

THE SECRET TO A HAPPY MARRIAGE

After riding as a child, Rachel Hilton, a consultant nephrologist, never dreamed she'd take up the reins once again. Then one Christmas she and her husband Terry went to watch the showjumping at the London International Horse Show, Olympia. Terry who is a Professor of Renal Pathology at Imperial College London, was inspired by watching 61 year old jumping legend, John Whitaker. Much to Rachel's amusement he said "I want to do that! So he researched Wimbledon Village Stables, booked a lesson, fell in love with a horse called Jazz and nagged me to join him". So after a 30 year break Rachel found herself back on a horse and totally hooked!

Rachel had never considered owning a horse again after growing up with her own pony, "I was worried about the trouble and expense of owning a horse compared with the convenience of riding other people's horses but I knew Terry was keen". Then one day, out of the blue she received an email from the stables asking, "Have you ever dreamed about owning your own horse?" Within seconds she found herself replying: "Yes!" Wimbledon Village Stables takes the stress out of horse ownership, "The horses have a marvellous life and we can be as involved as we like, knowing that if we go away our horses are receiving five star care."

A year after buying their first horse the couple began consider a second horse. "It was surprisingly hard to share a horse. We didn't argue over Bertie but it became clear as our riding progressed that we were looking for different things in a horse". They took the plunge and Merlin joined the family!

Having a shared interest has added another dimension to their marriage, even their holidays have turned into horsey expeditions! "We talk about the horses all the time and have pictures of them everywhere on our laptops and social media" laughs Rachel, "I definitely think the secret to a happy marriage is having a horse...EACH!"



"Our non-horsey friends think we are bonkers" smiles Rachel, "But compared with sports cars and expensive shoe collections it's a relatively harmless addiction! Our children know we are spending their inheritance but haven't made a fuss yet!"

Juggling work and home life can be tricky for the professional pair whose high stress roles can be very demanding. Both work very hard on their non-riding days to support their equestrian lifestyle which Terry explains has become an essential way for them to unwind and de-stress: "It is also very important to maintain fitness and strength as you age and riding is a very enjoyable way to do it. Wimbledon Common and Richmond Park are two of the most beautiful places you could wish to ride, we are very lucky".

If you have been contemplating starting or returning to riding then why not consider Wimbledon Village Stables?

Perhaps, like Rachel and Terry, you can enhance your life in more ways than you could imagine. ■

THE DETAILS

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