

The Wisconsin Wonderteam



Alisa Bernhard of Germantown, Wisconsin, wasn't sure she'd be accepted as an Amateur. A former Number 1 Youth 14-18, Alisa drew confidence from her cool-headed show partner, Fleetstreet Max, who she trained.

"I felt out of place," said Alisa Bernhard of her first few shows as an Amateur. "It was weird. People who were watching would tell me, 'You don't look like you belong in this class.'"

"I would think, 'Oh, great.'"

Such comments, however, probably referred to 20-year-old Alisa's teenager-next-door looks—not her ability to exhibit horses. By the time she turned Amateur in 2004, the Germantown, Wisconsin, native had already proven that she was an excellent horsewoman.

With her 1997 sorrel overo gelding, Fleetstreet Max, Alisa earned more than 2,260 points during her Youth career, two world championships and three reserve world championships. Alisa and "Max" ended their stint in Youth as the 2003 World Show All-Around Youth 14-18 winners and the 2003 Number 1 Youth 14-18 team.

Still, as she and Max entered the ring for their inaugural Amateur show, Alisa was nervous about whether or not she would be accepted as an adult.

"I didn't expect the judges to take me seriously at my first show in Tucson last January," said Alisa. "But, I actually got three usable top 20 scores there. That really got my hopes up for my new Amateur career. I was thinking that maybe it wasn't going to be as bad as I thought."

Alisa's optimism didn't last long. Accustomed to being at the top of all of her Youth classes, she soon found that winning Amateur rail events was difficult because of the number of specialized Amateur horses.

"Reality hit during the next few shows," said Alisa. "I was used to bringing in all these points, and it wasn't happening in some of the events. Being an all-around competitor is hard when you're going up against specialized horses."

Alisa reached the turning point for which she had been yearning during the World Show. There, she and Max fulfilled their goal of winning a hunt-seat equitation world championship.

"We'd come so close to winning hunt-seat the last couple of years," said Alisa, "that when we finally won



Alisa (shown with John Briggs and mother Susan Bernhard) was especially proud of her and Max's 2004 honor roll win in showmanship at halter.

it, it gave me a lot of confidence. I felt like we finally hit our stride."

In addition to the world championship, Alisa and Max earned top-five finishes in Amateur showmanship 19-44, working hunter and trail; and made the top 10 in Amateur hunter hack, Western horsemanship and Western riding. These successes tied them with Carly Veldman and Picasso By Q for World Show All-Around Amateur honors. Two tiebreakers later, Alisa found herself holding the Reserve All-Around Amateur title.

"I was just proud that I did so well my first year as an Amateur," said Alisa. "I can't feel bad about that."

After the World Show, Alisa took a two-month rest from showing. Then, one day she logged on to the APHA Web site and discovered that she was in the running for the number one Amateur spot on the Top 20.

"I had flip-flopped back and forth all year," said Alisa. "So, at that point, I made the decision to really go for it."

"That meant my poor dad [Rich] had to go to a few more shows with me than was expected."

Alisa and Max finished the year with 472 qualifying points, an Amateur Versatility award, Superiors in six events and, of course, the title of Number 1 Amateur. They were also at the top of APHA's Amateur Hunt-

Seat Equitation, Showmanship at Halter and Western Horsemanship Honor Rolls.

"Winning the Showmanship Honor Roll was big," said Alisa. "That was another year-defining moment for me." P

Alisa Bernhard's Year at a Glance

Trainer: Alisa does her own training. Additional coaching by John and Jill Briggs, Pilot Point, Texas.

Horse: Fleetstreet Max, a 1991 sorrel overo gelding by Fleet Machine and out of Cash Bar Maiden AQHA. Bred by Susan Bernhard of Germantown, Wisconsin.

Qualifying Points Earned: 472

Awards Earned: 2004 World Show Reserve All-Around Amateur; world championship in Amateur hunt-seat equitation; Amateur Showmanship at Halter, Hunt-Seat Equitation and Western Horsemanship Honor Roll champion; Amateur Versatility award; Superiors in trail, hunter under saddle, Western pleasure, Western horsemanship, hunt-seat equitation and showmanship at halter; Registers of Merit in hunter hack, Western riding and working hunter.