

A word from our GUEST EDITOR



Change needs to happen

GUEST-editing *Horse & Hound* has been an eye-opener. It was a bit of a task fitting it in with preparing for the season as I spend so much time on horses, something all eventers will be able to relate to and which we look at in the feature comparing timetables (p26).

As riders we normally only share opinions while circling the warm-up, so it's great to have a proper look at issues. Taking care of owners is close to my heart, and we canvassed views on what would make the sport more owner-friendly (p36).

The remarks from the various professionals about horse types and placing horses at certain events (p22) will spark thoughts for everyone involved in eventing at any level. Tim Price's comments were particularly interesting.

I loved talking about my heroes (p32) — and I always enjoy seeing different pictures of them.

After one of them, Ayrton Senna, died in 1994, brain surgeon Prof. Sid Watkins pioneered huge changes in Formula One and they haven't lost a driver since.

“ I'm not pointing the finger, but safety can improve, and we need changes ”

This eventing season starts under a horrible cloud after the death of Francisco Seabra. He was a friend and someone I had an association with through his brother Duarte, who competes some horses from Harthill Stud, my breeding venture with Nina Barbour.

I'm not pointing the finger at anyone, but eventing safety can improve, and we need changes. I would like stronger guidelines for course-designers, such as the compulsory use of brush in fences where the rider doesn't have full control over the horse's take-off point, such as after steps up or down.

Eventing needs a Sid Watkins — while we can never remove 100% of the risk, it's not acceptable to say deaths are unexplainable. I struggle with how some riders react to fatalities — almost as if it's expected. Deaths are not acceptable, they must never be the norm and we must examine every solution to eliminate them.