

Samples of Questions to Ask a Potential Clinician:

Questions

- How long have you been instructing and giving clinics?
- What type of clinics do you give?
- What level of rider is qualified to attend your clinics?
- What topics do you cover in your clinics?
- Tell me about your clinic participants?
- Do you have repeat clinic riders and auditors?
- Do you review goals with riders? Do you help rider set goals for the clinic they attend?
- How would you describe your teaching philosophy?
- Do you have any published materials such as books, DVD/videos, Articles, Instruction/Training Manuals, other publications?
- Do you have a website and/or social media page?
- Have you heard of Western Dressage?
- What do you know about Western Dressage?
- What is your philosophy about working with a Western saddle?
- Have you ridden Dressage? At what level did you/do you ride?
- Who did you study with for Dressage? (Check out the person they studied with)
- Have you shown Dressage? Where? What level? What scores have you achieved? What awards have you received? (Many clinicians do not or did not ever show. A show record is not a qualifier to advertise in this section, nor stated as a sole determiner of an individual's quality.)
- Have you given Dressage lessons? What level did your students achieve?
- Have you trained Dressage horses? If so, to what level?
- Do you give Dressage clinics? What are the elements you like to cover?
- Tell me about the Dressage training pyramid?
- Do you offer Western clinics? For what types of Western riding? What are the elements that you cover?

- Have you ridden Western? What type of western riding have you done (Western Pleasure, Reining, Trail Classes, Ranch Horse, Gaming, etc.)?
- Who did you study with for Western? (Check out the person they studied with)
- Have you trained Western horses? For what events?
- Have you shown in Western Classes? If so, what classes? What awards have you won? (Many clinicians do not or did not ever show. A show record is not a qualifier to advertise in this section, nor stated as a sole determiner of an individual's quality.)
- Have you given Western lessons? For which events?

Observe

Audit a few of the clinician's clinics, if possible given geographical considerations. Review any materials which they offer; try to read print articles, books etc. as well as watch any DVD's, programming, webinars, etc. that the clinician produces or takes part in.

- Is the clinician clear in their instruction?
- Are they clear in their teaching methods?
- As an auditor can you understand what is being asked of their riders?
- Are the clinician's methods comfortable to you and your learning style?
- Do the riders and horses look happy?
- Are the riders having fun?
- Are auditors welcomed?
- Does the clinician take questions from the auditors as well?

Reference Checking

Ask to speak with three (3) or more clinic/event hosts as well as three (3) or more clinic riders and/or auditors. When interviewing the hosts ask them:

- What they like best about the clinician?
- Did they see progression from the riders?
- Did the clinician have a clear plan for the progression of riders and offer assistance and supportive material to help riders reach the goal?
- Are they happy with the clinician?
- Did they have fun with the clinician?

- Do they have any concerns about the clinician?
- Would riders from your clinic return for a follow up event with this clinician?

Ask your vet, farrier and others about their opinion of the clinician that you are considering.

Selecting a “perfect” clinician can be a challenging process. The listed questions and resources are not exhaustive and only one of many tools for evaluating important areas in considering a clinician to teach the desired topic and/or skill set(s) to your riders and horses.

Many published guidelines will advise that as you seek a clinician you should evaluate the area(s) in which you and your horse need assistance or would like to improve and be conscious of your strengths and weaknesses. Since Western Dressage merges traditions from the Western events and Classical Dressage, finding a clinician to complement the discipline area in which a horse and rider have *less* experience *may* result in a more rounded educational basis toward Western Dressage.

Western Dressage is an emerging discipline. There is no certification and limited references in place to validate a clinician. As with any equine activity there is a risk of individuals offering “Western Dressage” clinics, instruction and training who may not have the qualifications that you desire. The Western Dressage Association® of America strongly recommends that you thoroughly research individuals; have a list of questions which are especially important for your anticipated clinic riders and audience; speak to and try out a minimum of three (3) clinicians; and follow your instincts to make your selection. If an individual does not feel right, try another instead.

This document is intended as one of many resources to assist the potential clinic host with their decision making process. This piece is not exhaustive to this subject and not universally inclusive, as it does not cover related topics, like the financial, business and organizational aspects involved in hiring a clinician. This piece is planned as part of a series in reference type documents, which cover various aspects of this process.

The preceding reference questions and articles provide samples of how to find an instructor and/or clinician, as well as examples of information to request from that person. Again this is not an exhaustive set of resources and the Western Dressage Association® of America takes no liability for the contents of these questions and articles.

Articles Regarding How to Find a Clinician:

- http://www.bukisa.com/articles/661941_finding-a-clinician-what-are-you-looking-for/