



ALEXANDRA LEDERMANN

FULL OF HEART

By **Nada H. Abdelmoniem**

COUNTRY: FRANCE

DATE OF BIRTH: MAY 14 1969

STAR SIGN: TAURUS

PROFESSION: SHOW JUMPING RIDER & COMPANY
MANAGER

ALEXANDRA LEDERMANN, THE 1996 ATLANTA OLYMPICS SHOW JUMPING INDIVIDUAL BRONZE MEDALLIST AND FIRST EUROPEAN FEMALE SHOW JUMPING CHAMPION, IS A VERY SPECIAL COMBINATION OF BUSINESS SAVVY AND HORSEWOMAN. SHE IS PERCEIVED TO BE INTIMIDATING AND AS SHARP AND HARD AS A DIAMOND ON THE OUTSIDE BUT INSIDE, SHE IS SHY, KIND, AND GENUINE. FULL OF HEART, SHE HAS STEPPED EARLY INTO THE GAME BECAUSE SHE IS TRUE TO HERSELF AND HER HORSES. SEEMINGLY FULL OF BRIGHT NEW IDEAS AND VENTURES, SHE IS A BUSINESSWOMAN WHO IS PASSIONATELY INVOLVED IN HER CLOTHING LINES, ENTERTAINING COMIC STRIPS AND VIDEO GAMES.....UNTIL SHE STEPS BACK INTO THE BIG SHOW JUMPING SCENE AGAIN.

◀ *Alexandra with 7-year old Requiem de Talma (gelding by Dobel's Cento), the horse with whom she places her biggest hopes for the future*



▲ Alexandra on Zues during HORSES & HOPES' horse trials in Cairo. In 3 days, they connected like they knew each other for years & were placed 10th in the GP

Please tell us about your coaches that have had the most influence on you?

All throughout my career I have been taught by only one person, my father Jean-Pierre Ledermann. He taught me everything I know. Above all he gave me knowledge of the horses, and allowed me to become a true horsewoman.

Tell us about your daily riding routine?

Nothing special for a rider...riding my horses, and going to the shows at the end of the week. And also taking care for my own brands: clothing line (sale online: www.alexandra-ledermann.fr), video games, books and comic strips.

Tell us about your horses and the ones who have left a mark on your riding career?

First of all, my ponies allowed me to become what I am; they taught me how to go very fast on a jump-off, to

win and to want to always win more! But the horse which definitely marked my career is unquestionably Rochet M. He offered me my most beautiful victories and my most beautiful titles. He was incredible, like a continuation of myself, despite the fact that he was quite difficult to ride.

But I do not forget that without those who preceded him, no success of that kind would have arrived. I won my first 1.50 m Grand Prix at the age of 18 with Natfot, a small horse born and bred at home. Then the mare Punition, also born at home, helped me out to start on the big international courses, by offering me one of my most beautiful victories in the World Cup Grand Prix in Paris-Bercy in 1992, and a qualification for the World Cup Finale at Del Mar, California (USA).

Following that, Mr. Dominique Mars, a French businessman, decided to buy me a horse capable of allowing me to go to the Olympics. I chose Rochet...

Are you currently involved in breeding horses?

My entire career was built on breeding; it is thanks to the horses that my father brought up that I was able to reach the international level and cut my teeth before Rochet arrived in my stables. As my parents couldn't afford to buy me Grand Prix horses, breeding was the most economical solution. But also the most unpredictable! Breeding is not an exact science, and despite the fact that we continued breeding in which I was, of course, involved, the following years were not as lucky as the beginning...

Do you train? If yes, tell us about who you train?

I teach very occasionally. I like to teach riders already competing at good level so that I can really bring them concrete added value (this "little more" that might change everything). Even when I do train sometimes, to teach only during one or two days during a clinic is not my

favourite. In my opinion one to two days is not enough to fix up riders' and horses' problems. So I'd rather train somebody in the longer term. It is more rewarding for both parties.

I teach a classical French equitation, based on forward motion and balance. I noticed that most of the riders are afraid of speed consequently I teach them how to not be afraid, and how to love it! I'm convinced about the benefit of dressage for horses, but I think that too many riders force their horses without psychology. I teach them that control and liberty are not incompatible.

Tell us about your stud farm?

My stables are located in Normandy, 100 kms from west Paris. My parents arrived there in 1965 and created the actual riding school. At the moment the stables are shared between the riding school, the livery yard, the breeding horses, and the show jumping horses.

How has the French Equestrian Federation been involved in your riding career and does it currently support you in any way?

The French Equestrian Federation brings me no help at the moment, and I cannot really say that it helped me a lot in the past (no more than the other French riders, in fact).

Do you have any sponsors?

My current sponsors are Guibert (a shop selling luxury goods of equitation in Paris), Audevard (Laboratory of equine food complements), Royal Horse (horse food supplier), Butet (top of the range saddles), Cavalassur (insurances and credits for the equine world). They sell high quality products, and are fantastic people, I'm very lucky to work with them! And they are as faithful to me as I am to them; all of them have been supporting me for at least 10 years!

How does it feel like to be known as the first European female champion?

The public and the press made a fuss about it, but as soon as this

sport is better mixed, I personally don't see why it would be something exceptional. However, I recognise that to be the first one to achieve something rare is good. And I know it is something that I will keep for the rest of my life.

Tell us about your clothing line and video game?


The collection of video games started in 2000, when Ubisoft asked me to be the image of their future game based on horses and equitation (at this time there were no video games about horses and equitation in France). To date more than about 10 products were created for a total of more than one million sales. The release of the latest one is planned for the first quarter 2013.

I also have been co-writing a comic strip bearing my name that was released in October 2012. And I am at the present time co-writing a book of popularisation and advices for the children. Concerning my clothes line, it's a project that was very close to my heart for many years. The concept of feminine yet technical clothes, that we can wear when riding and competing, as well as in the city, seems to appeal greatly to a lot of women. Sales are excellent in France, but also in Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Portugal, Denmark, Germany, and even South Africa, Mexico and Australia!

You have been described as being "outspoken and having a fiery character". How would you comment to that?

I can tell you a bit more about my character: I am mostly described by my friends as being honest, spontaneous, sincere, and faithful. I'm also a perfectionist (what can sometimes be upsetting for my close relatives...), I'm a fighter and I never capitulate. On the show grounds I heard some people talking about me as a "warrior" when I'm in the arena. Paradoxically, I am very shy the rest of the time in everyday life. I also don't accept any compromise when the health of my horses is involved. I think about them first, and then the competition. They are my priority.

You are a champion and act like one; will people see you competing again in high-level competitions?

People will see me again in high-level competition as soon as I can get horses again which are able to jump those competitions! I would really love it!!! 

**Photos courtesy of Virginie Bruneau: 3bruneau@orange.fr - Juan Zamora: 3bruneau@orange.fr & Alezane: photoalezane@gmail.com*

▼ Alexandra on Requiem de Talma at Le Touquet, 2012

