

Dear Birgit,

When you asked me to write a reference for you, I wasn't sure where to begin. Over the years I have explored and examined several different methods in horsemanship and have watched and participated in a few clinics as well. I learned about numerous different methods, and kept coming back to Chris Irwin. His methods just make the most sense, with no gimmicks. As so many women, I took time off from horses to start a career and a family, and in my late 30's I decided to get back in the saddle. After taking lessons with you, my riding skills and my confidence increased considerably, but more importantly, my horses responded better to me because I was communicating better with them. I was so pleased with what I learned, that I signed up my kids for lessons with you. Now both of my kids are confident beginners with solid foundations. They still have a long way to go, but at least they are smart, safe and respectful around our horses, which makes our horses more respectful around them. A few years ago, Dan and I were fortunate enough to add Sam to our herd. As you know, she is a rambunctious 4-year-old shire who knows how to "throw her weight around". I was hoping to train her myself (the fool that I was) and we managed to get her to the point where she was comfortable with a saddle and rider on her back, and a bridle and bit in her mouth. We rambled around the roundpen, but never ventured beyond that. She didn't really know what we wanted her to do, and we had no idea how to teach her. That's when we decided to hand her over to you for 30 days of training. It was the best money we've ever spent on a horse. We are now able to ride her on the roads, through all kinds of trails, and with other horses. She understands walk, jog and lope, on the ground and in the saddle, using our legs as well as voice commands. She stands quietly when we mount, and best of all, she knows NOT to run us over when we lead her around. Without your training I am certain that Sam would have been a very expensive moving lawn ornament, with lots of untapped potential. Birgit, I have recommended you to anyone I know who needs an excellent horse trainer or riding instructor, and I will continue to do so for years to come.

Thank you for being there for us.

With deep respect,

Riette Kenkel

Valemount, BC

January 3, 2011