

**Austin O'Connor, 50**  
**IRL**

Austin O'Connor, 50, and his 2024 Defender Burghley ride Colorado Blue won MARS Maryland CCI5\* last year and placed 17<sup>th</sup> at this summer's Olympic Games in Paris.

Austin is based near Didcot in Oxfordshire and over the last 24 years has represented Ireland in four Olympic Games (2000, 2008, 2020, 2024), four European Championships (2003, 2007, 2013, 2015) and one World Championship.

Austin was born in Cork, where his parents ran a riding school and breaking yard. At the age of 13, he started his international career becoming the youngest ever rider to compete in a two-star in Punchestown. Placed at Punchestown in 1990 and 1992, he was twice an Irish Junior team member, and was long-listed for Young Riders. After turning 19 he came to England for two months work experience with the Wiegiersma family at their yard in Cornwall. After two years, he left to set up his own yard, initially in Worcestershire.

Austin is married to Amy and the couple have two sons. Austin trains with Gill Watson, Tracie Robinson and Carl Hester. In his spare time, he is a keen follower of National Hunt racing and supports Everton FC.

**Colorado Blue** (Jaguar Mail-Rock Me Baby (Rock King), known at home as 'Salty', is owned by The Salty Syndicate and rider. Salty is a 15-year-old British-bred SHB(GB) registered gelding. Bred by Kate Jarvey, he is by the leading sire Jaguar Mail (sire of Tenareze, Fischertakinou, Treloar, Tresor Mail etc) out of Rock Me Baby by the former advanced stallion Rock King of which there are three progenies competing at Defender Burghley. Rock Me Baby is also the dam of Ludwig Svennerstal's former Olympic ride Balham Mist. Austin bought the dam Rock Me Baby as a four-year-old and sold her to Kate to breed from. Colorado Blue was acquired from Kate as a five-year-old by the four ladies of the Salty Syndicate and has been produced by Austin from the start of his career.