

THE FEATURED PROFESSIONAL

Deborah Long

Tucson AZ 85730 United States



Hiking volcanoes, kayaking, and zip lining. Oh, and riding, too.

There's little about Long Farms that is run-of-the-mill. Head trainer Debbi Long has owned and operated the business for over 30 years, offering a solid training program that is seasonally based in Tucson, Arizona and Idaho.

Several years ago, Long connected with Chilean trainer Matias Fernandez, who is well known in his home country as a grand prix rider and Pan American Games veteran. As their relationship evolved into a business partnership, Long and Fernandez realized that they could offer riders something that went far beyond their expectations.

Which brings us back to the kayaking.

Together, the two trainers bring a unique international experience to their clients. Why not organize a semi annual riding trip to Chile, they thought. Fernandez could use his network to find international level, affordable shows for those who wished to compete, and set up riding time at various sale barns for those who were horse shopping.

These days, traveling to Europe to ride and at times compete is fairly common among those whose pocketbooks can support it. And similar trips to the Southern Hemisphere are rarely considered.

Long and Fernandez are changing that, and presenting Chile as an appealing destination for riders who want to gain more experience in the saddle and experience the culture of a foreign country.

And a few extra vacation-like perks don't hurt, either.

"On our most recent trip, they hiked volcanoes and kayaked and zip lined, along with going to different barns and riding," Long says. "They also saw the biggest jump in the Guinness World Record. Some were trying horses and some were just riding different horses."

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The Long Farms group relaxing at dinner.

Meanwhile, Back Home

Long Farms is just 15 minutes away from the University of Tucson in Arizona, and Long crosses paths with many students who bring their horse to college, and continue riding and showing between studies. With a show schedule that includes nearly 20 shows per year, Long and Fernandez spend their fair share of time on the road, and are always happy to return home to the Farm.

Long and Fernandez import many Chilean-bred warmbloods from the Southern Hemisphere; prices are often easier on the pocketbook than importing a comparable horse from Europe.

"We have the experience of myself who has been in the business for 30-40 years and Mattias, a talented rider and trainer from South America," Long describes. "Between the two of us we are able to utilize getting the best out of our horses."

Both trainers have been riding for all of their lives. Long grew up in Southern California's Pasadena area, where she trained with the late Jimmy Williams at Flintridge Riding Club. After college and a

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move to Northern California, she worked with Rudy Leone and Dusty Blackwood, importing and working with young Warmbloods.

While she competed up through the levels all the way to grand prix, Long's strongest point, and greatest passion, is helping young riders learn to grow through horses.

Fernandez enjoys teaching as well, while also being focused on his own riding career. He has worked in Europe with Leon Melchior and John Whitaker, and has competed extensively for Chile. He's a veteran of international competitions such as the Pan American Games and the South American Championships, and his biggest win to date is the famous international Grand Prix at CSI "Sol De Mayo" in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Long Farms strives to be different, yet effective with their training. Long takes pride in her students' success and takes every step needed to point them in the right direction. While a trip to Chile is rare, it offers a unique experience that most young riders wouldn't otherwise receive, therefore, taking them one step further on the path to success.



Debbi Long, showing in Oregon in 2012

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