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## Ann Kathrin Linsenhoff Dismounts Into Her Kitchen

By RHEA WESSEL

*The German dressage rider talks to The Wall Street Journal Europe about how she starts her weekend.*

Ann Kathrin Linsenhoff, a 1988 Olympic team gold medalist and 1990 world champion, divides her time on her Schafhof stud farm near Frankfurt between her two loves: her horses and her children.



Kathrin Linsenhof

Ann Kathrin Linsenhoff

Ms. Linsenhoff grew up on the stud farm in Kronberg that she inherited from her late mother, Liselott Linsenhoff, who in 1972 became the first woman to win an Olympic gold in dressage. Today, the 51-year-old equestrian remains active in dressage, training horses and sponsoring tournaments. Ms. Linsenhoff also supports her stepson Matthias Rath, who rides Totilas, a Dutch Warmblood stabled on her property. The pair were set to ride as part of Germany's Olympic team in London but recently had to withdraw because Mr. Rath suffered a relapse of mononucleosis.

As a mother of four grown boys and a 10-year-old daughter, Ms. Linsenhoff says she's always trying to impress on her children the importance of helping others. She serves as the vice chairwoman of Unicef Germany and has created her own foundation to support Unicef projects, such as those in Cairo, Basra and Sudan.

What keeps the family strong is staying flexible, she says: "The main thing is that we're excited when the kids do make it home."

### **Since you live and work on the same estate, how do you know the weekend has begun?**

It starts to feel like the weekend when the kids and their friends or partners start trickling in. We're a big, open home. The four boys have their own places and are doing their own things, but each child has a room here in the house. The only one who lives here still is our daughter, Marie. Today, after dropping off Marie at school in Frankfurt, I went to the Kleinmarkthalle [Frankfurt's daily indoor farmers' market]. The salesperson said, "How many people do you have in your house?" I said, "I never know!" I always need something in the refrigerator so that I can magically get a meal on the table. What's always in the house is cheese. Today I bought Tomme de Savoie, Reblochon, Gorgonzola and an older Parmesan.

### **Describe a typical Friday evening.**

We meet in the kitchen. It's the heart of our house, where we have lots of interesting talks about anything and everything—not just horses. Everyone has something to tell about their lives. These days, we eat outside all the time. The terrace goes around the house so we can get sun at all hours.

### **What are the rules in your kitchen?**

If you set the table, you don't have to help clean up. That's one.

### **Anything else?**

Well, it's not a rule, but as an athlete, I definitely need three regular meals a day. I cannot skip meals. In general, I try to avoid carbohydrates and focus on protein, but if I'm riding, I need carbohydrates in the mornings and at lunch. Right now I'm training young horses and you need a lot of tension throughout your body. You have to work hard to help the horse keep its balance. It's strenuous mentally and physically.

### **Do you exercise otherwise?**

No, not at all. I only take electrical muscular stimulation (EMS), which contracts the muscles. Other than that, I ride six horses a day. Sundays are horse-free.

### **And when you don't cook?**

We like to eat Thai or Indian or enjoy the Italian restaurants Lucullus in Kronberg or Fiorentino in Königstein.

### **How do you spend Saturday?**

The alarm usually goes off at 6 a.m. Even if it doesn't, I cannot sleep longer than 7:30 a.m. The first thing is a cappuccino on the sunny side of the terrace. This morning, Marie and I saw a fox running across the field. We observed it for a long time. We see woodpeckers and titmice as well. This weekend we'll take Marie's pony to Kelkheim so she can practice to earn a riding badge.

### **Do you spend a lot of time with horses on the weekend?**

It's important to do something that doesn't revolve around horses, but on some weekends it's just not possible. We also take time for the other animals. We have three Rhodesian Ridgebacks: Chui, Rosa and Bacia. And we have an Austrian hunting dog, a Vizsla named Aisha. They live with us in the house along with Olga and Paul, our gray parrots.

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