

## Beyond Horse Massage

BEYOND HORSE MASSAGE. BY JIM MASTERTSON. HARDCOVER AND DVD. 2012. TRAFALGAR SQUARE BOOKS. WWW.HORSEBOOKSETC.COM, 800-952-5813. \$32.95. ELIGIBLE FOR HORSE JOURNAL'S BOOK CLUB DISCOUNT.

**W**hoever decided to produce a DVD to accompany Jim Masterson's how-to book made a really smart decision.

The book includes considerably detailed descriptions of equine anatomy and how the methods he uses affect the various muscle groups, and it fully describes how to manipulate the body to do that. But the depth of these descriptions hides the relative simplicity of the Masterson Method, making it appear rather daunting at first.

On the professionally presented DVD, however, Masterson clearly demonstrates exactly how to manipulate the horse's neck, front and hind legs to create the desired tension-freeing and movement-enhancing effect.

Masterson has performed massage and body work on a wide range of horses during the last two decades, especially show jumpers and show hunters. And a key to the Masterson Method is that he is not advocating sports massage or chiropractic adjustment by the untrained masses. He considers his method to be a sort of bridge between massage and chiropractic. His theory depends on allowing the horse to make the changes, by putting his body parts in a position to do so.

Masterson describes his method as "an integrated method of bodywork in which you learn to read and use the horse's responses to your touch to allow the horse to release tension in key junctions of the body that most affect performance."

The book is well photographed and clearly laid out, allowing readers to use it as a manual, one that's especially useful after watching Masterson in action on the DVD.

**Bottom Line:** While Masterson's technique doesn't require a veterinarian's knowledge of anatomy, it does require study, practice and consistency to be performed correctly and to be fully effective.

**Best suited for:** Any horse owner or trainer interested in improving the performance, and comfort, of their horses.

**You'll be disappointed if:** You think that this book, or any type of bodywork, can completely overcome serious conformation faults, unsoundness or poor riding or training. [U](#)



*John Strassburger, Performance Editor*