



## The Focus Factor

Randy G. Roy shares his insights into judging with two books. (Quick tip: Stay focused!)

By Michael Giltz

AFTER 35 YEARS of judging at every major horse show in the United States, Canadian judge Randy G. Roy knows a thing or two about horse shows. A one-time partner with rider Ian D. Millar, Roy has published the latest editions of his guides to judging, *You Be The Judge* and the more light-hearted *Judge's Pet Peeves*. Praised as "invaluable reference" and "hilarious and serious," the books have become a notable presence at horse shows. Just like Roy himself.

"I got a bachelor of arts in French and sociology. I was a teacher. I worked in a hospital. And then I got into the horse business with Ian Miller who's on top of the world—he's one of the best riders in the world right now," recalls Roy about his entry into judging.

Roy, who turns 60 in June, says he wanted to give something back to the horse community. The result is a series of books, all designed to give people a common sense guide to the rules of competing and explain exactly what the judges are looking for. *You Be The Judge* is filled with photographs and pointed commentary. *Judge's Pet Peeves* uses *New Yorker*-style cartoons and humor to encourage people to remember the

basics, like leaving the ring promptly when the rules call for it.

"I laid out that there are rules to follow," offers Roy, who has a farm in King City, Ontario with his children. "You need to follow the rules, not just your own opinion. Follow the rules and you can do it right."

Some of Roy's rules are: Dress conservatively ("You're there to present your horse; I don't even want to see you"); don't try and catch the judge's eyes; don't ride too close to the judge; and if you're a parent or trainer, it does no good to try and place yourself in the sightlines of the judge and try and stare them down or applaud loudly after every jump. This is just some of the straightforward advice Roy offers after consulting with many of the top officials who work horse shows.

If readers take away just one piece of wisdom from his books, Roy hopes that advice would be to focus on the job at hand and be considerate. Time and again, as a judge Roy sees competitors caught up in the frills and fripperies that are secondary to a horse's real goal.

While judges are reluctant to discuss your ride (you should really be talking to a trainer or taking a class for information), do not ever ask them about someone else's performance. "Never, never comment on somebody else's ride," counsels the judging guru. "That's the biggest thing."

After 35 years of the highest caliber judging, Roy shows no sign of slowing down. "Somebody asked me, 'When are you going to stop judging?' Roy laughs. "My answer was, 'When they stop asking me.'" ♦

