

SADDLES.

The quest to find a saddle to suit both the horse and rider can sometimes seem a daunting one, but advances in saddle technology and adjustability make it possible.

Charlotte Dujardin got in touch with Vanessa Fairfax of Fairfax Saddles when she was having issues keeping saddles still on her rising star, Gio. At barely 16hh the extravagant moving, short-coupled chestnut has the conformation and movement combination that causes the greatest saddle stability issues.

“Gio has certainly been a challenging saddle fit, but thanks to the adjustability and various built-in fitting features of our saddles, I was able to adjust the saddle on the spot to suit his shape and movement,” says Vanessa. “And it’s not just Olympians who can benefit from a bespoke fitting service – we work with a nationwide network of qualified saddle fitters who adjust and fine tune the saddle to the horse on the day of the actual fit, so the rider can feel the difference for themselves,” she explains.

Fairfax saddles are changeable through seven widths of gullet bar, so the saddle can easily be adjusted to suit the horse’s wither profile. Charlotte’s choice – the World Class Monoflap – has two panel options and the deeper one was best suited to Gio’s back shape, providing the ideal saddle balance.



ABOVE LEFT: IDEAL'S DRESSAGE SADDLES ARE DESIGNED ON A VARIETY OF FRAMES, FROM THE SOPHIA, WHICH OFFERS A NARROW SEAT FOR THE RIDER AND SUITS A MORE ANGULAR HORSE... **ABOVE RIGHT:** ...TO THE OLIVIA WHICH HAS A FLARED ARCH FOR THE BROADER, MORE POWERFUL MOUNT.





“Girthing is also crucial to optimising saddle stability,” says Vanessa. “That’s why the World Class comes with three girth straps on each side, so different options can be test ridden.” For Gio, Vanessa selected the first (point) strap to stop the saddle moving forwards and the third strap to stabilise the back of saddle. This, combined with the Narrow Gauge Fairfax Performance girth which is shaped to avoid the active musculature behind the horse’s elbows, ensured optimal saddle stability on Gio’s compact frame.

Having focused on getting the fit right for the horse it’s important to ensure the rider feels at one with their horse and this is where Fairfax’s scientific research into horse and rider synchronicity comes in. Charlotte was able to customise the combination of seat and flap size on the Fairfax World Class Dressage which allowed her to feel in harmony with Gio’s flamboyant movement.

All riders can benefit from this research because Fairfax offers customisable seat and flap options to suit their individual physique, along with two choices of twist width.

A HAPPY OUTCOME

After months of saddle sitting, Vanessa was driving around in the seat with a deep and regular seat, which was a real relief for her. She was able to ride with confidence and the saddle was stable and secure. She was able to ride with confidence and the saddle was stable and secure. She was able to ride with confidence and the saddle was stable and secure.

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LEFT: CHARLOTTE DUJARDIN'S GIO HAS THE CONFORMATION AND MOVEMENT COMBINATION THAT CAUSES THE GREATEST SADDLE STABILITY ISSUES BUT THE FAIRFAX WORLD CLASS MONOFLAP HAS TWO PANEL OPTIONS AND THE DEEPER ONE WAS BEST SUITED TO GIO'S BACK SHAPE, PROVIDING THE IDEAL SADDLE BALANCE.