



Farm Feature

Idlenot Farm Patricia Norcia Dressage

The long-standing name of Idlenot Farm in Clinton has been synonymous for its dairy production, but horses have always shared a piece of the beautiful, quiet property. Years later, the warmth and charm of the original dairy farm still remains, but with an addition of stalls, grass paddocks, and a spacious indoor arena. Idlenot Farm now sits in the care of owner and dressage trainer Patricia

In love with the feel of the Iberian horse breeds and the graceful beauty of dressage, Patricia absorbed all of the classical training the horses received in their schooling and returned with a thorough knowledge of how to work with Iberian breeds.

For 20 years, Patricia pursued a career as an actress and director in New York City, but kept dressage at the heart of her passions. She imported her first

“The best gift that I can give to the horses is to make as many balanced, supple, straight, and knowledgeable riders as I can.”

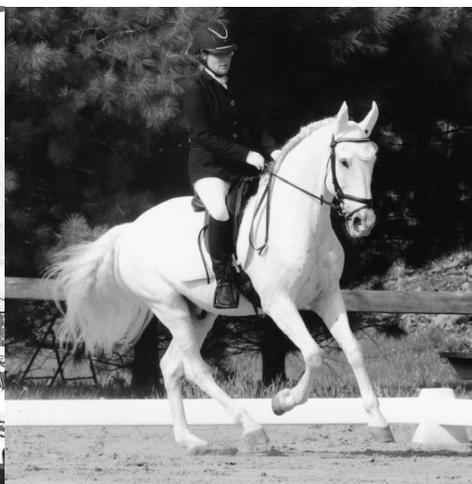
“I try to create a very intimate setting that people can learn in, where the rider can take a riding lesson and it will just be the student and me in the ring,” says Patricia. “You can feel free to be embarrassed, but also focus. I create a riding experience where you can feel



Patricia Norcia and PRE Valiente.



Asty.



Donna Dunn and Astyages Interagro.

Brenda V. Cataldo

Norcia who has revived the grounds with a classical style of horse riding.

Patricia's worldliness and incredible talents blossomed from a young age. A native of Rome, Italy, she grew up in New York City in a musical family with a love for artistry, classical guitar, and dance.

When she was 14, Patricia began riding at the local equestrian school on Long Island. She lessoned as a jumper and branched off into trail riding, but was still looking for her niche in the sport.

“I knew that I wanted to do something that was more artistic and then I saw dressage,” says Patricia. At 25, she dove in headfirst and travelled to study the origins of the discipline in Europe. “I took my first trip to Spain and that was it! I had the opportunity of working with a great man. I studied with Luis Ramos Paul, the head of the Spanish Riding School, for seven years and got certified there.” (Patricia is also certified with the British Horse Society and the American Riding Instruction Association).

beloved horse Valiente from Spain and her family of equines quickly grew, as she rode in the city in Riverdale.

“Why don't you teach, Patricia? You can work off your board,” others said, encouraging Patricia to change course. Patricia was riding competitively and in Baroque exhibitions. “With four horses, board was more expensive than my apartment in New York, so that's how Idlenot Farm started,” Patricia says.

It was Patricia's husband who initiated the move to a rural farm, where they would raise their two children and she could accommodate her expanding student clientele. Idlenot Farm was a stark contrast to the city, but the ideal, intimate setting to import more horses and train with them.

“We specialize in alternate breeds — Baroque horses (PREs [pura raza española], Lusitanos, Lipizzaners, and Friesians), Morgans, Quarter Horses, and others,” says Patricia.

“The goal of the training here is to create a horse that is in balance, on the haunches, and light in the hand — a very classical way of riding,” she says.

safe, feel comfortable, but more importantly, ride on educated horses.”

Smiles and hellos are kindly exchanged between every person that passes in the barn aisles and the love shared for the friendly bunch of much-loved horses is greater than any achievement in the saddle. A handful of dedicated, young ladies eagerly help out at the barn for extra lesson opportunities and to simply spend more time with the horses.

Patricia's daughter, Francesca Edwards has been learning classical dressage from her mother since she was eight and now teaches alongside her. Francesca has inherited both her mom's charisma and passion for horses — there's no challenge she hesitates to approach.

Idlenot Farm focuses on all aspects of both competition dressage in United States Dressage Federation (USDF) and International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) levels, as well as classical exhibitions, which allow for creative expression through choreography and costumes. “There are two schools of

dressage — competition dressage and the more classical French school, which is what I was trained in. I'm very well versed in competition dressage, as well, so we cross-train, which is really the modern way," says Patricia.

Lisa Schmidt, a USDF "S" judge, instructor, and Grand Prix competitor in dressage, met Patricia during her time in Riverdale, New York City. Lisa regularly comes out to Idlenot Farm to give clinics and teach, where she is continuously impressed by Patricia's approach.

"What has always struck me about everyone I've taught there is that they're completely dedicated to Patricia and believe in her training methods," says Lisa. "Many people have been with her for a very long time. Most impressive to me is all of the youth, of people under twenty-one, that she draws to her barn and the opportunities that she gives them to learn about horse management. She has so many horses that she puts her students on that give them different feels and experiences. She's always very encouraging and every baby step is an important step. It's such a great opportunity to see different aspects of dressage."

"I travel quite a lot, judging as well as giving clinics across the country," says Lisa. "I see quite a lot of farms, different horses, and types of people and I have the most fun whenever I visit Patricia."

Kathy Crockett, one of Patricia's dedicated clients and an Idlenot Farm boarder, discovered more than a love for dressage when she and her then strong-tempered mare, Belle, newly came into the discipline together.

"I've been with Patricia for eighteen months," says Kathy. "In that time, I've learned cumulatively more than in my thirty-plus years of riding. I've always wanted to get my PhD in something and I feel like I'm getting it in dressage. You know everything that's going on both within your own and your horse's body. Patricia strives for a position in accuracy, and tenfold, in this time I have seen my ability as a rider and my confidence go up, as well as my mare, Belle, blossom into a very relaxed, more balanced, and physically healthy horse. Patricia is a miracle worker for horse and rider!"

Perhaps what draws and keeps many people at Idlenot Farm is the well-rounded training. There's a superior amount of work done out of the saddle on rider fitness. Patricia, who maintains a consistent, core exercise routine her-

self, advocates that all riders must first and foremost find their own center and balance when learning to ride.

"We have a big interest here in bodywork," says Patricia. She and long-time client Donna Dunn have developed a widely popular Pilates program geared specifically toward equestrians of all disciplines.

"When I hit a riding plateau, Patricia told me, 'A horse and rider are a pair and one can't get better without the other,'" says Donna. Donna tried different ways of exercising to improve her seat and knew she'd hit on something when she took a few Pilates classes and saw a dramatic difference in her posture, core, and everyday aches and pains.

"I knew right off the bat that this is the missing link to riders improving," says Donna. "Patricia teaches all the nuances of riding and it's great for people who like to understand. I've gotten into the biomechanics of it as well and I've been able to adapt that with my Pilates training to help people work out issues."

Donna and Patricia develop custom exercises for Idlenot Farm's students and locate the specific areas to reform.

"[There are] clients who are collapsing to the left or can't separate their upper body from their lower body," says Donna. "I can develop exercises to help people identify and correct those issues. The goal is to make that become an unconscious correction so that it doesn't take away from the quick, instant aids you need to give the horse."

"I have people who come to me, who are falling all the time and getting injured," says Donna. "I teach them how to stabilize their powerhouse in unexpected situations and with that strength comes confidence — a confidence that their body now knows what to do to offset that."

The 14 stalls at Idlenot Farm cannot often accommodate new boarders, but Patricia offers lessons at private barns and many of her clientele are happy to trailer in to the farm.

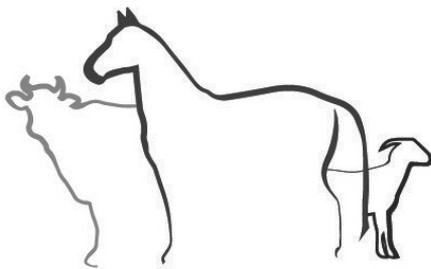
Patricia is always moving forward with her work and enjoys delving into the creativity of dressage. For years, she's drawn from her artistic roots and choreographed dressage routines for the Dancing With Horses company — a stunning concept where horses and dancers express movement and emotion in musical performances together.

Patricia also creates one-of-a-kind opportunities for her clients that extend beyond the ring. She organizes annual trips abroad to visit the prestigious riding schools of Italy, Spain, and France so her clients can see firsthand how the horses they ride and own become as gracious and intelligent as they are.

Idlenot Farm is uniquely built on the belief that a connection and deep understanding between a horse and rider are the pivotal part of learning and success.

"We try to integrate the artistic aspect of dressage with really good training," says Patricia, walking with boots painted in mud and a horse in hand. "It's beautiful and it's creative. It's like you're dancing — you become one with the horse and you're both dancing!" 

Singer/songwriter Lara Rudowski enjoys performing, spending hours at her piano composing, and writing stories and spoken-word poetry. Inspired by travel and the everyday details of life, she can often be found, camera in hand, at equestrian events capturing her love of horses and riding since childhood.



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