

# “I want to do it my way but 99% of the time she’s right!”

ISABELLE COOK ON BENEFITTING FROM HER MOTHER TINA’S EXPERIENCE



of competitions – it could be really helpful to have someone living with you who has progressed through the levels and knows the answers,” she points out.

Tina Cook, who grew up with successful equestrian parents herself, couldn’t agree more. Her father Josh Gifford was a four-time champion jump jockey as well as Grand National-winning trainer; her mother Althea was a top-class international showjumper.

“I loved following Dad around the yard,” Tina says. “I had 60 horses at my back door and I would watch him look around every horse every single evening. I learnt a lot from him and his attention to detail.”

Now Isabelle is benefitting from that knowledge, too, although that’s not to say she always takes Tina’s advice.

“At the end of the day, she’s my mum so you’re always going to disagree on something!” Isabelle says. “She’ll suggest something, and I want to do it my way but 99% of the time she’s right and I think I should have listened to her in the first place.”

Jack agrees. “That’s the only disadvantage,” he jokes, of his father’s expertise. “Michael knows everything. So you have your own idea, he says it won’t work, you try it anyway and then it doesn’t work. He’s always right.”

Overall, Jack sees his family’s knowledge as a huge advantage. “My dad doesn’t say a lot but what he does say is unbelievable. It’s an endless supply of advice.”

*Above and right: “I loved following Dad around the yard... I learnt a lot from him” – Tina Cook is now sharing her equestrian experience – and enjoyment – with her daughter Isabelle. Below: Rebecca and Gareth Hughes have, among other support, talked to daughter Ruby about the highs and lows of the sport, helping to prepare her*

