really helped me to see how I wanted to ride my horse.

For the rest of the season, I will be working for Lendon's WIT program. Mica is the assistant trainer for the program, so I get to continue working with her once a week. Having the opportunity to do this intensive training with her before the program have us the opportunity to get to know one another and figure out what to work on. I just compete Grand Prix in my first show of the season. Mica came and coached me. I am very thankful for my time with Mica, and hope to continue working with her back in New England. Mica is a fabulous equestrian in the stable, as an instructor, and as a rider. I am sincerely grateful for the time that I have spent with her! Thank you!

