



After an extremely busy 2013, **Izzy Taylor** looks back on her year and looks forward to an exciting 2014. The big question is: how will she be preparing?

Taylor's targets

FINALLY THE 2014 season is here and Team Taylor is raring to get going. I've never made New Year's Resolutions, as I've always viewed them as a failing proposition and I'm not really a negative person. However, from the start 2013 brought lots of changes and so many 'firsts' for me and my loyal team of Owners, sponsors and supporters

that I have been thinking about what I'd like to accomplish in 2014 ... clearly winning the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials, even more so now they have increased the prize money for the winner to £80,000 from £65,000 – a great incentive.

I'd now like seconds, or more firsts if I am being honest! I'd love to be chosen for the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games held in France at the end of August – clearly there is going to be hot competition for selection and to have made my debut last year as an Individual in the HSBC FEI European Championships 2013 in Malmö, perhaps I should be happy with that – but I'm not...

It's been a testing couple of months with the rain, then flooding, the wind, the mud, the cold and the frost and for me it's been an exceptionally busy winter – lots of hunting, which keeps me sane through the drudgery of the weather. With an ever-expanding yard, plans have been afoot for an American barn, which will be a godsend; this tied in with lots of recruitment has meant long days. I'm not complaining, though, as spring is within our sights, with longer, brighter days on the horizon.

I haven't been skiing or on a sun-kissed beach holiday – due to my competitive nature I thought it best to steer away from the slopes as there's too

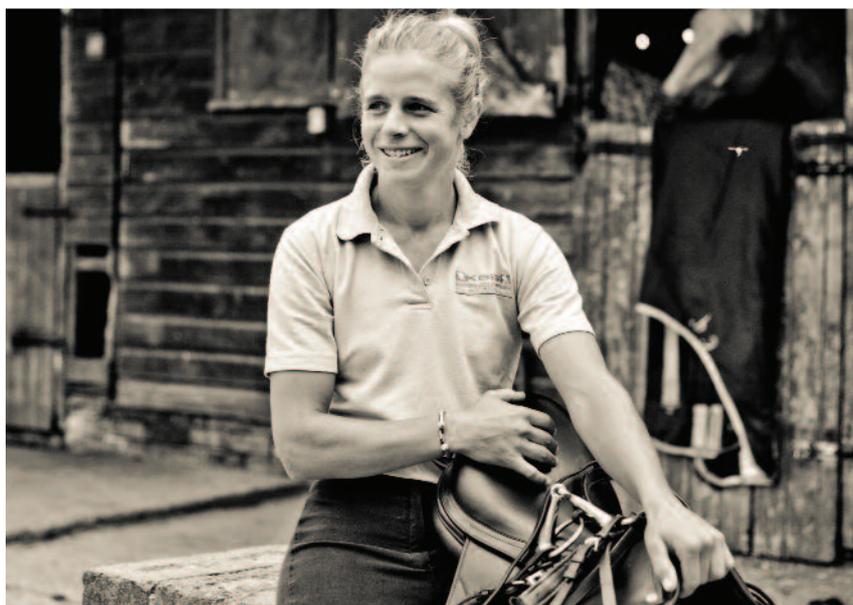
much at stake for my 2014 season to end up being injured! Plus, I can't sit still for long enough to enjoy a beach holiday. So it's been all about the horses. I believe in the old-fashioned methods of plenty of hacking, roadwork and early season fitness work. The likes of KBIS Briarlands Matilda, KBIS Starburst, It's Chico and not forgetting

Orlando have returned to me from their holidays with their owners and are all back in work. Some (seemingly KBIS Starlet, Doris) have thoroughly enjoyed their hunt outings balanced nicely with regular schooling sessions with Yogi Breisner and Sarah Ward. If mucking out, riding and general yard duties weren't enough to keep me fit, thanks to Yogi I have also found the benefits of an Equicizer used in the racing fraternity mostly. If you search on the internet you'll understand why no one is allowed to witness me riding it! If there was ever a way to gain core strength, stability and technique I can recommend it wholeheartedly, but it's not for the faint-hearted – I could only manage a minute to begin with. Freddie and Lily love the Equicizer and it has nearly taken over from Toffee Taylor!

Being part of the Elite Squad, with World Class funding by UK Sport and the Lottery, is such a privilege as we have meetings, training sessions and one-to-ones with our performance Coaches, which keeps us up to date with changes in new CPC legislation for our HGV licences ready for September 2014, updates on travelling horses into Europe via the Channel Tunnel, and latest rulings on the FEI Clean Sport regulations for human and equine anti-doping.

On a lighter note, for those of you who watch *Horse & Country* TV, keep an eye out for my starring debut in a new series of Uvex adverts, complete with up-and-coming junior superstars. Suffice to say Team Taylor won't be signing up for an ITV2 fly-on-the-wall documentary!

In the meantime I will be planning for and entering the horses into their Events for the first part of the season, so my main aims for now are Fontainebleau, Lexington and the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials. Until next time ... 🐾



MARK FAIRHURST

“ I believe in the old-fashioned methods of plenty of hacking, roadwork and early season fitness work ”