

# Views from

# Ullrich Kasselmann

By Ina El Kobbia, Germany



A strong team; international horseman Ullrich Kasselmann & his son Francois

The international horseman Ullrich Kasselmann from Hagen (a. T.W.) in Germany is one of Europe's most recognised personalities in the international horse business. Together with his partner Paul Schockemoehle they represent an everlasting success story in the challenging horse business around the globe. With their world-famous PSI-Auction they supply the international riding scene year by year with Olympic and World champions in dressage and jumping. In 2005 Ullrich Kasselmann hosted the European Dressage Championships and received special honours from the German Equestrian Federation for his outstanding achievements. Each year the International Riders' Festival Horses & Dreams on the Kasselmann Estate offers highlights of international equestrian sport in jumping and dressage accompanied by a vivid lifestyle exhibition. Recently Ullrich Kasselmann took the challenge to train and equip the Qatari Team for the Asian Games 2006 in Doha, which gave me another opportunity to ask him about his recent equestrian engagements and views.

*Mr. Kasselmann, how were the Asian Games 2006 in Qatar for you? What was your strongest impression?*

The Asian Games carried the motto: "... the games of your life" and I really felt it lived up to it. The opening ceremony was breathtaking!

*You trained and equipped the Qatari national dressage team that qualified for the first time for the Asian Games and ended up in an admirable 6th place. Are you satisfied?*

It is the first time ever that an Arab country qualifies and competes on such an international level in dressage. I really would like to express my greatest respect to the riders who took the challenge and managed in a very short time to pass these demanding competitions well.

*Dressage is considered one of the most elegant, yet one of the most difficult equestrian disciplines. In the Arab World dressage has yet to be broken in, but the Asian Games 2006 proved that with excellent horses and professional training you are able to catch up and challenge even Eastern Asia, such as Korea and Japan who are still considered the region's forefront riders. What are you hoping for as to the development of dressage in Arabia?*

I hope very much that the Asian Games 2006 will be the spark that sets the dressage world in Arabia alight.

I would like to think that dressage could be a particularly successful challenge to the female riders in the region; whereby, with good horses at hand you can quickly catch up and enjoy the success of riding at the highest level.

*International commerce celebrates China as a country that offers enormous economic opportunities. How would you describe your involvement in China and what chances do you see for developing horses business there?*

In the next years to come, China will witness an economic boom in equestrianism. This country has a long historical tradition for horses. Moreover Chinese riders like to come to Germany and to learn about its training and education methods for horses and riders alike.

*At the World Equestrian Games in Aachen, the horse world celebrated the new F.E.I President, H.R.H. Princess Haya bint Al Hussein; she received plaudits throughout and German newspapers described her as having "the Games winning smile". You have known the Princess since her earlier days. What do you think has changed already since the start of her presidency and what are*

*your expectations?*

In her earlier riding career H.R.H. Princess Haya stayed for quite a while at my partner's estate (Paul Schockemoehle) in Muehlen. She is a young woman, who thinks strategically and has great leadership qualities. Due to her riding career, she really knows what she is talking about; she is close to the riders and understands their problems well. As new F.E.I. President she is already a great asset for the riding sport through her radiant and charming appearance.

*Mr. Kasselmann, the International Riders' Festival Horses & Dreams at Kasselmanns' will take place from the 28th of April till the 1st of May this year. What will we be able to look forward to?*

Many international riding stars will join and compete at the festival. Besides, the renowned Nations' Cup in jumping with the most promising young riders from Europe will take place again in addition to the German Dressage Championships for Professionals. Along with our yearly lifestyle exhibition we will host China as this year's guest country; a special attraction will be the Chinese National Circus.

Ending this interview, I would like to add a personal note and thank Ullrich Kasselmann, who in order to make this interview possible and to meet his very narrow time schedule, sat down and answered all these questions, in writing, for Horse Times at the same morning he received them from me by e-mail through his office. **HT**