

TODD, Mai-Liis (continued)

Stell Dec 28/89

Talented rider off to Europe

STIRLING — Was there really a Santa Claus? Ask 26-year-old Mai-Liis Todd of the Equinox Training Centre, who just received a doubly exciting present.

This year, the jolly old elf recompensed her for several years of carrying out routine chores on Christmas Day.

Because she and her husband Christopher, operate an equestrian centre, often they find no time for holiday celebrations. The horses in their care must be fed and "mucked out" as usual.

This year, Todd could whistle as she worked, in happy anticipation of a two-month training period at private stables near the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, Austria.

St. Nick tossed in a bonus for the young equestrienne. She will also have an opportunity to enjoy what is a special pleasure for her — the Vienna State opera.

For several years she was "seriously into theatre" and studied in New York and at the Banff School of Fine Arts in western Canada. She also studied in Europe for two years.

"I hated New York and I came back and went straight into horses," she says.

"They say once you have the bug it doesn't go away. All I could continue with was my voice and I fell in love with classical voice. I am interested in pursuing that to see what sort of quality my voice is."

Since moving to the Stirling area about three years ago, Todd has studied voice with Picton teacher Phyllis Antognini. This year, she was preparing to take part in the annual Rotary Music Festival, when she received an invitation to study with Johann Riegler, a trainer with the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. She hopes that she will return here in time to join in the festival.

Mrs. Todd acknowledges the diversity of her two career interests but does not feel they are incompatible.

"There has never been a conflict. I want to do both. Everyone gets mad at me because I have to make my mind up. I could never stop training horses but I may decide to take a rest and see what happens with my voice."