



TOURISM

I am pleased to introduce former Equestrian Olympian Silver Medallist Megan Jones, still busy competing, instructing and most importantly being a mum! Bill Nehmy

BN: Megan, please can we start with an overview of your early years, where you were born, went to school, your early plans and aspirations?

MJ: I was born in Adelaide at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I went to school at Arbury Park in Stirling. From 10 years old after being a spectator at the 1986 world championships in Gawler, my olympic dream was firmly cemented!

BN: Please can you elaborate on your Olympic career and experiences including winning team silver medal at 2008 Beijing Olympics.

MJ: Getting to the Beijing Olympics was a very organic progression, almost like a fairy tale. We bred our horse Kirby Park Irish Jester from our stud (Kirby Park) in the first batch of foals.

He was born in my last year of school and it was my goal to go to the games on this horse.

Dreams like that rarely work out in this sport so I was very blessed.

I firstly got to the 2006 World Championships in Germany and won a team bronze medal and that was my first senior international team.

A number of riders from other countries actively pursued me to buy my horse Jester but no amount of money could buy me my Olympic dream and I knew I had the right horse, the right partnership and the right dream to make it a reality.

Coming home with a silver at Beijing with my horse that I had bred, broken in, trained and won a medal (first person to have ever done this) was very special.

The medal has meant so much to the whole team including my friends, family and fans.

Then pushing on to 2010 World Championships and

2012 London Olympics it made me realise how hard it was to get the medals I had.

Jester suffered travel sickness/pneumonia on the trip ending my world champs run. Then our Kirby Park entrant Floyd unluckily finding something sharp to stand on in the 2012 London Olympics resulting in me withdrawing him the day before competition.

BN: If you have visiting friends or relatives and you want to give them a memorable Adelaide Hills day, what do you recommend?

MJ: Breakfast at the Chase Chocolate Notes (Woodside main street) then on to Woodside Heritage Park (Melba's Chocolates & Confectionery, Woodside Cheese Wrights and Chesterfield Whiskey factory).

Other favourites include Green Valley Strawberries Café near Nairne including pancakes and seeing Jan at Barrister's Block Winery. I am very food driven on my days off!

While I have focussed on Woodside here, we do explore our diverse region and we pinch ourselves regularly living in the beautiful Adelaide Hills.

BN: What do you think is the most significant tourism opportunity waiting to be realised in the Adelaide Hills?

MJ: The people... it is such a big place but you are always made to feel welcome like a big country town. There is so much here that you are always discovering new cafes, wineries, distilleries etc.

Just come and say hi to someone and you will find a new discovery almost every time.

BN: Please share any other key interests/activities that might surprise us!

MJ: I am a keen chef... when I get the time I love to bake for my husband James



(he is the main cook in the house) but I just don't get time as I am always riding, teaching or competing.

BN: What advice would you give a young person in respect to finding the right career and to have an enriching life?

MJ: No matter what you

choose always follow your heart with what makes you happy because you will always be willing to put in the hard work.

Thanks Megan for giving us the opportunity to get to know you better.

You deserve the 'juggling' of the year award!