

both riders and horses really enjoy the process of training and learning.”

COURTESY OF NICKY VOGEL



**Name:** Nicky Vogel

**Home base:** King George, VA

**Why I got certi-**

**fied:** Growing up in England, Vogel “started in Pony Club, worked

up through the ranks,” and went on to the British Horse Society exams while doing “all my horse stuff around ‘real’ things that I could do for a living”—including Cordon Bleu chef training. Declining a “very good job” as a chef in Australia, she chose instead to go to the US to work on her BHS top-level exam for three months. (That was 20 years ago!) Finding that her BHS credentials weren’t well recognized here, she enrolled in the USDF “L” program, then the USEF “r” (she recently earned her “R”). She also took USDF instructor workshops with Debbie Bowman, Lendon Gray, and Lilo Fore.

“Debbie encouraged me into doing Second Level certification and then pushed me into doing Fourth Level certification—though after the first time, I’d said, ‘I never wish to do this again.’ Funnily enough, Bailey Cook and I both said ‘never again’ after Second Level—and then both showed up for Fourth Level certification in the same year.”

**My students:** “Since passing my Fourth Level certification, I do a lot more clinics,” including an average of four a year in Bermuda and one a month in Pittsburgh. “Then I have my local students—my ‘little diehards,’ I call them: adult amateurs who just clock around year in and year out, just wanting to learn and improve their riding. I have a bunch of juniors, too; they’re fun, though I keep saying they owe me a dye job every so often because I’m getting gray hair. I also teach a few husbands who want to go trail-riding with their wives and be safe. Recently, I helped Corine Barber to her associate certification and Lisa Hall to her Second Level certification.”