

A Horse Of A Different Color Is Laura Reece's Perfect First Horse

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Danash's Northern Tempest is not hard to find at the Winter Equestrian Festival (Florida). She is quite literally spotted.

The 7-year-old Friesian-Appaloosa (Danash K—Chief's Bold Angel) stands out from the bays, grays and blacks traditionally found in the hunter ring. But owner Laura Reece knows "Dani's" coloring is not her only defining quality.

"Dani is just a fun, willing horse," Reece said. "If you chip something or land awkwardly, she doesn't care. She just keeps going. She's got a really great demeanor about her."

Reece grew up competing on her high school's equestrian team in Newtown, Pennsylvania, and her riding career was spent primarily on lesson horses. While in college, Reece took a break from horses to focus on her academics. Though she loved the sport, work and life kept it on the back burner. But when her second daughter started riding lessons at DeVaux Farms in Berryville, Virginia, Reece decided to swing back into the saddle.

"It is nice to get to have the time to spend on it again," Reece said. "That's something that's nice about riding. It's something you can do when you're 5 or you're 85. It's a lifetime sport."



Ashley Glica with Danash's Northern Tempest. Photo Courtesy Of Laura Reece

In 2017, Reece and her family moved to Palm Beach Garden, Florida, where Reece began riding with Ashley Glica at ATG Equestrian. Soon she started searching for a horse of her own. Early in their search, they found a promising listing on [dreamhorse.com](https://www.dreamhorse.com).

"Dani was just so quiet and so well behaved for [Reece]," Glica said. "She wasn't finished by any means. She was a 4-year-old with no lead change. But we took the jump, and we bought her."

At 16.3 hands, Dani has a commanding presence coupled with her standout look.

"She is an incredible animal and really smart," Reece said. "She is very willing and very trainable, and that is what makes riding her a pleasure."

Reece, who runs her own travel agency, Reece Worldwide Travel, competes Dani in the rusty stirrup hunter division, and Glica takes the reins in the green hunters.



Laura Reece and Danash's Northern Tempest won a circuit championship during ESP's holiday series. Anne Gittens Photo

In addition to the hunter ring, Dani's résumé includes low-level dressage and packing around novice riders. Reece believes Dani's non-traditional lineage contributes to her all-round suitability and talent in competition.

"Her conformation is just like her mother's, but her father was a Friesian, which contributes to her movement as well as her size," Reece said.

Reece does sometimes worry that people focus too much on her mare's flashy color rather than her performance.

"I think as soon as we walk into the ring the judges decide if they like us or not because she doesn't look like your traditional hunter horse," said Reece.



Ashley Glica competing with Danash's Northern Tempest in the green hunters. Sportfot Photo

So Reece focuses on the elements of her performance that she can control and continues to meet one goal after another with Dani.

"Laura's riding has gotten so much better, and she's just learning to believe in herself," Glica said. "With Dani, eventually I'd like to take her to the derbies. Her form has gotten so much better this summer. I really think that we're going to go far with her."

While Reece is hoping to "have that perfect hunter round" at WEF this season and is aiming for circuit champion in the rusty stirrup division, it's her partnership with Dani that matters most.

"As an adult riding, you realize that it is not about the ribbon that cost 25 cents," Reece said. "It's about how you behave, your horse behaves, and how you work together in the ring. If you have a great round, and if you did your best, then you already won."

Do you know a horse of an unusual background competing in hunters, jumpers, eventing or dressage? Email Kimberly at kloushin@coth.com.

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