

HORSE TIMES INTERVIEW WITH

LUIZ FRANSISCO DE AZEVEDO

BY FARAH REZEIKA

LUIZ IS A BRAZILIAN RIDER BASED IN WELLINGTON. HE WAS PRACTICALLY BORN ON A HORSE, COMING FROM A FAMILY OF HORSEMEN. HIS FATHER IS A 2X OLYMPIC MEDALIST, AND HE ALWAYS DREAMED OF FOLLOWING IN HIS FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS. HE HAS PARTICIPATED IN A WORLD CUP FINAL, WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES, AND HAS BEEN SELECTED TWICE FOR THE BRAZILIAN OLYMPIC TEAM, REPRESENTING HIS COUNTRY IN LONDON 2012 AND TOKYO 2020.



WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE A CAREER IN SHOW JUMPING?

My dad is my greatest inspiration. I grew up seeing his successful career. Also, my brother is a professional and fantastic rider who has influenced me.

CAN YOU SHARE A MEMORABLE MOMENT FROM YOUR COMPETITIVE JOURNEY SO FAR, AND WHAT MADE IT STAND OUT FOR YOU?

Fortunately, I have had a few remarkable moments in my journey. But one that stands out a lot is the CSI 5* WEF Rolex Grand Prix, where I was in second place with my great companion Comic. Of course, being selected to represent my team in major championships is also a great achievement in my career.

AS SOMEONE WHO HAS ACHIEVED GREAT SUCCESS IN THEIR FIELD, HOW DO YOU STAY MOTIVATED AND CONTINUE PUSHING BOUNDARIES?

Our sport is so competitive and challenging that there is always something more to conquer. My motivation comes from my everyday work to keep improving and getting better each time.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THE SPORT EVOLVE OVER THE YEARS, AND WHAT DEVELOPMENTS EXCITE YOU MOST ABOUT ITS FUTURE?

Many things have changed. First, the quality of the horses, amazing facilities and the quantity of riders able to compete at the highest level are impressive.



DOES ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY CURRENTLY COMPETE OR HAVE EXPERIENCE IN SHOW JUMPING, AND IF SO, HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR OWN APPROACH TO THE SPORT?

Yes. My oldest brother, Luiz Felipe de Azevedo Filho, my sister-in-law, Celine de Azevedo and my nephew Luiz Felipe de Azevedo Neto. It's a great opportunity to share the same passion and to be able to exchange thoughts and opinions with people so close to me. In fact, we will all be competing together in the Global Champions Tour of Miami in April.

FAMILY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MANY ATHLETES' LIVES. HOW HAS YOUR FAMILY SUPPORTED YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR SHOWJUMPING JOURNEY, AND WHAT IMPACT HAVE THEY HAD ON YOUR SUCCESS?

As mentioned previously, my father is a fantastic rider and a great mentor. He gives me very incisive opinions that always yields results when put into practice. My wife is a great supporter and plays an important role in helping me maintain my focus.

WHAT'S THE MOST ADRENALINE-PUMPING SHOWJUMPING COMPETITION YOU'VE EVER PARTICIPATED IN, AND HOW DID YOU MENTALLY PREPARE FOR IT?

The World Equestrian Games at Tryon in 2018 required long preparation, spanning many years. It involved consistent training to keep my horse in the best shape and the confidence to always give my best.



AS A RENOWNED SHOWJUMPER, YOU'VE TRAVELED THE WORLD FOR COMPETITIONS. CAN YOU SHARE A DESTINATION THAT LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION ON YOU AND WHY IT WAS SO MEMORABLE?

My profession gives me the opportunity to be in amazing places and meet wonderful people. But there is one place that has a special feeling for me. **Rome, Piazza di Siena**, where I placed 3rd in the Nations Cup representing Brazil alongside my brother, who was also on the team. A real dream comes true.

LUIZ, IT HAS BEEN APPROXIMATELY A YEAR SINCE YOU OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THE RETIREMENT OF YOUR ESTEEMED HORSE COMIC. LOOKING BACK ON THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY YOU SHARED TOGETHER, CAN YOU

REFLECT ON SOME OF THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS YOU HAD WITH COMIC THROUGHOUT HIS ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER?

Comic is definitely an esteemed horse. I would even say more; **he is part of my family**. The Boss of my house, there are pictures of Comic in every corner of it. In regards to results, I won't mention just one, but the day I actually tried him when he was only 6 years old. That day, I had the best feeling I have ever felt on a horse. Our connection was immediate. I knew he was the one.

FOR THOSE JUST STARTING, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR TOP THREE TIPS FOR BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL SHOW JUMPING CAREER?

Work hard, be patient, and most importantly, love and respect the horses. 🐾

