

Monday morning finds us back in dressage tack for our last full day in Virginia. This morning's lessons continued the focus of finding more gears in each gait, working on the suppling through transitions between more collected steps and more extended steps. Ron is certainly becoming more accepting of the work and the overall quality of his gaits is improving every day. We particularly focused on riding the outside aids to produce a straighter, more correct horse. This is important for us in the counter canter, especially on the left lead, where Ron can anticipate the outside rein as the aid for the change. As that left to right lead change has been a sticky one for him, it is important that I teach him there is a difference in the aids between the counter canter and using the outside rein as a half halt to produce collection, versus the preparation and aids for flying changes. He is such a trier and a pleaser, that he gets anxious trying to do the right things. One of David's strengths as a coach is his patience. He places a high value on communication with the horse and makes it a priority for the horses to understand what we are asking of them. After the day's lesson, it was time to head into the Dover store in Chantilly. Ron inherited a very large double bridle from McKinlaigh and along with it a couple of bits that are a bit too big for him. It was time for him to have his own. The Dover store is an equestrian's dream, so much fun to browse and shop! On the way home I stopped by the Safeway in Middleburg to pick up fixings for the evening's dinner. I had mentioned to Karen that I loved to cook, so I was nominated to make tonight's meal. I shopped around for recipes to use the Stonehall beef that is stocked up in the freezer and settled on a Flank steak roll. I marinated the flank the night before and then made a filling from spinach, onions, portobello mushrooms, gorgonzola cheese, and roasted bell peppers. Served with rosemary roasted potatoes and a Gorgonzola sauce and spinach salad on the side. A bunch of the girls on the farm came over and we had a great party for my last night in Virginia.

Tuesday morning was a final jump school with David. We definitely made progress in our stay here and Ron jumped way better than I have ever felt him jump before. I am so glad that we made the extra effort to come out early, even though it made the last two weeks pretty chaotic. After the jump, we had one last go up the hill for our final gallop and then packed up the rest of our stuff. I'm a bit sad to be leaving Virginia behind. It was great to be back for a visit and I hope that the horses keep going well, so that we can come back again soon!



Packed up and ready to go!



Final views from VA



View from the front porch  
(where we saw a fox!)