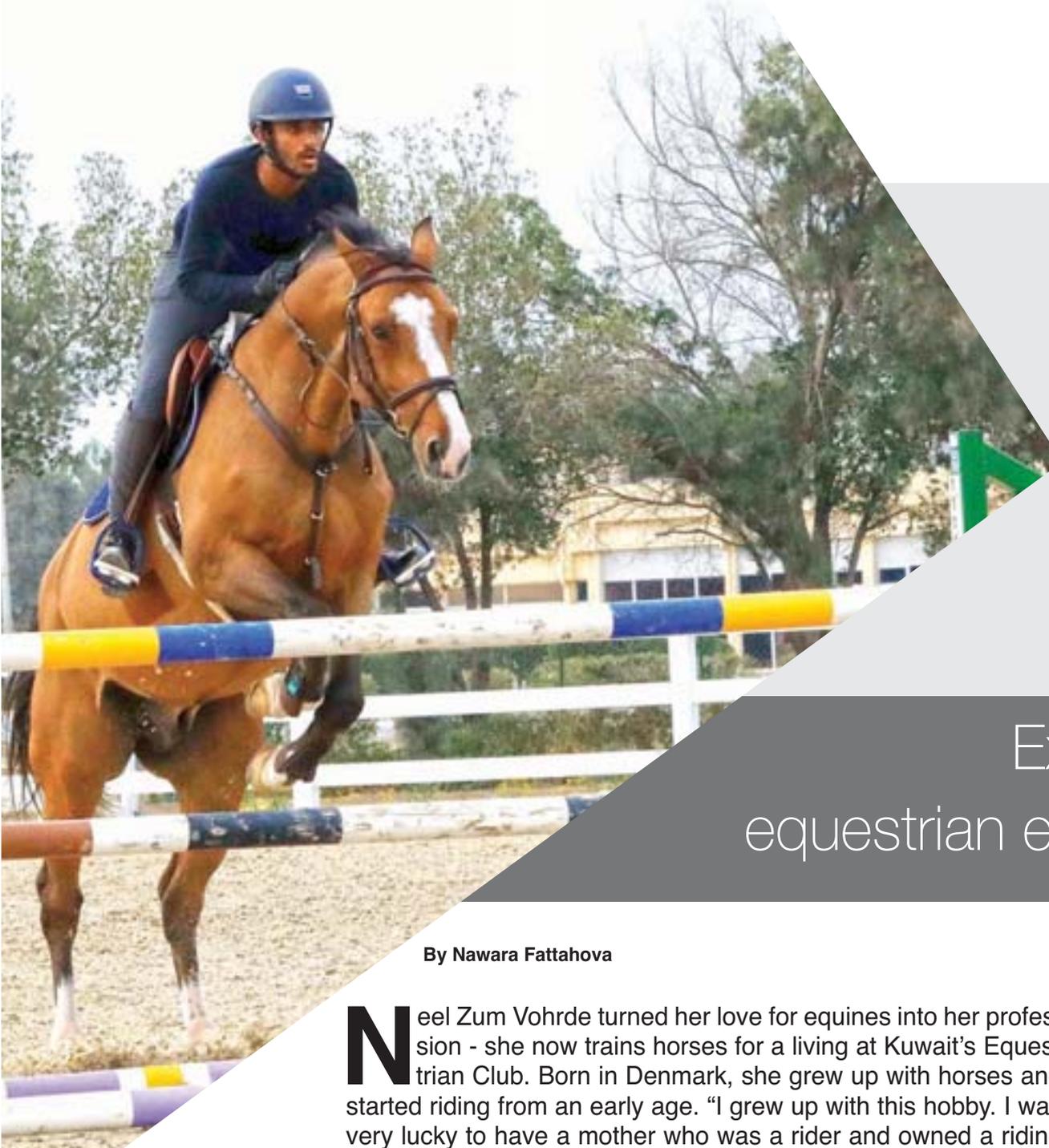


## Local


 For the  
*love of*  
*riding*

 Expat trainer explains  
 equestrian experience in Kuwait

By Nawara Fattahova

**N**eel Zum Vohrde turned her love for equines into her profession - she now trains horses for a living at Kuwait's Equestrian Club. Born in Denmark, she grew up with horses and started riding from an early age. "I grew up with this hobby. I was very lucky to have a mother who was a rider and owned a riding school in Denmark. I had a passion for this sport, so I worked alongside my mother, coaching, riding and schooling horses and ponies," she told Kuwait Times.



**Neel Zum Vohrde, an expatriate from Denmark, trains horses and riders at the Kuwait Equestrian Club. A lifelong passion for horses and riding led her from Europe to Dubai and now Kuwait in pursuit of riding and training opportunities. — Photos by Joseph Shagra**

horse to make it fresh for the show. On weekends, we have competitions," she said.

"The grooms take care of stable management. They clean the stables, feed the horses and hand walk the horses twice a day. It's the same in summer and winter, but usually the horses fly to Europe to be part of the top sport there. In Kuwait, it's only seasonal due to the climate. So they stay approximately eight months here and four in Europe. This month the horses start to fly out, and I'm going with them as well, as there are no competitions in the summer here in Kuwait," noted Vohrde.

Vohrde began her career in Denmark, working there for about 10 years, followed by a year in Germany. She then decided to head overseas, so she went to Dubai, where she coached for seven seasons. She moved to Kuwait in 2017. This is her second season training riders in Kuwait. "I was always curious as a person and wanted to travel and see the world. This was the opportunity to do so - with my sport. The way to improve is by seeking the best places, riders and trainers to work with," she said.

Vohrde chose the United Arab Emirates as there was a good opportunity there for a coach and rider. "It was an interesting place due to the potential they have, as there is money, which this sport requires. The sport was growing there. At that time I was considering the Arab region or America, and the opportunity came along in Dubai," she pointed out.

She is now 42 years old. "Being an athlete fulltime is not something I could continue doing, because I started having problems with my back. So I focus now on coaching riders on techniques and tools to improve and maintain their horses, so we can create sustainable progress," explained Vohrde. According to her, there is a lot of talent and potential here. "Central Europe is the center of equestrian sport, where it has its roots and where we find the best riders. We

try to import the sport here so riders can progress and thrive. It will also help them maintain and school the horses they buy," she noted.

"Everything we do with the horse affects its behavior later, which affects the end result. It's not a car - it's a horse - so we can influence it. It's important that we - in terms of horse welfare, schooling, managing, training, vets, and everything associated with this sport - do things in the right way to make it sustainable and add value," Vohrde said.

The horses are walked about six days a week, and have a day off. "Currently I work with eight students. We work together for a couple of hours every week, and we watch shows. Every week there is a new competition and we manage the training according to this competition. We also have big competitions such as the Amir's Cup (show jumping) and others," she stressed.

Vohrde trains competition riders. "It's up to them to improve and progress in this sport. I mainly train riders aged 16 and older, but I also had some talented junior riders aged 12 and 14 whom I trained occasionally," she added. Her riders are students or employees, so they are busy in the morning and come in the afternoon for training. "We train in the arena; then depending on the days, we ride flatwork and jump them about two days before the show. We supply the