The two week trip started with a very early start, picking up Jocelyn King (Kingsfield) from Frankfurt and heading to Spoga. Spoga is a shoppers paradise, dream and torture all in one. So many nice products, many of which do not see the shelves in Australia.

From Spoga to Dortmund and Dusseldorf, where we were able to visit some amazing ponies. The stallions Going East and Daruby Gold were first on the list, as well as the young progeny of these stallions. It’s wonderful that the breeders take time from their work day to show us their beautiful ponies. Next were Valido, Valido’s Highlight and some very impressive riding age mares and youngstock. Highlight of all of our stud visits was a visit to Gestuet Bonniger, home of the amazing Dornik B and my all time favorite pony Golden Dancer, amongst many more beautiful ponies. Going to Bonniger is like stepping back in European Pony History. A room dedicated to the history of the Bonniger ponys and the European Championships sure is something special to see, especially when the history is explained on how each pony was bred and their riding history. I believe Gestuet Bonniger is the most successful pony stud in producing European Championship Ponies, at one stage having every pony on the German Team bred by Bonniger or by Bonniger Pony Stallions.

Thanks to Saskia Walnsch for her expert navigation skills and organizing each of the studs times for us to visit.

Travelling to Germany in September always means 4 days at the Bundeschampionate. My regular apartment in Telgte that I stay at was booked on a long term stay, so I ventured out of the town and stayed at a lovely town called Oelde at a very nice hotel called Hotel Engbert. I highly recommend this hotel to travellers who will be in the Warendorf area. Extremely clean rooms, great beds, good pillows (as good as German pillows get really), excellent breakfast and is just around the corner from the most amazing little pub, that did incredible dinners.

The Bundeschampionate itself was entertaining as usual. Gorgeous ponies, beautiful horses and great people. It was lovely to meet up with old breeding friends and to meet new friends from across the Globe. Our congratulations are sent out to all that qualified and those that had success.

Post Bundeschampionate, we travelled to Spahnharrenstatte to visit Gestuet Hilkens. Hospitality at Hilkens is always second to none and many thanks to Sabine for the use of the apartment and also the recommendation of the Greek Restaurant – that is a whole story of it’s own! The Hilkens ponies were spectacular as always and it will be sad to see this stud wind down it’s breeding program.

Next came the purpose of my trip – finally I get to ride BKS White Light. What can I say about him! What a gorgeous, well behaved, sweet stallion. This is the type of pony you want your kids riding. I have absolutely no doubt that he will be a brilliant dressage pony for kids – lucky Scarlett. Many thanks to the Coldewey familie from Gestuet Kastanienhof for their fantastic care of Casper. It’s never easy to leave a pony so far from home, but it is made much easier with the care given at Kastanienhof. Many thanks also for the beautiful dinner and hospitality. A special moment at Gestuet Kastanienhof was a photographic history of the Kastanienhof ponies from Renate Coldewey. A painted picture of Brillant takes pride of place in their loungeroom – a pony who has had such an influence on the development of the German Riding Pony. Jocelyn and I were fortunate enough to be given a copy of this photo and it will take place in the history of the Roseglen Farm ponies, as Brillant is the grandsire of our stallion Kennedy WE. I’m sure it will take place in the history of Kingsfield as Jocelyn owns the very first Kennedy WE foal in Australia.

Time at Kastanienhof came to an end and we had the pleasure of catching up with Alex Wright – it was so good to see Alex in the saddle riding again. From Alex onto Hengstation Danica Duen, where we were spoilt for choice of beautiful ponies. I cannot describe just how beautiful Cosmopolitan, Cocktailzauber and Del Estero are. I am really pleased that we have secured frozen semen for Australian breeders of these beautiful stallions. They have always looked good in their photo’s, but wow, their photo’s really do not do them justice – they are even better in the flesh. Thankyou Danica and Ulli for your time and hospitality. So many beautiful ponies and stallions in your stables. I look forward to seeing more of them all in the future.

Finally my portion of the German trip was coming to an end. Jocelyn had booked us into an amazing hotel in a little town called Kirchen, near Siegen. The hotel was 361 years old and in the most beautiful location. I truly felt we were in Hansel and Gretel land. The food was amazing, the rooms so very clean and the history incredible. Thanks Joc – great pick of hotels.

Although I could easily have spent another week in Germany and I would have loved to spend the next three horsey days with Jocelyn, I was really missing the kids. It’s amazing how your life perspective changes when you have kids – I love my ponies very much – but my family are my world to me. Very big thanks to Steve and my inlaws for looking after the kids and farm whilst I was gone, this meant I could jam as much into two weeks as possible without the stress of things at home.