

Three weeks became two years at Flag Is Up Farms

Certified instructor Anna Kerckhoff on her wedding in Las Vegas, her time at Flag Is Up Farms and her future plans

Yes, I do! Nervous, happy, and excited I am holding the sweaty hands of my newly wed husband. We are in the little white wedding chapel in Las Vegas, surrounded by ten friends, two of them my dear friends and fellow Monty Roberts instructors Kasia and Sally.

How did we - Claudio from Brazil and I, from Germany - end up in Las Vegas?? Well, the reason was: Monty Roberts.

Claudio and I met in Australia watching the final game of the Soccer World cup – Germany against Brazil! Germany lost 3:1 but I won this night: it was love on first sight with this handsome veterinarian in his Brazilian soccer trikot!

On our trip from Australia to Portugal, where we want to live, we made several stops, one in California. Being crazy about horses since early childhood I read and watched everything about Monty Roberts. I thought „may be I can check out myself, what is behind the `horsewhisperer` legend“. On the website I found information on the volunteer program: at that time you could work at the farm for two weeks and get a free Join-Up clinic. Claudio and I applied. We were in Brazil on the beautiful island „Ilha Grande“, when we got the good news. I screamed through the whole internet cafe to Claudio: We are accepted!!!

That's how we got to Flag Is Up Farms. Three weeks became two years. I worked off the Introductory course and got accepted into the instructors program. We were trained for several months in all aspects of horsemanship and teaching. Then the big moment came: we would get intensive training in working with green and remedial horses with Monty himself! One of the horses was Gigi, a pinto filly. I was in love with her from the first moment and couldn't resist adopting her from the PMU rescue farm. The training with Monty was of course absolutely amazing and we received an immense amount of knowledge on starting horses, gentling babies, ground manner training, trailer loading, dealing with remedial problems, etc. Personally, I learned a lot about security the hard way: when I put the first rider on Dante, a Thoroughbred cross gelding, he took off bucking, got the rider in the dirt and landed on my foot. I was lucky: two vets took care of me and x-rayed my foot in our living room - nothing was broken!

I worked as an assistant instructor for six months and got certified as an instructor in July 2004. Now it is time to finish our trip to Portugal. We arrived in California with a backpack each and our little pup-tent. Now we are moving to Portugal with three horses, two dogs and far too much stuff! We will offer courses in Monty's Join-Up methods in Portugal and hope to spread the word and transfer the knowledge that I so generously received at Flag Is Up Farms.

I am taking my husband by his hand, that is not sweaty anymore and we make our way to Portugal. Hope to see all of you there!

More information on Anna and Claudio at: www.horsemanship-portugal.com, info@horsemanship-portugal.com, ph. +49-176-50055413

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