

Glenormiston Finnegan is a very special young gelding who is out and about around the Sunshine Coast, attracting a lot of attention. He has the gorgeous, proud presence of a classic grey stallion. Everybody notices how beautiful he is, and they also notice that he knows it. But he is not at all arrogant about it – simply matter-of-fact.

He knows he was meant to be a stallion and still is struggling to come to terms with the fact that he isn't one – periodically he likes to show that he has the presence and courage worthy of a stallion. I have had a chat with him and assured him that he can do as much to promote Connemaras, if not more, by being a brilliant showjumper and eventer for me and making up for my own inadequacies. Time will tell if he accepts my theory, but so far it is looking promising.

He loves all the attention he attracts wherever we go and is willing to talk to anybody that comes up to meet him. I remind him that it is only as a gelding that he is able to go to so many places and get so much friendly attention. Some of his admirers recognise his breed and say things along the lines of how they had a Connemara when they were a kid, and how it was the best pony they had. Others don't know what breed he is, but are so drawn to him that they have to come up and find out.

I take Finnegan to Pony Club meets, to the Showjumping Club, to Hunter Trials, to One Day Events and to Competitive Trail Rides. For those who don't know about Competitive Trail Rides (CTRs) they are run by Sunshine Coast Trail and Endurance Riders (SCATER). The rides range in length from 18 km to 28 km through the various forests in the area. Riders have to travel at 8km per hour, and there are a number of judge sections in the forests where horse and rider are required to do various tasks that test the obedience of the horse and the relationship between horse and rider.

The first time I entered Finnegan in a CTR ride, he won a trophy for third place. Immediately after that I had a number of people ask me where they could get a clone of him. At the Hunter Trials and One Day Events he points out to everybody how sensible a horse can be as they stand and wait in the start gates. None of the silly prancing about from Finnegan – he knows he may as well stand still while he's got the chance! The kids at Pony Club think he is picture perfect; the little girls recognise the unicorn of their dreams. At the showjumping club people are noticing what a natural jumper he is and he is being talked about quite a bit. Add to that the fact that my jumping instructor (a rider and trainer of great reputation) just loves Finnegan and believes that he is the perfect sort of horse for people who want to jump and have fun, from beginner level through to novice. He says he is a much better sort of horse than a thoroughbred or warmblood for most riders. How's that for promoting the breed? And all that has been achieved in only two and a half years. When Finnegan decides that being a gelding is a great opportunity for him, I'm sure he really will grow wings and become the unicorn of this (not-so-young) girl's dreams!