



BALANCE SADDLE CONSULTATION WITH BIRGITTA BERGSTEN BALANCE REG. SADDLE CONSULTANT



Thank you for contacting me in order to find out about the **BALANCE** Saddling System.

I met Carol Brett and Lesley Taylor way back in 1992, and at this time I was still interested in competing in dressage and eventing. I had a lot of challenges with my horse, and according to a lot of people around me at the time, the biggest problem was that my horse was an ex-race horse, and worst of all, a mare. Hmm, luckily I did not believe them, but I never thought our challenges were saddle related. Carol, together with my mare told me differently, and it did not take a lot to convince me.

I have very set ideas about riding and how a horse should move, mostly learnt from my Swedish trainer, mr Petrus Kastenman, and Carol, Lesley and the **BALANCE** saddles solidified these believes in me, now with a greater understanding.

Efficient bio mechanics in a horse is a must for me, but sadly I have learnt this can mean different things depending on who you talk to. I do not accept research that has been done on the ridden horse, because horses are specialists on compensating their movements, and have they been ridden regularly in a saddle that is too narrow, their compensation patterns will have become habits. But I do accept research done on horses that have had NO interference from human beings. I hope this makes sense to you.

A consultation is **not about selling you a saddle**. I am not a sales rep, and I am not even employed by, or paid by **BALANCE** to come and help you to help your horse. I am only a very passionate horse owner/rider who would like to offer others what I have myself been lucky to learn from Carol and Lesley. So, for this to work, I have to ask you for a consultation fee, see the Consultation Application Form. Otherwise, I would not be able to travel at all. In case of late cancellation from your side, less than 48 hours prior to your appointment, I will have to charge you full amount, unless I can fill your appointment with another client.

The consultation starts with a theory session without horses, I use a presentation with photos and pictures, especially helpful if you are not fluent in English. This will give you a lot of information about how **BALANCE**, started, and why, you will learn about **BALANCE's**, and mine, view on Efficient Bio Mechanics in the horse, and how this relates to saddle design and fit of the saddle. I will not proceed to try the **BALANCE** saddles without you having heard this first, because it is important for you to understand us, and how this system work. Even if you are a professional! You don't have to have the same view, but you need to understand **BALANCE** and how the saddles are designed to be used.

After the theory, I will measure your horse across the back behind the wither area, in order to have a record of the shape of your horse on the day of the consultation. I will also take 6 photos, and I encourage you to make your own set of photos. I will assess the muscles on your horse, and I will also want to see your current saddle if you have one.

The riding part is for me to assess the quality of your horse's movements, in your own saddle, and then in the different **BALANCE** saddles. This is how I can find out what your horse needs - or you can say, your horse chooses the saddle. Walk and trot without too much influence from

the rider, in correct speed of the tempo is the most helpful. 'Dressage' riding is not helpful at this stage. Once you and I have an idea of which saddle and pads your horse needs, then, and only then, you can try canter, more dressage movements or even a jump.

It is helpful for you if you have another person at hand to do some video recording. It is not always easy to get a feel when things are new, so a video you can watch at home afterwards would be perfect.

You need to have access to a fairly flat area, round pens are not big enough, I need to see you ride in straight lines.

In case of rain, I am grateful if a covered arena is at hand, although I know it is not always possible, but it helps to keep the saddles in good condition. If the conditions are too bad, I reserve the right to cancel your consultation, in which case you don't pay me.

I will have a good selection of **demo saddles** with me for you to try. I have stirrups and stirrup leathers, and a selection of girths to use in the consultation.

In many cases I will show the **Remedial Program**. Have in mind, some horses will need to do the remedial program first, to recover muscles and posture, before choosing a saddle.

Most of the horses I see will have been ridden in saddles that are narrow and fitted close to the horse, so in most cases these horses have learnt to move in a way that looks natural, but is not. Changing saddle is only one step. The horses will need help to remember efficient movements, and I am very fond of Carol Brett's Remedial Program. It is safe, it is in fact simple, although not 'easy', it is not about teaching the horses a new trick, it is reminding them about something they already know but forgotten.

In the case where it is appropriate for the horse to choose a saddle, **I will help you to fill in** the order form at the end of the consultation, which you need to buy the saddle from **BALANCE**, so it has the correct saddle and pad details with prices on. You keep this form, and **YOU decide IF and WHEN you want to buy the saddle**. The consultation is valid up to a year afterwards, but if you need more time, I may have to see your horse again to make sure he/she has not changed the shape from losing muscles, or vice versa - in which case the original choice of **BALANCE** saddle/pads might not be appropriate anymore. It may only mean a different combination of pads, but the same saddle, width and style.

If you think what I offer is more than what you need, have in mind there are **BALANCE registered Test Ride Facilitators** that can help you. They are all experienced horse people, having had a **BALANCE** saddle for many years. They offer you a simpler version of what I do, where you get help to try the saddles. You find their contact details on www.BALANCEinternational.com

I do regular trips over the year to quite a few countries in Europe, travelling from the South West France. Most of these trips are advertised on the **BALANCE** website, on my own website and Face Book. If you end up as a client of mine, you will be on my emailing list, and you will receive my Newsletters that also advertise my trips, and interesting reading, tips etc. All trips are generated by requests from clients.

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