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Transcript

OF THIS EPISODE

BEYOND THE SADDLE PODCAST
EPISODE 32

Beyond the Saddle Podcast

Ep. 32: Photographer, Videographer & Content Curator, Amy Dragoo

Transcript, autogenerated

[Podcast intro music plays]

[Podcast Intro] Hey Folks! This podcast goes beyond the saddle as we explore professional careers across the equine industry. I'm your host, Katie Clinebell. Let's tack up and head out!

[Host, Katie Clinebell, reads guest introduction and biography] This episode of Beyond the Saddle is brought to you by Dressage Today OnDemand. And today we're featuring photographer, videographer and content curator, Amy Dragoo. Amy Dragoo has been documenting the equine industry for the past 25 years. Located in Eastern Pennsylvania, she is minutes from eventing, dressage and show jumping Olympians. Her work covers everyone from the beginner lesson rider to the those who have represented their country to a pair being accepted into the Century Club. (The Dressage Foundation is given to a horse and rider pair whose combined ages total more than 100 years old, who are able to ride down the center line and perform a dressage test.)

She spent 20 years working in daily journalism, rode the hunters and equitation through intercollegiate in college, and still considers herself a rider if she get on for an hour a year.

Nancy, thanks so much for joining the podcast today.

Amy, thank you for joining us today. I've heard a lot about you from all my coworkers, so I'm very excited to get to know you and get to talk to you today. So thanks for coming on the podcast.

Amy Dragoo: [00:01:12] Oh, you're welcome. I hope I'm as interesting as has been previewed.

Katie Clinebell: [00:01:17] Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure. We can start off on an interesting foot. So before this episode, before we recorded, I asked you to prepare two truths and one lie about yourself. So go ahead and read those. And I'm going to try to guess which one is your lie?

Amy Dragoo: [00:01:31] Oh, no. About myself. I had a ringer in there. Let's see I swore I would never have a job that involved computers. I love summer. And the ringer would be lacrosse is the national sport of Canada. So I should say national summer sport of Canada now.

Katie Clinebell: [00:01:46] Oh gosh. Everyone loves summer. So I'm going to toss that one out. I'm going to say that your lie is you never thought you'd have a job with computers.

Amy Dragoo: [00:01:54] No actually it's that I love summer. No, I hate sweating.

Katie Clinebell: [00:02:03] Fair enough. Although it is so stinking cold across the whole country right now, but I think everybody is disagreeing with you.

Amy Dragoo: [00:02:09] Considering I haven't shoveled my driveway yet. Yeah, I'm, there might be a little bit of an asterisk on that one. And it is snowing again. Yeah.

Yeah, the joys of I grew up outside of DC and it's very humid and I guess I should say I hate humidity, so warmth is not bad, but yeah, humidity don't enjoy it.

Katie Clinebell: [00:02:28] I don't blame you at all on that front. Talk to me about lacrosse. Why'd you throw that one in there. Do you have a lacrosse history or background?

Amy Dragoo: I did play I was the only girl on a County rec league. Back in the day. Yeah no, no real lacrosse. I enjoyed photographing and I worked for a newspaper for 20 years I enjoyed photographing it, but yeah, just random. I like random trivia.

Katie Clinebell: And you are a photographer and you do all the things. You have to, you're forced to work with computers, but it sounds like maybe you weren't hoping to.

Amy Dragoo: [00:02:55] Yeah, that was a let's see. With third, fourth grade, we had to copy code to make some sort of little like snowflakes fall around a little snowman made of Xs or something. And maybe I should have thought that it was a, I don't want to job that involves typing because yeah, to this day, my typing is subpar.

Katie Clinebell: [00:03:12] Hey, we all have what we're good at and I am terrible behind a lens. So there you have it. Let's jump into your job, Amy, in your own words, can you tell us what is your job?

Amy Dragoo: [00:03:21] As a photographer it's been an interesting ride being that I started in the nineties in college and as a failed biology major, it was my art credit. And I did seem to grasp the concepts, so I changed my major and I worked for a newspaper or a group of weeklies and then a daily paper for 20 years in total.

And in that time we went from processing black and white film by hand and hand printing halftones to be waxed into, the pages that were being stripped up and, to digital, to websites, to, shooting video, shooting and editing video. And so I guess the thing that runs through that is that it's storytelling.

In some way, shape or form whether it be written, in a caption or visually.

Katie Clinebell: [00:04:07] Can you give us like a short list of the events you've gone to, like the people, the equestrians that you've photographed and been a part of telling their story.

Amy Drago: [00:04:14] Yeah. So I'm based in Eastern Pennsylvania, which is very nicely centrally located to, for the English sports.

I'm 10 minutes from Olympians, from all three disciplines, which is really convenient professionally. I've covered the world, equestrian games I've covered, world cup. My first rodeo was Cheyenne, which was fun. I still don't know how healers do their job. I have yet to figure that out. I spent a lot of time watching team roping and going well, how does this happen?

Still fascinating. Yeah, it's a little bit everything. I tend to stay domestic just because, I'm funding myself and there are a lot of photographers out there and making it, something like the Olympics pay for itself is really difficult to budget within limits, things like that.

Katie Clinebell: [00:05:01] We're very fortunate to be able to work with you on client projects, but also for Practical Horseman and Dressage Today. And just utilizing your talents and your relationships to cover us. So many events for us. So we are thankful to have you in our back pocket.

Amy Drago: [00:05:14] I greatly enjoy it. There's nobody at the equine network who I dislike working with. And it's always an adventure always.

Katie Clinebell: [00:05:25] Can you walk us through a typical day at an event?

Amy Drago: [00:05:27] Sure. So there. I wear a couple of different hats. I do my editorial, I have my editorial work, which is like World Cup or WEG or whatnot.

And they all have different clients. If for Practical, it was like daily coverage of whatever was happening that day. And then, I have some commercial clients who sponsored riders. And then I also cover a number of horse trial series. That where I'm the vending photographer. So I have a group of people who helped me and it's planning where, what people are shooting and who's covering what, phase of show jumping or cross-country, or dressage if it's a CCI.

So it's a, there's a little bit of everything. And back to, and not having a job that involves computers. Yeah, every day involves computers. This pandemic has, let me catch up on a lot of archive images that have not been keyworded or sorted or whatnot. So yeah, a lot of computers, there are a lot of cables and drives and things all over my desk, all the technology, all the technology.

Katie Clinebell: [00:06:31] Do you do all three? Do you wear all three of those hats at a given time? So you're doing like editorial coverage and commercial coverage and you're like the vending photographer? Oh, my gosh, that sounds like chaos.

Amy Drago: [00:06:44] They all come together at some point. I know if there's a particular rider that I'm concentrating on, that I might shoot a little more candidly of, then I would shoot for just for everybody. It doesn't really change how I shoot. That makes it easier.

Katie Clinebell: [00:06:59] Sure. Great. That gives us sort of a flavor of an event day. Can you walk us through what a typical day looks like at a client photo shoot.

Amy Dragoo: [00:07:06] It depends on the client and what they're looking for beforehand. There's usually a discussion of what they want.

I have flown out at California for shoot that the photographer who was contracted, broke her ankle on the shoot. So I, yeah, so I had no preconceived knowledge of what actually it was happening. Do enjoy a good, a fly by the seat of my pants shoot. For the most part we've discussed what we're looking for. We have some sort of game plan of what shots they want. Nowadays there's, most people are looking for something for an advertising campaign, whether it be digital or print and then social media content. So it's grab what you want. And we just did a shoot for Nutramax through the Equine Network with Phillip Dutton.

And so it was a day at his place in Wellington, Florida. And we were simulating the three phases of eventing. So we had started off showjumping. And so you had a bib number and, turned out and braided whatnot. And I it's nice to be able to take and choose what fences we want to concentrate on, light background how the horse is jumping.

And that was shooting in conjunction with the video team. So just being able to, what they're getting and staying out of their way and vice versa.

Katie Clinebell: [00:08:22] That's fun to work in tandem.

Amy Dragoo: [00:08:24] Yeah, actually. Yeah. Is that group and I have worked together a number of times and it's really jelled quite well. It's most enjoyable.

Katie Clinebell: [00:08:31] It sounds like a photo shoot, right? It gives you a lot more control over what you want to get versus covering the event. Like you just got to get all the shots, and just try to be everywhere and get as much as you can. But the photo shoot, you've got more of that, how do we want to change it?

Amy Dragoo: [00:08:44] Yeah event coverage. You do wish that cloning had been advanced further than it has, but I do a lot with remote cameras. So it's, they're fixed, but I can get different perspectives. And a lot of times I work with say on cross-country the fence judges or a friend, spectator or somebody to fire them so I can move around the course.

And then I will say know in air quotes that I have the. Shot from those cameras. But they are definitely the cherry on the whipped cream on the icing on the cake, because, if there's something that can go wrong, it will go wrong. And there are many things that can go wrong. So when they work you can find people, me, in particular, dancing around like an idiot, but there's also a lot of cursing.

Katie Clinebell: [00:09:36] You're just exceeded all of my technical knowledge. That works. That sounds magical to me.

Amy Dragoo: [00:09:41] I felt your eyes glazing over.

Katie Clinebell: [00:09:44] Yes. Wow. Oh my gosh. Do you have a common misconception that people have about being a photographer? And can we bust it?

Amy Dragoo: [00:09:52] Busted. I've never really heard it as a misconception, but it's a general feeling of, Oh wow, horses! Horse people have money, you must be rich. You're just basically printing money. And I know exactly. No, that's not the case. Sure. I guess source people have money and, or they choose to spend it on the, I have one horses.

I, that's what it is. It's a job. Like anything else, it's pouring rain days. And, I can hope for snowy days, but it's it's any other photography job it's know you need to be a self-starter and promote yourself, which is the worst part for me.

Katie Clinebell: [00:10:24] Sure. It's tough. It can be tough, but your work speaks for itself. So you've got that covered.

Amy Dragoo: [00:10:28] I like a humorous moment.

Katie Clinebell: [00:10:31] You're behind the scene. Photos are my favorite.

Amy Dragoo: [00:10:36] Oh, there's so many that never happened or never have never been taken. I have more memories of the things I've missed than the things I've done.

Katie Clinebell: [00:10:42] Can you share with us your most memorable moment behind the lens?

Amy Dragoo: [00:10:46] I nearly got run over by Arizona Cardinals football player. Yes. I could have been the highlight of the week. I have been hit by football players. I have, I got hit by an official. That was fun. Yeah, that was fun. I missed the first quarter getting my nose packed. But I didn't get knocked down. The head coach was very impressed that that I took my hit and bled a bit.

Katie Clinebell: [00:11:10] Oh my gosh. And protected your camera?

Amy Dragoo: [00:11:12] Ummm the lens never really quite worked as well as it did before then. But in that the Nicor lens took, it, took a beating. I've never seen footage of that. I did nearly get run over by a horse in Florida that is on video if you a YouTube: "so you want to be an equine photographer" that would be me. Yeah, it is in slow motion and I do have the sequence of shots. Like the first, it gets three or four

strides. And in real time it's a bit scary. I still get the adrenaline hit of it. I can remember everything that went through my head through that sequence.

And I can't say it anywhere near as quickly as it happened.

Katie Clinebell: [00:11:57] Gosh, that leads me to my next question, which is what's the sketchiest thing you've ever done to get the shot, quote, unquote.

Amy Dragoo: [00:12:03] Sketchy. I'm not going to do something illegal, but like I've climbed the ladder on fire trucks.

That's an old steel town and some of the trees from the world trade center, the metal pieces that stayed standing after nine 11 were milled here. And one of them was brought back to the Foundry, I guess it is a number of years ago and there was a big parade and there's a museum being built around it and sort of history of steel and Coatesville with the fire companies had done a arc over the street with a giant flag hanging between the two baskets and someone said, Hey, you want to climb up? I said, sure. Yeah, got strapped in and hung out the side of the basket to shoot the flag over top of the trees. And actually it turned out really quite well, but completely unplanned back before the legislation changed, I went on a drug raid in my first year at the paper. And I was in the house before they had cleared out. So yeah. Yeah, man. And then being, hit by horses and what not.

Katie Clinebell: [00:13:07] Living life on the edge.

Amy Dragoo: [00:13:09] I, I've seen some things.

Katie Clinebell: [00:13:12] Yeah. I'll say I really, I wish I know it's audio, but I wish there was some way that I could just cut to that footage of so you want to be an equine photographer!

Amy Dragoo: [00:13:21] I'll send it to you.

Katie Clinebell: [00:13:23] I love it. Oh my gosh.

Amy Dragoo: [00:13:25] It's always keep your eye on the horse. Even when you're not shooting, know where the horses to this day, if I hear hoof beats where they shouldn't be like, if I'm on cross country, I will whip my head around because you never know.

And I do think that loose horses do seem to come to me at speed. I don't know if there's something about me that looks very cuddly?

Katie Clinebell: [00:13:49] Like a magnet they're drawn to you.

Amy Dragoo: [00:13:51] It is yeah, I guess it's my equine magnetism.

Katie Clinebell: [00:13:55] Lucky you. All the rogue horses come to Amy.

Amy Dragoo: [00:13:59] Seriously. Stop!

Katie Clinebell: [00:14:00] Oh my God. You talked about your journey in the beginning, let us know where your education started and how you ended up there.

But I'd love to know more about what was your journey and how you got to be like the amazing photographer that you are today.

Amy Dragoo: [00:14:11] Being in the right place at the right time. My advisor in school. Cause I, I didn't photograph in high school or before college, I knew I wanted a job that didn't involve computers sitting in an office I've done well with that.

But, and being outside and my advisor, my college advisor said, if you're enjoying this photography thing, which I literally just took as my art class, and there was someone who was repeating the course because they couldn't grasp with the turn that the camera vertically, you didn't get pictures of people laying on their side, honest to God honesty.

I was like, yeah, I'm grasping this. But those organic chemistry bonds are not coming to me. Very naturally. I've sworn I will take it organic before I die, just to prove to myself that I could get through it. So he said, maybe, like photojournalism sounds like. You know something up your alley, but you should get at least a writing minor.

So my major is liberal studies with double minor and instructional media and journalism. It's been a long time since I've said that!

Katie Clinebell: [00:15:13] But it got you started it. Got you off on the right foot.

Amy Dragoo: [00:15:16] Yeah, it was. That was invaluable. And actually my first job out of school was predominantly writing for a monthly and did some photography for them actually looking back on it. My very first thing I wrote was, interviewed and wrote was a story about an event or who was killed and a rotational fall. And that was in 94 or five. It goes back that far. And I called the mom and I had a very nice note from publisher, who was, he was the editor at the Trentonian in New Jersey, old hard school newsman, and this very nice note on my desk the first day I walked into work and said, here's your number or call or she's either going to hang up on you or, you won't be able to get her off the phone. And I called and she was very accepting. And by the time I was done, she was offering me the kid's horse. It was okay. I guess that works.

But, yeah, so I don't use my writing nearly as much. It's not my love, but when I was at the paper, it was very, it was beneficial to have an understanding of what the writers were constructing. And then Practical

Horseman's offices used to be about eight miles from me. I started my relationship with them back in the days of film.

And it was. Yeah, a lot of last minute, do you have a photo of X? So we can, for this article and I would grab my negative or my slide and drive it on over and drop it off. And they haven't gotten rid of me since.

Katie Clinebell: [00:16:42] Well, something worked. Yeah. They're keeping you I think you're selling yourself slightly short because the way I hear it, you have amazing relationships too with, not just the publications, but the writers themselves, like people really like you, they really trust you to get the shot, to show them in the right light and to just be that welcoming presence.

Amy Dragoo: [00:17:00] Yeah. Thank you. Everybody has a story to tell and I think that's. If I had to actually think about it, that's probably what my approach is.

And celebrity has always been wasted on me. I didn't have posters of actors or bands on my wall. It was always horses. Geek! I find that people just want to be treated like people. QVC is local to me and years ago when they were rebranding themselves, it had this big push to photograph everyone from the part-time dishwasher, through the CEO and all their on air talent.

And I honestly don't remember how they found me, but I did a lot of the sort of off hours, weekend stuff that their in house team was not in for. And I did a lot of the on air celebrity stuff. Most people respond better if you just treat them as humans and not suck up to them or ignore them.

Katie Clinebell: [00:17:51] Sure. But people love you. I want to know. Why horses? You've got posters on the wall. So I did I where you bit by the horse bug when you were a kid.

Amy Dragoo: [00:18:00] I dunno when I was bitten by the horse bug. Definitely not. My sister didn't ride my mom, I think took some lessons at some point, but I don't know what the initial germ was and we we're a one-car family. And my dad worked for the Bureau of Standards and in Maryland, ironically turned out to be right across the street from the Practical Horseman offices, after the left Pennsylvania. Small World and one of his fellow scientists, his wife was a pony club instructor and their kids were the same age as me. And she was my first riding instructor. Invaluable things. Yes. My favorite lesson is don't run up behind your pony in the field.

Katie Clinebell: [00:18:40] Did you learn that one the hard way?

Amy Dragoo: [00:18:41] I did. I still remember that one. It also can be also trying to catch your breath and yeah. Yeah. Never happened again.

Katie Clinebell: [00:18:50] It stuck with you. It was a good lesson.

Amy Dragoo: [00:18:52] Did stick with me.

Katie Clinebell: [00:18:53] Now you get run over for other reasons.

Amy Dragoo: [00:18:55] Yeah, exactly. And maybe they feel that the brand of those two hooves and my middle of my chest. Oh gosh. Double-barreled. Bam!

Katie Clinebell: [00:19:03] You still loved it. You still rode and you still do horses today.

Amy Dragoo: [00:19:06] And then I rode all through high school.

I went to the first Montessori high school in the country and we had a barn. So a lot of things that came out of a Thurmont sales actually had a relationship with a rolling acres, which is the Nicholson and Mary Lisa Leffler. And we would get some of their young ponies and have them for summer and camp and whatnot.

And our, all our horses stayed there during the winter. Field worded at their place. Had a little exposure to some of the top ponies, my last large pony. My, my last junior year, it was, she had been a large pony Hunter champion in Maryland. I don't remember how many years in a row. And she was too old to campaign, but. She was really good with the kids. She like big fat, rubber snaffle with the kids and be half asleep. And then when I would ride her, she would run away with me with a Pelham, so she actually like really taught me to ride. I actually had a judge come out of the booth one show. And say, is that Zelda? And I said, yes. And she's I used to show against her when I was a kid, she looks fabulous. She was in her twenties at that point in time and still jumped around a two nine course.

Named for her Breeder's mother, I think. Oh yeah. Actually I have one photo that I thought I should send this into jumping clinic for many years, but it's on my wall.

Yeah.

Katie Clinebell: [00:20:26] Do you still have horses today or do you still ride?

Amy Dragoo: [00:20:29] I do not have horses. I like to think that if I ride at least an hour a year, I can still consider myself a rider. I think I missed last year, pandemic, quarantine, Netflix.

Katie Clinebell: [00:20:42] Not that it was anything weird last year.

Amy Dragoo: [00:20:44] No. Oh, okay. Actually with Joslin Pierce with prac and I were out in California, a number of years ago for the Todd Meniscus Win a Day clinic.

And, , since we'd been out there, we were done on Saturday. We had decided, we'll extend the trip, on our own dime and stay for a day or two and, do some bucket list things. And mine was paddling and Monterey Bay with the sea otters and seal sea lions and hers was riding up in Point Reyes.

So we did a three hour trail ride up there and she was prepping to do the Mongol Derby, which he did complete, I think the next year. So I thought three hours that'll cover me for a couple of years. But I think 2020 was the year that I that I was. Needed to get my hours.

Katie Clinebell: [00:21:26] That's right. This year you'll make up for it. It'll be great.

Amy Dragoo: [00:21:29] Yeah. I guess I have to get two hours in this year, minimum.

Katie Clinebell: [00:21:32] I know that you do some video work for dressage today online. So you're watching all those amazing clinicians, and like talking through their lessons. Doesn't that make you itchy to ride? Like I can't watch somebody else ride and not want to ride myself.

Amy Dragoo: [00:21:44] Very much. Am actually editing a video right now and know, I don't really hear when I'm shooting, because I'm thinking about so much like framing and what's happening and who I'm concentrating on. And then there's the part in my head where I'm like, how am I editing this? How do I make this a complete piece?

And I don't really hear what's happening until I'm actually editing it. And it's actually to me on just on the half halt Like Oh! That makes so much sense. I don't know why it has been so difficult to grasp for so many years. So I look forward to that. Hopefully I'm not the only one who finds it as educational as I did, or it just clicked, but Oh yeah. There's so much that you just come back and want to ride, come back from Kentucky or athletic horses are athletic horses. I grew up doing the hunters. I like something that jumps round and, uses its body and nieces nose.

And, but that can be over, a giant ox or cross-country or yeah, in the Hunter ring or anything. Yeah. I appreciate an athletic horse who can do a flying change at, a reining horse. It can do a flying change at speed. Yeah. And and I still have yet to figure out those heelers.

Katie Clinebell: [00:22:55] Amazing. I think if I was watching people like Phillip Dutton ride around every day I don't know if that would be good for my confidence. Oh, I actually don't know how to ride at all.

Amy Dragoo: [00:23:03] Yeah, suddenly I think maybe I don't want people to see me.

Katie Clinebell: [00:23:10] Right?

[Podcast music plays]

[Katie reads the episode sponsor's commercial]

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[Podcast music ends]

Katie Clinebell: The sea otters in California and loving horses. And I know you've got some pups, so it sounds like you're a lover of all critters.

Amy Dragoo: [00:23:55] Yep. I have the two rescue Clumber Spaniels, and then I have some chickens which are my volunteer workforce. I donate my excess eggs to the food bank. Since weekends tend to be a bit busy and Yeah, there's no habitat for humanity, home building for me. I donate my eggs, their eggs. And then I have some bees, three hives. We'll see what happens after the winter, because they're fascinating and who knows?

Katie Clinebell: [00:24:21] Wow, you've got a regular little hobby farm there.

Amy Dragoo: [00:24:24] Oh, so it's something. I made a suit cakes for the birds last night. Because I have become the crazy bird lady person who cooks for the birds.

Katie Clinebell: [00:24:33] Crazy chicken lady watch out!

Amy Dragoo: [00:24:35] I havent baked bread yet, but there is some use in my refrigerator. She's ready. Sometimes you just need to push away from the computer. I have a bad habit of just sitting here all day and I do need to find other things to keep you busy. A little busy, busy is good. Changing the you visual distance definitely felt my eyes light change this past year, too much staring at school.

Katie Clinebell: [00:24:56] I hear that, man. Oh man. Let's talk a little bit about advice. What is one thing that you wish you had known before you began your career?

Amy Dragoo: [00:25:05] Business would have been very helpful, just structuring a business and taxes and all those boring things. But yeah, I was lucky or I'm glad that my track has been being employed and getting a regular paycheck.

To then developing and going out on my own because , it gave me a foundation of people that I'd already met. I wasn't just starting out cold and trying to make a start in the industry. Even while I was doing like your daily newspaper work, I was still working for myself and doing equestrian work. Looking at it at this point in my life is diversifying and, basically having more than one egg in your basket, not just one client, not just one area of knowledge. I started off as a photographer and then that time of the paper, we, added new videos. So that actually that made me really marketable number of years ago.

And then, I do some web work and, I've managed a number of websites, both commercial and retail wise and individually commercial. I didn't go out searching for that, but it just fell in my lap. And there is something to be said for the regular source of income. Diversifying, is would be my biggest piece of advice.

Katie Clinebell: [00:26:20] That's great advice. And you are diverse in your talents and skills and your skillset, but you're also diverse in what you photograph, which is really cool too. It's not just, eventing, it's not just horses, even, it's so many things.

Amy Dragoo: [00:26:33] Yeah. Horses actually are really difficult for me to shoot when I first started because, I guess the adage is write what you know, but photographing what you know is, I've found difficult because, you've seen it. Someone was picking out a hoof, but that photo fills many needs editorially. I don't think I could have enough joint injection shots and the competitions are fun and there's the excitement and the adrenaline and the comradery.

And it's the day to day stuff that pays. The bills in this day and age, the winner is. It's old news. By the time I pick up my cameras and get back to the, to my computer, someone in the stands that's posted something from their phone or whatnot. So every publication does a spring shot story. So having, those practical images are the things that, for the most part, don't get old.

I did a quarantine photo. Set it up at my barn when I was riding with a, keep out sign and a bottle of bleach and a bucket and some boots and a Pitchfork and stuck one of the horses in stalls. And that series is probably close to 10 years old and something from it gets used every year. It's not the sexy, Outfront, I got to be at XYZ place. That is the business.

Katie Clinebell: [00:27:46] Yeah, definitely. And just being on a little bit of the editorial side that I, interact with, you hit the nail on the head. That is the content we need more than anything. And we're so thankful for people like you that have those photos ready to go because picture's worth a thousand words. The article can only be so good if it doesn't have the visual to go with it.

Amy Dragoo: [00:28:02] Thank you. Yeah. I would have loved, I did a little bit of self assigning this past year. I had some contacts who said, sure, come out. We're, vetting horses, injecting, and flexing and whatnot. And pre-purchase photos.

Those again, could never have enough of them. Here's a Bay horse, here's a chesnut horse. Here's a, warmblood, here's a quarter horse: doesn't matter? Yeah. Vetting, pre-purchase is, gets used a lot. I wish I could have done more, most of the clinics are, shut down to anyone coming in and going out on to people's farms as that outside contact.

So that was my decision to sit down and actually dive into the folders that I havent keyworded. And amazingly, there's a bunch of stuff that's practical that I've shot cross-country with someone walking back after that fallen off or someone falling off.

Katie Clinebell: [00:28:50] Yeah. We need all that. For sure. What advice would you give to someone looking to pursue a career as a photographer?

Amy Dragoo: [00:28:57] You want to develop a style, but you don't want to be trapped by it. Post-production or there just there's so many things. I think when I started, I never wanted to look at anyone else's work because I didn't want to be accused of copying them, but I've gotten over that I can be inspired by other people now.

And say, Oh, wow. I really liked the way they lit that. How is that applicable to something I would do? Or where would I use this and not just equine photographers. I feel like the equine world. And maybe it's just because I see it, that's what I'm looking at a lot, has its trends. Some of them are new.

Some of them are, recycled, everything old is new again. The Dutch Tilt, Dutch angle, basically shooting crooked. I like to call it. Horizontal. And it's an old film technique. And I actually, I think it's, might've gone back to some painting. But yeah, it's but it's funny in the past couple of years, it's become very popular again. I chuckle reinventing the wheel, I guess, watching things change and come back. There's no wrong or right. It's photography.

Katie Clinebell: [00:29:55] That is all great advice. And I love that even though the photography space has gotten so competitive there's just, I feel like anybody who owns a nice camera now claims to be a photographer.

Amy Dragoo: [00:30:04] There is that, that is one of your biggest challenges. Yeah.

Katie Clinebell: [00:30:12] And there's that and there's that we'll leave it there. Amy, in your own words, what does it mean to you to be an equine industry professional?

Amy Dragoo: [00:30:20] I really liked the community that it is. And the comradery of it. That's one thing I really, I have missed this past year is there not a lot of international events, there is the sort of that, there's a core group. If you're traveling, you're in a hotel together and, or dinner, or, just walking a course or being in the press room and just that comradery of people, being part of that community has very important or has come to be important.

Katie Clinebell: [00:30:47] Yeah. That relates back to your philosophy of everyone has a story to tell and once you know those stories of your community and you appreciate them, that builds community all by itself.

Amy Dragoo: [00:30:57] Very good point. Yes, exactly.

Katie Clinebell: [00:30:59] Oh, Amy, thank you so much for coming on the show and just sharing with us. Your perspective and some of your fun stories, I'm sure that you could talk about your offered for days and days. I love it just close it out. I'm sure that people listening definitely want to see the images you've taken, connect with, you see the work that you've done. So what's the best place that the audience, the listeners can do that?

Amy Dragoo: [00:31:21] My Instagram is @dragoophoto. The business Facebook page is AK Dragoo photography. So those are probably the most active platforms. There's always a new platform.

Katie Clinebell: [00:31:35] So true. Check her out on Instagram, follow you on Facebook. You can see some of her awesome photos. I also just adore your captions because they make me laugh and they make me like re-look at the photo and think. Okay. There's a story here. So definitely check those out too.

Amy Dragoo: [00:31:48] You definitely have to use fish duet, then.

Katie Clinebell: [00:31:51] Fish, duet?

Amy Dragoo: [00:31:53] It's in the gallery. I sent you.

Katie Clinebell: [00:31:55] Perfect.

Amy Dragoo: [00:31:55] Because it was the highlight of Kentucky a couple of years ago. It makes me laugh every time I look at it .

Katie Clinebell: [00:32:00] I love it. Can you just leave us with some food for thought? What do you want the listeners to think about and take away from this episode with you, Amy?

Amy Dragoo: [00:32:06] I think everyone can be a photographer and it doesn't matter what your equipment is. Look at things differently and see things, be open to the funny moment or the artistic moment. It doesn't necessarily just have to be knees to nose over the fence.

There's a lot happening behind that, whether it be grooms or owners or people or spectators, or, a random dog, just be visually aware.

[Podcast music outro music plays]

[Podcast outro] Thanks for riding along! Know someone that would be great to interview? Have questions you'd like answered on the podcast? Send me an email at beyondthesaddlepodcast@gmail.com or join the conversation on social media. You can connect with us and learn more about the Beyond the Saddle Podcast by following us on Facebook and Instagram at @beyondthesaddlepodcast. Find more episodes anywhere that you get your podcasts such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify, iHeartRadio, and more! Beyond the Saddle is a production of the Equine Podcast Network, and entity of Equine Network, LLC.

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