SPILL the beans! - Scarlett Ward

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In our SPILLERS SPILL The Beans Series we get to interview a variety of our fabulous professional customers and find out more about them. We find out who inspired them to get serious about horses, what kit they can’t live without, and ask which is their favourite SPILLERS feed, of course!

This month we caught up with Yorkshire’s Scarlett Ward who was practically born in the saddle…

Please introduce yourself - who are you and what do you do?

Hi, I am Scarlett Ward. I am a rider from East Yorkshire and I run a yard with around 15 sports horses. Showjumping has always been my primary focus but last season I started to event a few of our younger horses and really enjoyed it! It gave me a huge appreciation for the sport of Eventing, and I am aiming to split my time more evenly across the two in 2025!

How did you start with horses?

I am fortunate that I was practically born into the saddle! My Grandmother was an international show jumper before latterly running a stud, and my grandfather rode and trained racehorses, so it was in my blood. My mum was also a showjumping groom, so I had

a good grounding in all aspects of horse care, not just the riding. We had ponies and took showjumping fairly seriously from an early age.

Who was your inspiration growing up?

I was completely obsessed with John Whitaker (still am!) A tough Yorkshire man who can win on anything? Sold!

Of course, I also always looked up to my Gran as she seems to have done it all - Showjumping, point to pointing, training racehorses, breeding, the list goes on. Although I didn't appreciate how incredible she is until I started to manage my own yard of horses.

What's your lifetime horsey highlight?

Without question it would have to be finishing second at The London International Horse Show riding Milena 8 in the British Under 23 final. I was based with (the then world number 1) Ben Maher at the time and to be able to compete at such a prestigious 5-star show, under Ben's careful guidance, was a special point in my career.

And what's challenged you the most working with horses?

Injuries!!! The list of bones I've broken doesn't make for pleasant reading - the worst fall I've had resulted in a broken neck and back in five places, and a sprained knee and ankle. It takes such a lot of time and hard work to get fit and have a strong team of horses in place and an injury (horse or rider) can put a stop to it all just like that.

If you could spotlight one special horse, who would it be and why?

I’ve had a few incredible horses but the horse that stands out is Milena 8, she completely transformed my career. Previously, I’d only ridden up to 1.30m, mostly on young horses or ponies. She showed me the ropes and gave me so much experience. Together we jumped my first World Ranking classes and first 1.60m Grand Prix. She still jumped to 1.40m level at 20 years old, when we retired her from jumping. She continues to compete in the show ring as a Veteran on long term loan.

I can’t not mention Calista H who was one of the most talented yet complicated horses I’m sure I’ll ever come across. We enjoyed a lot of success, but she taught me how to work outside of the box to tailor a plan to a horse who liked to do everything backwards!

If you have a horse free ultimate luxury/fun day – what would you be doing?

There would have to be some kind of nice restaurant involved, paired with some retail therapy. It’s nice to get out of my breeches every once in a while!

What’s the one piece of horse equipment you can’t live without?

My 3.5t lorry - it gets used every day of the week! It’s just so handy and we can all drive it which is bonus. It does more miles than my car!

What is your No1 top tip for managing your horses/yard?

Never leave a stone unturned when it comes to preparation. Fail to prepare, prepare to fail!

What are your goals for this season?

This season I would really love to have some competitive results Internationally eventing. I have a lovely 7yo who is about ready for a 2* so watch this space!

Which horse in your yard do you think is a rising star we should look out for?

We have some really exciting young horses. I have a very flashy 5yo by Hardrock Z who will hopefully start in the ring this year and he looks to have all the ingredients to be top jumper. He’s leggy, beautiful, scopey and careful!

What’s your best piece of advice for up-and-coming riders?

Keep it simple. A lot of people want to over complicate things but often the simple answer is the best one, both in and out of the saddle. Also, if you believe in your plan, stick to it. Don’t let others steer you off course if it works for you.

And finally, which SPILLERS feed is your favourite and why?

We absolutely love SPILLERS Conditioning Fibre. Every horse on the yard eats it and looks great on it.

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