

R E N N A V A N D O O R E N

1993 – Current President, Colonial Saddler & Harness Company Inc.

Bespoke Saddler

- Bespoke English Saddles
- Saddle fit clinics, lectures & private saddle fit evaluations
- Bespoke girths, bridles, reins, stirrup leathers & halters (pleasure & show)
- English saddle panel reflocking, gullets widened and custom saddle panels
- Custom fit your manufactured saddle and tack to you & your horse
- Replace worn saddle flaps, seats and billets
- Saddle alterations and repairs to all major brands; specialized equipment

BIOGRAPHY

Renna VanDooren is a Certified Bespoke Saddler who has served the horse industry in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, New York and Florida since 1993. Renna teaches saddle making courses in Sweden, and tours Sweden and Denmark several times a year giving saddle fitting demonstrations and lectures.

Renna entered the fine art of the leather craft in 1993, learning from a Master Saddler and Shoe Maker here in the states. In 1999 Renna traveled to England to inquire of the Sergeant Major of the Society of Master Saddlers in England if there was additional course work he could take to further his education and was told at that time there was wasn't - his education was completed – and in fact was commended on the quality of his work, as it was better than what they were teaching! In 1999 there was a British residency requirement which prevented Renna from being certified by England.

While in England at the BETA leather trade show, Renna met Frances Kelly, official Saddler and Harness Maker for the Queen of England, and was offered the rare opportunity to pattern the original Queen's Black Horse

Harness, and in fact returned to England in 2000 to do so. During this same trip in 2000, Renna flew to Sweden to tour the Tarnsjö Garveri, and was asked to give a lecture on saddle fitting at their school, the Tarnsjö Sadelmakeri. In 2001, Renna contacted the Tarnsjö Sadelmakeri to inquire about bringing an apprentice to Michigan to work with him; the terrorist attacks of September precluded this from happening, however, the Sadelmakeri offered to fly him to Sweden to teach saddle making and fitting courses, which he began doing in 2002, with a 3 week course, for 20 students. At that time the school, though dedicated to leather crafts, had no saddle making class. Renna also gave three saddle fitting clinics in different cities in central Sweden that year, and two articles were written on the clinics and Renna's teachings at the School, and published in the Swedish newspapers. In March of 2003, Renna returned to Sweden and gave saddle fittings clinics in 4 more cities, and went back to Sweden in May 2003 to teach a four week saddle making class at the School.

During the fall of 2003, Renna traveled to Sweden to view the Masterpiece Test at the Masters Guild, and to his delight found that the only person passing the saddle exam (the first in many years to pass with a saddle) was a student of his. More articles on what he was doing in Sweden were published. In March 2004, Renna went to Sweden and Denmark to give 5 more saddle fitting clinics and taught yet another course at the school, this one a 5 week course. That same year, two more of Renna's students passed the Master's Exam with saddles; no other masterpiece presenter, other than Renna's students, were presenting saddles, which are admittedly the most difficult piece to pass with. Students of other Master Saddlers were counseling their students to produce a harness, a simpler piece, to pass the test with.

Renna traveled to Sweden again in 2005 to teach at the school, for a four week course, and was asked to give a saddle clinic to the working Masters and Saddlers of Sweden. The clinic was held at Rockelstad Castle, which is over 900 years old and is the training center of international driving competitor and long reining clinician, Anders Eriksson. Each faction of saddle making had a representative present to look at and evaluate the clinic saddles. Renna brought 6 students from the school and together they worked on six saddles to show the audience how the fittings worked, and presented the finished saddles to the audience, so that the riders could explain in their own words what a difference the correct fitting made. Renna also gave a course on saddle making at the

clinic, and the theory behind his manner of Bespoke Saddle Making, versus manufactured saddles.

During the winter of 2005, Renna traveled to Wellington, Florida, to fit saddles and was widely received. Most recently in 2006, Renna taught three saddle fitting clinics in Sweden, one of which was at the Horse Chiropractors School of Kethetraholm, and in 2007 Renna gave a three day lecture on saddle fitting at the Horse Congress at Vasteras.

EDUCATION & AFFILIATIONS

1995 Certificate of Master Saddlery, Pymouth, MI

2005 President of the Equine Independent Saddlers Guild (abbr. in Sweden H.O.S.S.) Representing saddlers from Sweden, Denmark and America.