



Senior Spotlight!- Lila McDougall on Eventing Course Design

When asked about why they chose their senior projects, most seniors might tell you about their passion for their topic, their intense curiosity about a specific idea, or their simple love of the project. Lila has all of that and more. She joins our FaceTime call from a virtually empty room, explaining that she's leaving for Florida soon and has been packing for days. Lila explains that she's been lucky enough to be able to

take her project to another level. She's packing up and moving to Florida for her experiential learning and to practice course design in real time. When asked about her inspiration for the project she laughs "I wanted to go to Florida." Lila already had the connections and internships all set up, her mentor and friend, Meredith Scarlett owns a 100 acre eventing farm which hosts local schooling shows. Lila has spent much of her life at the farm and is devoted to eventing and the horses. Lila expresses excitement about being able to explore a new aspect of a sport that means so much to her. Her trip to Florida not only gives her a chance to focus on her senior project, but also offers an opportunity to connect with her community, a chance to improve her riding, and an exciting opportunity to talk with three real course designers!



Lila says that for her product she will design five different courses for the five different levels of eventing held at Scarlett Hill Farm. She will use everything she has learned from the designers to adjust her courses to fit the different levels of eventing. When asked about the most interesting thing she has learned so far Lila immediately lit up. She explained that horses see the world differently than humans do. She says that because horses are prey animals their eyes are on a different part of their head so they have blindspots that humans don't. They also have certain color blindness that course designers need to keep in mind when designing obstacles. Lila remarks that for this reason she's always been told not to bring a yellow umbrella to an event. Horses often have trouble with certain shades of yellow and blue. Apparently, color contrast is very important in the designing process and knowing this has helped Lila evaluate her own riding more clearly.



While in Florida Lila has the ability to do online school from her computer. Online learning, she says, has made her trip possible. It has made both her and her father more comfortable with her absence from school as she gets the opportunity to not only focus on her project while traveling but also continue her school work without a problem.

Lila has nothing but good things to say about the Parker community. Her teachers, she says, have been very accommodating and willing to work with her. All of her teachers have been willing to adapt their materials, plans, and curriculums when Lila has needed it and for that she is grateful. She is especially appreciative of her advisor, Debbie, who has helped Lila make the most of her project.



In tribute of gateway season and our absence from Parker, the last question Lila answered was "If your senior project was a fruit, what fruit would it be." Lila thought long and hard about her response before declaring that it would be a mango. "Not everyone has had a mango" she explains. A mango is different and a bit unique and just as many don't fully understand mangos they may not understand eventing and course design. However, once they get to understand it they will learn to love and appreciate it just as much as Lila does

