

Shayan was referred to me while I was looking for a suitable Spanish horse to buy or lease. As a disabled rider new to CA, finding an opportunity to take lessons or ride at all was proving impossible. My knees are shot, so I am unable to use stirrups or use leg pressure for aid, plus I have chronic pain and fibromyalgia that have been constant and limiting for the past 15 years. Most people just see a liability, not someone who has been in the saddle for 35 years and just needs a chance. My dreams of replacing the Lusitano I had to leave in Germany and continuing to study classical dressage in the US just seemed hopeless and I was close to giving up when I met Shayan. He is one of the only people I've met who understands my desire to be a better rider – not just a passenger -- and shares my own passion for the unique Iberian horse and all they can do. He not only gave me a chance to take lessons and motivated me to not give up, but also went out of his way to help me locate a suitable horse and train her for my needs. I've known Shayan about two years now and he has become a dear friend and still pushes me and my horse to give our best.

While giving me lessons to improve my seat and years of bad habits, we finally found Esperanza. She was a green broke 5-year Azteca mare in poor condition that was advertised as a 2nd level dressage horse in someone's vast imagination. The "trainer's" demo ride was not impressive and my own test ride was uncomfortable and discouraging. Essy could barely be ridden and was in terrible condition, with a mouth like lead and unable to even pick up a canter. Her sweet character was all that held my attention. Shayan's top concern was to find a horse for me that was levelheaded and would be safe and comfortable for me in my condition. He rode her and was able to see through her current condition to what she could become in addition to how willing and intelligent she was. My trust in his recommendation and her soft, sad eyes won me over and I have not regretted it.

In just 10 months, Esperanza barely resembles the horse I bought. She is well muscled and carries herself balanced and rounded with little effort on my part. He found a bit that she responds to well and has made her sensitive to hand and even my weak legs. Her gaits and transitions are smooth and she collects easily despite her less-than-ideal conformation. She has lovely lateral work with shoulder-ins and half passes in all gaits. Shayan has her doing very tight circles in all gaits too, which is required for Garrocha work. He is currently teaching her lead changes and the Spanish walk. I now have a wonderful horse that is a quick learner, knows more than I do, and one on which I can enjoy learning to ride correctly! I can take her over and through any obstacle or trail and safely wander the hills alone with her. It is hard to believe that only a year ago Esperanza was too unbalanced to canter and could only be stopped by running her into a fence. Shayan has gone beyond his initial promise to find me a safe, smooth horse to enjoy!

Shayan can truly train a horse while maintaining its spirit and love of people. Being cruel does not do this nor does letting the horse be in charge, both of which are commonly seen in training. When working with my young horse, he gives her frequent rewards and breaks which keep her relaxed and eager to please. He works both in the arena and on the trails, breaking things up to keep her mind engaged. His training approach is unique in too many ways to describe, but the results speak for themselves. Horses and other animals are visibly drawn to him as he is to them. He's the kind of guy that would pull over to pick up an injured squirrel or take in an orphaned deer. The horses sense this and give him their hearts.

Riders and horses of all ages, levels, and disciplines will benefit from what Shayan has to teach. Whether you are a parent looking for a safe horse and quality lessons for your child or an advanced rider stuck in a rut and unable to figure out why, he is a man who can and will help you. He is dedicated, hard working, unique, honest and truly talented. One lesson is all it will take to feel and see a difference in horse and rider, and give an idea of where he can take you or your horse!

Jennifer S. Martin

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