

Ina in

**Osnabruecker Land;****The world met twice in Hagen: Kasselmann Stables hosted both the International Riders Festival Horses & Dreams, as well as the much talked about **European Dressage Championships 2005****

By Ina El Kobbia, Germany

At a very late stage, the International Equestrian Federation had to declare the withdrawal of the European Dressage Championships 2005 from Moscow. The Russian Equestrian Federation and its organising committee ultimately failed to provide the necessary guarantees to host the event. The international horseman Ullrich Kasselmann along with his long-time partner Paul Schockemoehle and their most skilled PSI-Team stepped in and organised the European Championships as scheduled in no more than two weeks! It is said that Kasselmann Stables presented on its beautiful estate in Hagen in the Osnabruecker Land one of the nicest championships ever held in dressage. The powerful Chairwoman of the F.E.I. Dressage Committee, Mme. Mariette Withages, called it "the wonder of Hagen."

18 Nations competed in the discipline that started on July 28th with two days Grand Prix qualification rounds out of which the team medalists were established. The results were dramatically close: Germany won the gold medal for the 21st consecutive time, with just 0,541% ahead of a strong Dutch Team, that included the world champion Anky van Grunsven and her Hanoverian gelding 'Keltec Salinero'. The Spanish Team took third place and fascinated the audience with its lively performances. The equally strong Swedish Team with its best couple Jan Brink and his beautiful Swedish bred stallion 'Bjoersells Briar' (the stallion was awarded horse of the year 2001) finished with the same total score of 213.125% as the Spanish Team. For the first time in more than 40 years of European Dressage Championships two teams concluded their performances with identical points. Article 434.4 of the F.E.I. Rules for Dressage Events states that: "In case of equality of points, the winning team is the one whose lowest classified competitor out of the three has the best result". The outcome was in favour of the Spanish Team, whereas Sweden was granted 4th place.

In a most generous effort and extraordinary gesture of fair play, the Spanish Dressage Team and their Chef d'Equipe Bobby Bobadilla referred to the F.E.I. and requested that the third place be



From left: Hubertus Schmidt (GER), silver; Anky van Grunsven (NED), gold; Jan Brink (SWE), bronze. This picture shows the individual winners of the European Championships.



European Championships in Hagen; Jan Brink preparing for his performance.

granted equally to the Swedish Team. F.E.I. Dressage Chairwoman, Mariette Withages supported the Spanish approach fundamentally. The F.E.I. agreed to the Spanish request; a special prize giving ceremony was held in Hagen for the two bronze medal winners, Spain and Sweden! The championships continued with spectacular individual qualification rounds. After one day of Grand Prix Special the event ended next day with the particular highlight of freestyle to music. As expected, Dutch Anky van Grunsven and her Hanoverian gelding 'Keltec Salinero' received the highest scores in both, Grand Prix Special and freestyle. The couple were awarded the gold medal and became the new European Dressage Champions of 2005. However, van Grunsven admitted that she wasn't at her very best the last two days. German Hubertus Schmidt and his wonderfully relaxed mare 'Wansuela Suerte'

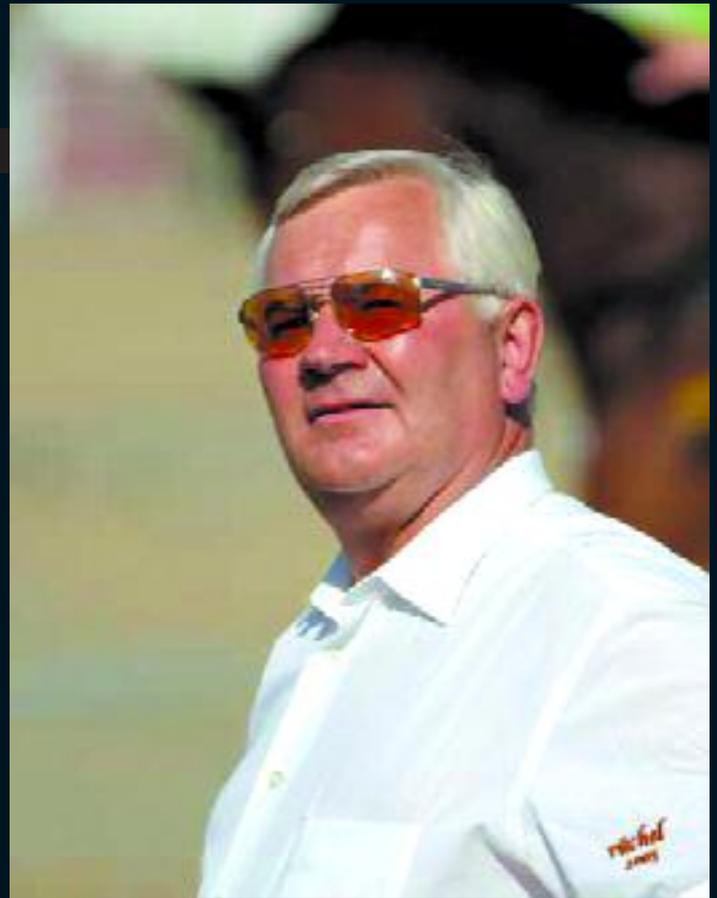
convinced both, audience and judges by most elegant performances and took the silver medal. The very harmonic Swedish duo Jan Brink and his stallion 'Bjoersells Briar' won the bronze medal.

Unfortunately the championships also witnessed uneasy debates following an article in one of Germany's most recognized equestrian magazines, 'St. Georg'. Prior to the championships in Hagen, the magazine issued a lengthy seven page article where the authors claimed that unconventional training methods were practiced by a number of professional dressage riders; these were alleged to be capable of jeopardizing the welfare of the horse. In that context, the authors amongst others also released a photo of the Dutch Dressage Team during a warm up. The Dutch Team reacted by strongly denying any malpractice and by additionally referring to the ongoing success of their horses in international competitions, which demonstrated their very good condition. In fact the international dressage community and its experts have not claimed any kind of malpractice against the Dutch Team in particular. It is also partly argued that it still remained unclear whether certain training methods mentioned by the article would at all go against a horse's well being. However, if the controversial debates lead to a better recognition of the horses' needs, they surely would serve the best possible purpose!

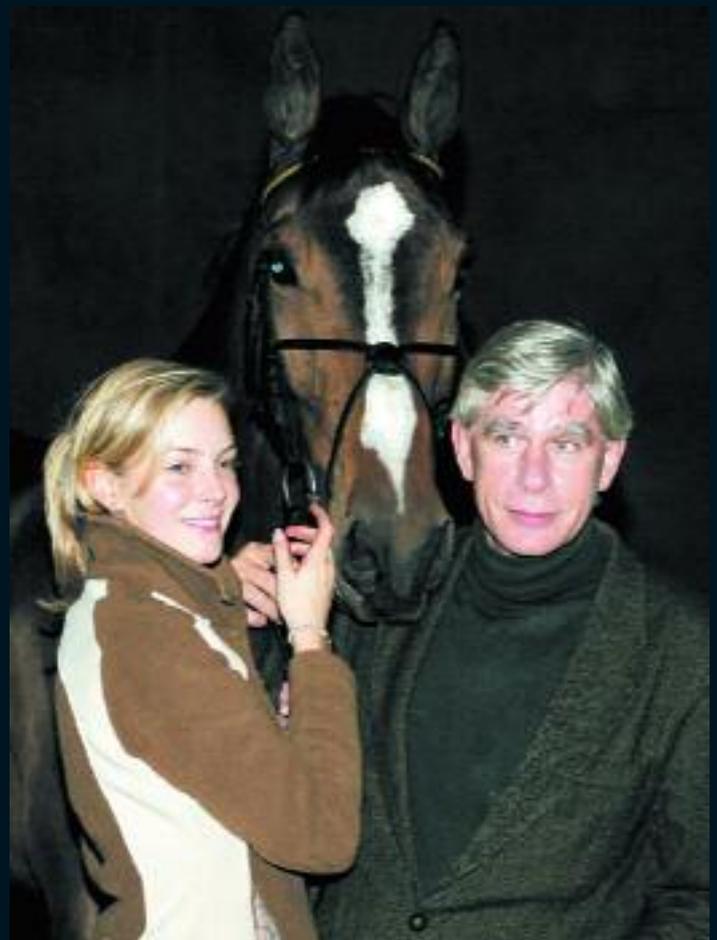
The F.E.I. Dressage Committee has reacted already to the speculations about malpractice by releasing an official declaration according to which it stressed anew that: "At all stages during the preparation and training of competition horses, welfare must take precedence over all other demands".

Beyond any doubt the European Dressage Championships were spectacular, determining Ullrich Kasselmann as the most admired host. When asked about taking a rest after the event, Kasselmann had already referred to the CDI\*\*\* dressage competition taking place in August with riders from as far as the U.S. and Japan, who will resume on his estate. Moreover, the preparations for the world-famous PSI Auction, which is due this year from the 10th till 11th of December, are running high. At the auction Kasselmann and Schockemoehle will present their greatest horse talents to the members of the international riding sport.

Only two months earlier Kasselmann Stables hosted another season's highlight; the International Riders Festival Horses & Dreams. It is



"Kasselmann, a smart visionary & a wonderful host"



"A proud father; Paul Schockemoehle with his beautiful daughter Vivien, Nations' Cup winner with the team in Hagen".

surely Kasselmann's dearest event, and involves the family at large. The Festival, that started much smaller eight years ago, has achieved a steady place in the calendar of international sport events. It presents next to high class dressage and jumping competitions, the exotic F.E.I. World Challenge Finals in both dressage and jumping. The F.E.I. World Challenge has been designed as an extra tour for the riding talents from countries that are seeking to take up to the elite circle of international riding nations. After one hundred qualification rounds in sixty countries, the finals of the F.E.I World Challenge are carried out each year in Hagen on top horses provided to the riders by Kasselmann & Schockemoehle. During the last four years, 10.000 starters had registered for the F.E.I World Challenge. However, Kasselmann & Schockemoehle already announced their search for additional partners to organize the World Challenge Tour next year.

Another top event at the festival is the Nations' Cup of the Young Riders (CSIOY), which is the equivalent to the renowned CHIO in Aachen. The best of the best young riders of each nation compete in show jumping; this time Germany won the Nation's Cup followed by the Netherlands and Poland. At the prize giving ceremony one could witness a very happy and extra proud Paul Schockemoehle: his beautiful daughter Vivien was a very successful rider in the German winning team. She presented two clear rounds on her horse 'Come On'.

Horses & Dreams is more than a riders' festival; it carries the vision to combine the riding sport with other fields of interest and business in order to reach out to a wider public. With zeal and passion, Ms. Silke Alberty, another successful member of the Kasselmann family, has established a very tasteful and elite lifestyle exhibition that encompassed this year some 150 exhibitors from all around the country.

It is well proven now, that Ullrich Kasselmann enjoys bringing people together and he does so in a nice and skilful way and for a very good reason too. Having been a guest myself several times at Kasselmanns', I know about his talents of quickly and successfully bringing people from in & outside the riding sport together. It shouldn't therefore be a big surprise that two great visionaries like Ullrich Kasselmann and Paul Schockemoehle join efforts in the business and shape the international riding scene. For the joy of riding sport, one cannot but to wholeheartedly wish both, ever lasting success, ongoing determination & innovation and foremost good health!! ■



"Heinrich-Hermann Engemann, the local matador & one of Germany's fastest riders"



"Lifestyle at Horses & Dreams in Hagen, organised by Silke Alberty"



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