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VIEW POINT

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear readers,

With all the unprecedented events taking place in the Middle East in general - which could affect the equestrian sport and in particular show jumping - in this summer issue of HORSE TIMES we closely feature more information about riders involved in that field, hoping that the sport picks up from where it stopped.

We start off with Syria's Yasser Al Charif, a veteran show jumper and an active competitor, in a significant interview regarding his visions of his present and future. We then continue with Qatar's Ali Al Rumaihi and his career that is developing positively towards a bright future, as well as Lebanon's Karim Faris and some of his personal habits in the 60 seconds piece.

Not to say the least, we feature more show jumping, although with a veteran icon in a league of his own; Michel Robert and how his mental toughness sets the most admirable path, leading him forward as a legend.

You will find inside results and moments caught in pictures from the 2011 Global Champions Tour season, as well as technical and training tips that are the basis for successful riding at any level.

On to racing, polo, and art, read about this year's Royal Ascot celebrating its 300th anniversary - going from strength to strength with 300,000 people attending, polo the sport of kings in Egypt, and Ireland's talented artist Paddy Lennon.

For the first time, Randa Henry Barakat presents to our readers a love story written in the language of love itself, French. And finally, a small reportage in pictures of the progress that is taking place at the Ferosia Club in Cairo.

We hope you read on and enjoy.

Sincerely,
Khaled Assem

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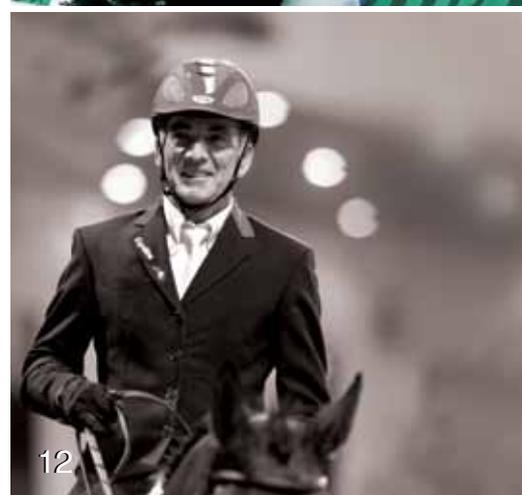
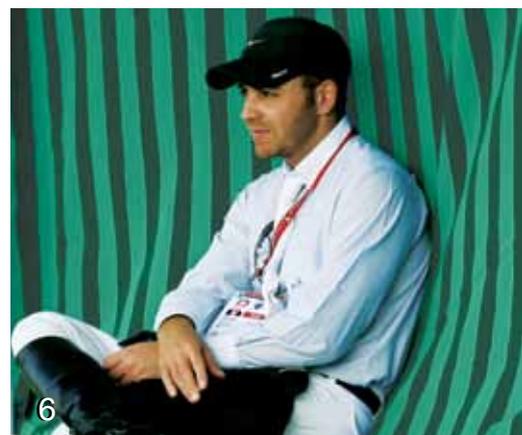


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YASSER CHARIF

HE WHO SHALL NOT HEED

By Khaled Assem

A GENERAL TREND IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS TO FULLY CONCENTRATE ON JUNIOR AND UPCOMING TALENT AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, OVERLOOKING VETERAN RIDERS IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES, ONE OF WHICH IS EGYPT. INVESTIGATING THIS OCCURRENCE IN SYRIA, ONE WOULD FIND THAT YASSER CHARIF – NO QUESTION A VETERAN OF THE GAME – HAS BEEN COMPETING SINCE BEFORE THE 1987 MEDITERRANEAN GAMES IN SYRIA AND IS STILL GOING STRONG UP TO THE 2011 GCT IN DOHA. THIS POSES A VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION; WHAT IS THE WINNING FORMULA? A VETERAN RIDER WITH TALENT AND PLENTY OF MILEAGE, VERSUS A YOUNGER RIDER WITH SOME TALENT, ENTHUSIASM AND GROWING MILEAGE, OR SIMPLY BOTH, KNOWING THAT A NATIONS CUP – THE BEST REPRESENTATION OF A COUNTRY'S LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE – IS BASED UPON THE RESULTS OF A THREE-RIDER TEAM?





How do you continue to stay part of competitive show jumping and how do you envision your future in the sport?

I started young and quite frankly, I do not see myself stopping. I also still see myself competing in big levels. The Arab League events are great venues to keep riding at and are annually developing. We have top horses, top competitions and certainly top riders, and to compete there, it's necessary for me to keep up with the sport's pace.

Your horse jumped extremely well during the GCT five star competitions; was he bought as

jumps. I saw him with a friend of mine and felt we had a connection.

If you get a good offer to sell that horse, would you take it?

No, I wouldn't. I'm working hard to establish a relationship and understanding with him. However, this would differ from one rider to another; this sport was actually a "sport" to us once upon a time, but now it has changed and become more of a business, an industry. Having said this, we do need to keep up with what is happening. In the past federations paid for horses, now we have to manage on our own. Several Gulf States pay well for horses, and

do not, and I suppose this is also the case in Egypt, and certainly in Syria. So I'm sure, you as a rider and a trainer understand what it's like to find and keep a good competitive horse.

Why do you think all federations in the Middle East do not fully support their experienced riders?

European federations fully support the idea of sponsorship due to the fact that equestrian sport is popular there and viewed by a big variety of enthusiasts. It is a spectator sport there and so logistics are quite organised. In Syria for example, in a way our federation ensures a range of sponsorship such as promotion and



▲ Yasser & Gemini during the GCT of Doha 2011

an experienced horse to jump such levels or have you used your long experience to prepare him?

Gemini came to Syria at three years of age; he jumped small classes at first and gradually went up to 140cm

their money is not wasted; Saudi's Abdullah Al Sharbatly proved that. But unfortunately, not all Arab countries are rich! Arab riders are also fully dedicated to the sport; they train in Europe for six months and compete during the following six. I

televised events. At the end of the day, show jumping is not a popular sport; it comes last if compared to football, or basketball, or even anything that may be considered pragmatic to our government. It's different in our countries; the idea of commercialised

sponsorship is still not at its mature stage. It's also a tricky situation yet completely understandable. But as a rider, I do owe thanks to my country since over the years - put aside my experience - it has invested in my horses plenty. I am still here, aren't I? And it's great to be here in Doha, competing, upping my performance and experience. Nevertheless, I do think that federations in Egypt and Syria for example, should try to follow the footsteps of federations in some Gulf States which are to ensure that equestrian sport is a major activity of the country's sporting legacy.

What happened in Europe 20 years ago was that companies under the title of sports marketing were established, they would sponsor riders under the auspices or organisation of the federation; do you see that happening in our region?

Soon? Quite unlikely. The idea is still young in our rich yet developing countries. Many keep on saying that we, as Arabs, need to follow European trends. We can and we ought to when it comes to the technicalities of the sport, but other than that, try to put in mind, we as Arabs, are different in our traditions, our beliefs, and in prioritising how to spend our money and on which sport.

You as an Arab are here competing in a very big event and you probably went through many individual logistics related to what you mentioned above in order to be here; you are developing your experience, the sport, as well as the name of the sport for your country, is that enough?

Yes I am here on my own. But how did I get here? Over the years, my country has sponsored my past experiences which have enabled me to get to where I am now. I would not have been a veteran rider, as you described me, if my country did not formulate an investment in me. For 20 whole years, I rode three top horses provided by my federation and several times I have lifted the Syrian flag; that was a special feeling. But if



© Jacques Toffi

▲ Yasser & his team mates after winning the Team silver medal at the 2007 Pan Arab Games in Cairo

the federation cannot continue with such provisions, and my passion for the sport is still strong, I have to continue on my own.

What is your opinion about the courses here at the GCT of Doha?

These are big courses built to international standards, presented to top horses, and everything related to that is done meticulously down to the detail. But put all that aside and let me tell you, if a rider does not have an expensive and top horse with him here, then there is no use attending any of the GCT tours if he is looking to get some results. He will gain experience certainly. The prices of most of the horses we see at the tour range from three to six million Euros. Some of the horses at the Arab League are also bought at these prices. Being in the top world rankings allows Arab riders to compete here without going through many individual finances. I am not part of those top rankings but I am here because I want to compete, and horses are just in my blood, and you may call me self-centred if you wish, I just love to stay competitive.

I would not call you self-centred, but I would tell you that in the Arab League, you are competing with riders that are from the top 200, and at the GCT you are competing with ones from the top 30 and ones riding the best horses

one could ever see; how can you relate to that?

You are absolutely right and even though only a small number of riders competing at the Arab League have the calibre and horses that can be compared to those of the top 30, I am still here competing....all for the love of the sport. Some say that I have grown old and should find something else to do, but let me tell you, when I was younger, I used to watch, look up to, and dream about riding with France's Michel Robert. That same Michel Robert is still here competing, a star in his own right, and I am competing with him. This is a beautiful sport and I cannot get enough of it, enough said. No veteran rider can replace a young and upcoming rider and vice versa. Eventually, he who trains, rides, competes and continues, is he who would be worthy of being named a star or a champion. 

Yasser Chairf has been competing for Syria for many years. He rode sturdy horses including Baher, Tima and Laganscho. He won the four star Grand Prix of Syria many times, has an individual silver medal from the Syrian Military Ward, a team silver medal from the 2007 Pan Arab Equestrian Games, and recently won the 2011 four star Grand Prix of Al Ein in the UAE. Yasser was born on May 12th 1971, owns a business, and is currently a part time trainer.

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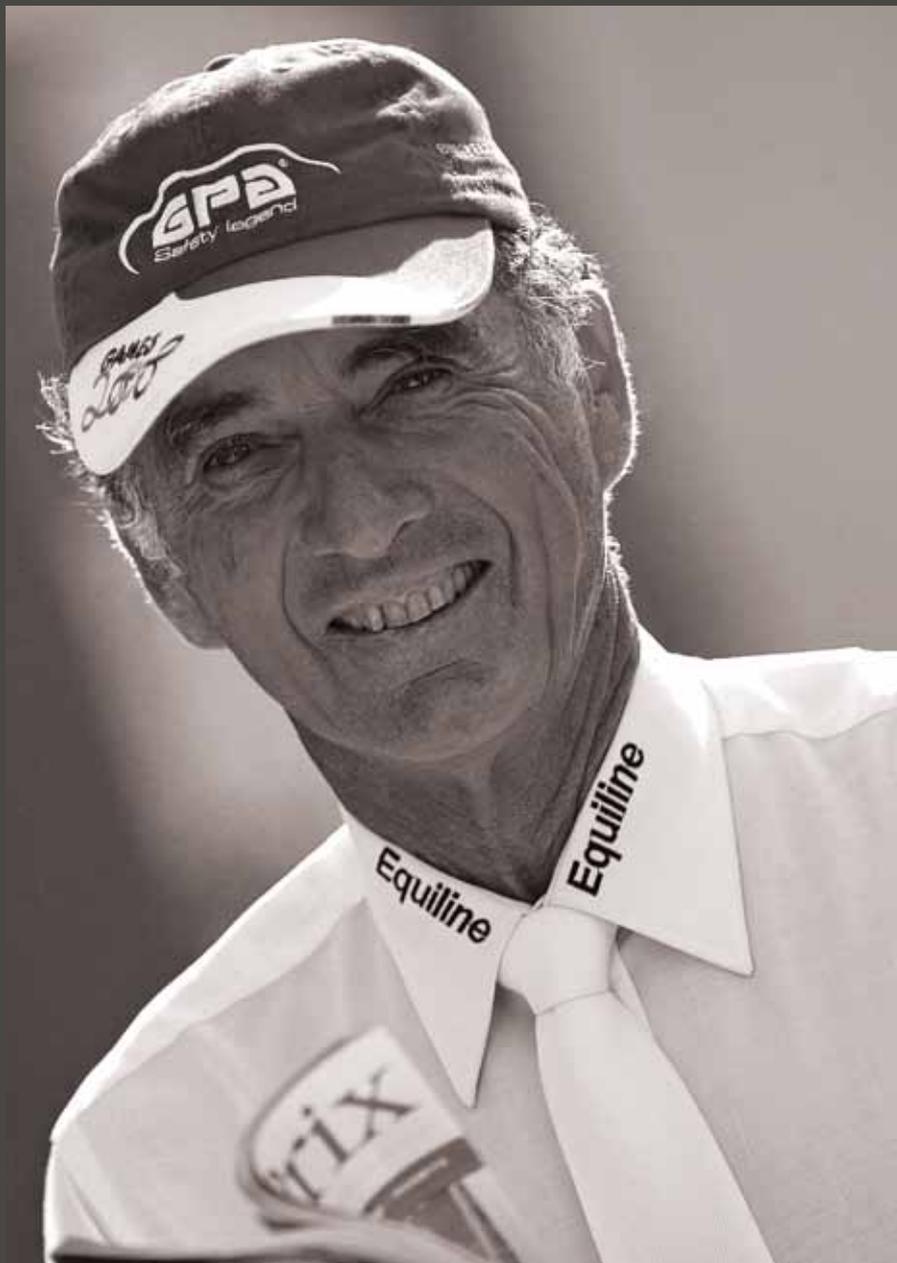
MICHEL ROBERT

A LEGEND

By Khaled Assem

AT FOUR YEARS OF AGE, FRANCE'S MICHEL ROBERT TOOK HIS FIRST RIDE, NOT ON A HORSE, BUT ON A SHEEP! AND BY FIVE, HE HAD ALREADY ACQUIRED A LOVE FOR HORSES, INTRODUCED TO HIM BY HIS LATE FATHER WHO WAS A DOCTOR. LATER ON AFTER JOINING THE RIDING SCHOOL OF CHAMBÉRY, MICHEL STARTED COMPETING IN DRESSAGE AND SHOW JUMPING AT THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL. AT 18, HE LEFT "TO MAKE HIS VOYAGE AROUND THE WORLD ON HORSEBACK".

ROBERT, A SHOW JUMPING LEGEND REPUTED FOR HIS UNMATCHABLE HARMONISED PERFORMANCE WITH ANY HORSE, AS WELL AS FOR NOT TAKING ANY MEDICATION OR GIVING HIS HORSES ANY, PARTICIPATED IN HIS FIRST OLYMPICS IN 1972 IN MUNICH, AND TODAY HE DEDICATES HIS CAREER TO INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION, HORSE TRADING AND WRITING. WITH MEDALS WON AT EUROPEAN AND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AND OLYMPIC GAMES, ROBERT IS DESCRIBED AS A "BLUE CHIP FOR THE TEAM OF FRANCE". ROBERT'S MENTAL CAPABILITIES ARE BEST ATTRIBUTED TO MEDITATION, YOGA AND A HEALTHY DIET.



His splendid stables, located 40km from Lyon in North Dauphiné, also constitute for him an environment and working frame advantageous for the success of his personal and professional objectives.

I watched you working with your horses; what are your daily training routines?

Firstly, I try to understand the horse. I then interact with him. It's very important to be technically well positioned on the horse; it has to be fully correct. It's not easy to connect with a horse and so practice is necessary; both physically and mentally. If you know your objective that is good, but it's necessary to fulfill that objective gradually, and afterward form a common language with your horse. It's extremely important for me to understand my horses; everyday they have different ingredients and I respect that.

Observing you work on lots of basics, you practice plenty of basic work such as half-halts, backward movements with your body and inclinations slightly forward, and you change stride as well as diversify a lot; please elaborate on this technique?

I have been working on this technique for a long time and it serves me well. My problem is that during competitions I ride very fast and as a consequence the technique becomes hard for me to collect the horse before the fence. It's good to control the energy of my horse as well as devise good and small aptitudes with the horse.

You are one of a very few riders who have a consistent pace all through the course, is that correct?

I try to keep the same pace!

How long ago did you start your philosophy of no medications whatsoever for both you and your horses?

20 years ago. Horses have the same spirit as humans and it is very important to me to find out what the problem is before having to give any medication. For example, if you drink too much alcohol tonight, tomorrow morning you will have a headache



and would need an aspirin. Instead of drinking too much, or should you give in to the temptations of alcohol and drink too much, you can avoid taking that aspirin and simply drink plenty of water. Horses are the same – without the alcohol.

Does that mean you do not give any medication at all?? What if your horse goes lame before a show?

Then I rest it for two weeks. I don't jump it. Jumping it with medication is a big problem.

No supplements at all?

No no. None. Not for me or my horses. No drugs.

Did you try to take that concept a bit further by educating young riders in France?

Personally, it's important for me that people know that Michel Robert wins a class without medication. In cycling tours in France and Europe, cyclists may not have the chance to win tours without doping, but in equestrian sport, it is possible for me as a show jumper. This is a big decision to take, however others may not always see eye to eye. It's a choice. Ten years ago I had problems with all my horses; several of them were lame in one leg. I thought it was my position so I changed that along with my exercise which was when they got better.

You wrote two books: why?

Because I get many questions about my technique and so I wrote them. It was also very important to me to transmit my experiences. My heart is my light and to me it was important to give other people solutions to problems, and many have learned from them.

Do you think you would write a book with the concept "free from medication" in order to tell people about this more and more?

A new book? No. but articles and journals, why not?

Tell us about your horses?

I have a mare I've been riding



for four years. She won the 2009 GCT in Doha and this year in February she won the World Cup Grand Prix in Degole. She has a great character. I have another which I bought in 2010. He is not jumping big classes but there is progress. I bought him as I needed a horse with experience. It's hard for me to find a horse as such since I have no sponsor for the time being.

Is there any championship that you did not win but are keen to win?

Well, I think one just needs to work hard and keep going, and one day a certain championship win will come. One gold medal versus having a good life and enjoying it with my horses will not give me everlasting pleasure. 🐾

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PERISCOPE ON ALI AL RUMAIHI

Nada H. Abdelmoniem



Country: Qatar
Date of birth: August 26 1981
Full profession: Show Jumper
Horses: Nagano, Ravena,
Charmeur Z & Romy

A MEMBER OF THE QATARI SHOW JUMPING TEAM, ALI AL RUMAIHI IS A PILLAR IN THE SQUAD AS HE IS A RIDER WITH PLENTY OF MILEAGE AND RING CRAFT. AFTER A CERTAIN LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE, ONE TENDS TO REALISE THAT THE LESS ONE SEE'S A RIDER DOING, THE MORE EFFECTIVE HE ACTUALLY IS. ALI HAS SHOWN SKILL WITH SEVERAL HORSES ESPECIALLY RAVENA WHO TANGOS ALONG WITH HIM, THROUGH WHICH IT IS EVIDENT THEY ARE IN TUNE; A TRUE REFLECTION OF "REFINEMENT" AS THE GREAT COACH, THE LATE PAUL DHARRAGH WOULD SAY.

WE WORK EVERY DAY WITH THE HORSES ON SOME FORM OF ROUTINE AND WE REFINE THAT COMMUNICATION EVERY DAY; THIS IS WHAT YOU SEE WITH ALI AND RAVENA IN THE RING. SIMULTANEOUSLY, HE IS ALL HORSEMAN, A GOOD FRIEND, A GENUINE HUMAN BEING, AND A VERY WORTHY OPPONENT.





© Jacques Toffi

▲ Ali & Ravena during the 2007 Pan Arab Equestrian Games in Cairo

Tell us about your riding history and who had the most influence on you?

My father had a stud in Syria where he bred Arabian horses and where I started to ride when I was six years old. He later became the President of the Qatar Equestrian and Racing Club, and then the President of the Qatar and Arab Equestrian Federation. I started my show jumping career in Qatar and things grew from there.

Who have you trained with? And, has the federation shared in your total experience as a show jumper?

I have trained with many riders including Jos Lansik, Eric Lanen and most recently Jan Tops. The federation has made it all possible for the Qatari show jumping team.

As a show jumper, what is your plan for 2011 and what are your plans for the next five years?

To try my best to stay in touch with high levels of top show jumping and stay competitive as much as possible. I hope to achieve more results and make my country proud.

Do you see yourself as just a professional rider? If not, do you have a side job? If yes, how do you accommodate between both?

I do not have a side job, just the riding.

Do you see the equestrian sport developing in the Middle East? Can you continue doing what you are already doing as a show jumper for the next ten years?

The sport has developed tremendously especially over the last few years in our region. The Arab League has become very competitive with many Arab riders winning big shows on an international scale. We have had three Global Champions Tour shows in Qatar including a final, and Abu Dhabi is hosting this year's final in November. Certainly this is an indication that the region is moving in the right track.

Tell us about some of your best wins?

Winning the Asian games in 2006 with Nagano was very special. In 2007 I won the Sharjah Grand Prix World Cup Qualifier, and then in 2008 I won the World Cup Qualifier in Tripoli also with Nagano. I also came first in the Army World Championships in 2008 in Fontainebleau in France, and in 2009, I won the World Cup Qualifier with Ravena in Bahrain. So, I do have some "close to my heart" wins.

Tell us about your horses and training programme?

All my horses are top horses and are very special to me. I will be in Europe soon to start my summer training where a big part of it is competing in shows. I hope to achieve good results and have a good time in the process.

I would like to thank you for this interview and the continuing support that you give to all the Arab riders and the show jumping sport. 

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ROYAL ASCOT

WHAT A JOLLY GOOD SHOW!

By Lulu Kyriacou & Rhodri Andrews, *England*

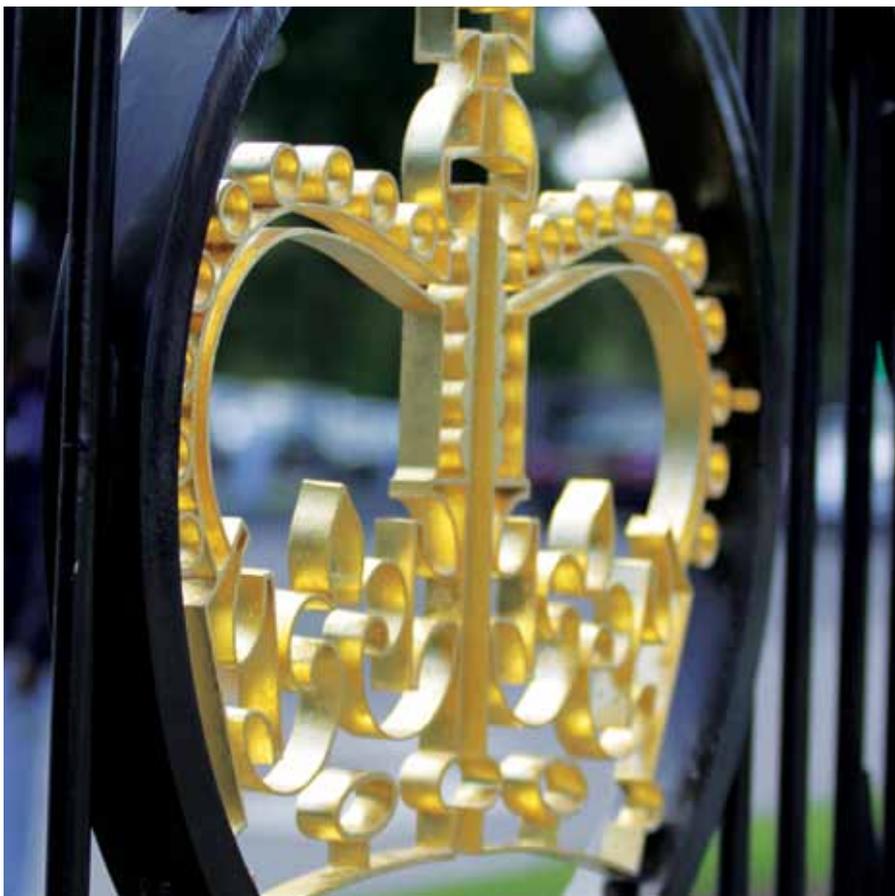


▲ *Frankel leads the way in the St James Palace Stakes*

Royal Ascot, which celebrated its 300th anniversary this year, has a rich heritage, much of it connected to royalty and it has ranked highly amongst British culture since Queen Anne thought the heathland near Windsor Palace would be a perfect place for racing three centuries ago. The event has gone from strength to strength, with 300,000 people making the trip to Berkshire this year.

One of the show pieces of international horse racing, Royal Ascot remains a quintessentially British event, one of the première occasions of the social calendar each summer. While the fashion, the food, the racing and even the odd bet make perfect ingredients for a traditionally British occasion, it is the attendance of the Royal family that runs through the veins of Ascot week. Some racegoers only attend

so they can rub shoulders with the likes of Prince Harry and Prince Charles, the royal connection epitomising British charm and aristocracy. This year saw the new Duchess of Cambridge, formerly Miss Kate Middleton, making her first appearance as part of the Royal Procession, which of course meant that another British institution, the paparazzi, were also out in full force.



▲ *The gates with their royal insignia*

focus at all, with the attention on the attendees, the Queen and of course, what everyone is wearing!

The dress code is strict at Ascot and people have a huge appetite for wearing head-turning outfits, with a sea of elaborate fascinators and top hats on show every day of the week. It's almost as if the fashions are a contest in their own right, and with the Royal wedding still fresh in the memory, Kate Middleton has ensured that dresses and traditional fashion at Ascot has become all the rage, making sure that the competition is a healthy one. However posh frocks and smart suits can sometimes only be a disguise for a spot of good old British hooliganism after a few drinks, with one fight in the public enclosure making the headlines of many national newspapers.

But there is racing. Millions upon

▼ *Ascot is famous for ladies wearing their best hats*

The British social calendar is jam-packed with sporting events all summer that both wealthy and working class people lick their lips at the thought of. The Wimbledon Tennis Championships, Henley-on-Thames Regatta, the sailing week at Cowes on the Isle Of Wight are annual events and of course, next year, London makes the Summer Olympic Games its own. All these occasions seem to roll off the tongue when mentioned as one tries to plan one's summer programme.

So what makes Royal Ascot special? Why has it continued to be a name that fits seamlessly into that list of classic British summer events? Perhaps because everything about it just oozes British-ness: the fashion, the fine dining and the fact that the Royal family turn up year upon year. Sometimes the racing does not seem to carry the main





▲ *The Royal Procession enters a packed Winners Enclosure*

millions of pounds of horse flesh, straining every muscle and sinew to get first past the post in a series of championship level events. In any year, for aficionados, the racing at Royal Ascot is a mouthwatering week of the best that the sport can offer but 2011 was special even by Ascot's high standards. Champions of France, USA, Ireland, Hungary and Australia amongst others were lining up for glory. There were runners trained in the UAE and others owned by the Chinese. And the British were hoping that the newly knighted Sir Henry Cecil would celebrate his freshly awarded honour by getting the week off to a flying start when the so far unbeaten and amazing three year old Frankel ran for him in the colours of Prince Khaled Abdullah. The horse who galloped away with the 2000 Guineas let no-one down

as he powered to victory in the St. James Palace Stakes. But this was just a warm up for one of the two most anticipated races of the season so far.

The French mare Goldikova needs little introduction to racing fans. Now six, she is the winner of three Breeders Cup Miles and more Group One races than any other mare since the grading scheme was introduced in 1973. She is a living legend. Already victorious this year on her first start, she was a hot favourite to win her 14th race at the highest level. But opposing her was the two years younger British Champion, Canford Cliffs. This horse was aiming to win at the Royal meeting for the third year in a row and had not been beaten in over a year. In glorious sunshine the race was everything that could have been expected. Goldikova took up

the lead two furlongs from home and then fought to keep that lead for the remainder of the race as her younger rival produced a finishing burst that closed the gap with every single stride. The post did not come soon enough for the mare and Canford Cliffs was a length in front as they pair flashed past after an epic duel, the like of which had not been for many years.

But Royal Ascot was not done with great racing yet. The Budapest Bullet, Overdose, was an honourable fourth after setting the pace in the Kings Stand Stakes won by Prohibit, showing that Hungary's superstar was coming back to his best after a year off through injury. Fame and Glory, unlucky enough to come up against Sea the Stars in the Derby a couple of years ago, galloped easily past his rivals to win the Ascot Gold

Cup for Irish trainer Aidan O'Brien and Immortal Verse took revenge for France after Goldikova's defeat, by winning the fillies only Coronation Stakes. But there was still one other race that was going to attract worldwide attention; Australia has produced its share of good horses but they rarely travel to Europe to race. When they do, it is usually with some success. But So You Think is a class above most of those that have come before. Winner of two Cox Plates (the Australian all aged middle distance classic) his transfer to Aidan O'Brien's stable for a European campaign has

been the subject of heated debate and discussion since the horse arrived. Running in the Prince of Wales Stakes, his victory was a foregone conclusion, the banker of the meeting surely? But there is an Italian jockey called Frankie Dettori who makes a habit of not reading the script at Ascot. On one occasion he won every race on the card, last year he sent Poets Voice flying past hot favourite Rip Van Winkle to win the autumn mile championship, The Queen Elizabeth II Stakes. And this time in the presence of the Queen herself, Frankie set about catching the Australian with Rewilding. The

horse who was a well beaten second to Workforce in last year's Derby has spent the winter winning in Dubai but So You Think is not used to being passed and, like Goldikova, he fought back like a tiger but there was no stopping Rewilding's late rush who won by a neck. "I always knew he was better than the Derby" said Frankie afterwards. The horse is trained for Godolphin Racing by Mahmood al Zarooni.

Royal Ascot 2011 had indeed been a feast of racing fit for a Queen, her loyal subjects and all the international visitors. Don't miss it in 2012! 

▼ Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II accompanied by Prince Phillip, looking happy & relaxed as she arrives



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UNDERSTANDING POSITION & BALANCE

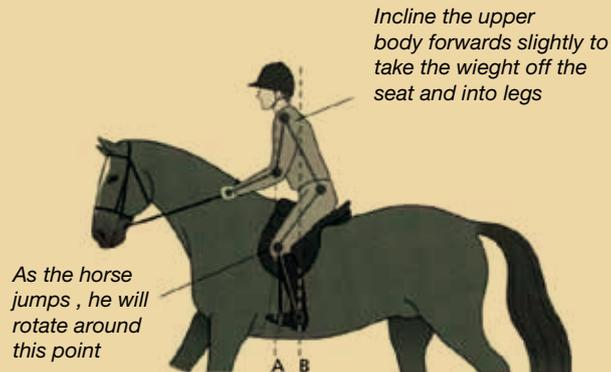
By Khaled Assem

YOU NEED TO WORK ON THREE DIMENSIONS WHEN CONSIDERING BALANCE WHILE RIDING: YOUR OWN BALANCE, THE HORSE'S, AND THE BALANCE OF HORSE AND RIDER TOGETHER. CONSEQUENTLY, YOU HAVE TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

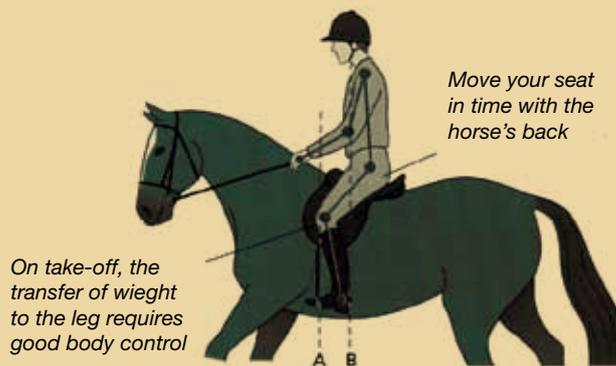
THE HORSE'S NATURAL BALANCE:

In a standing position, the centre of gravity is situated approximately half way between the withers and stomach which is the area under the saddle flaps close to the girth line. 60% of the weight is on the forelegs and 40% is on the hind ones.

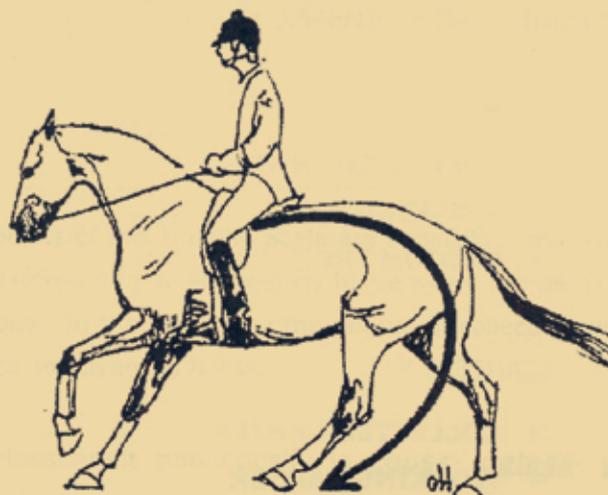
A well trained horse can carry 50% of his weight on his hind quarters making him lighter on the front end, appearing to be going uphill. I recall my late trainer Paul Dharragh saying, "the horse is like a seesaw with ever changing balance", hence the rider has to keep the front end high and light whilst engaging more the hind end to get submissiveness, control and efficiency.



In this position, the rider's shoulders are over the knees, taking the weight off the seat & into the legs called the *toe*



As your horse becomes more advanced & carries more weight in his hind quarters, you can put more weight in the saddle



Well engaged hind quarters



Shock absorbing joints (hips, knees and ankles)

THE RIDER'S EFFECT ON BALANCE:

A combined centre of gravity of horse and rider is approximately 10% higher than that of the horse alone, but on the same vertical line, so that the distribution of the load between front and hind end would not be affected. Subsequently, the light seat and weight distribution through the legs will not affect the balance.

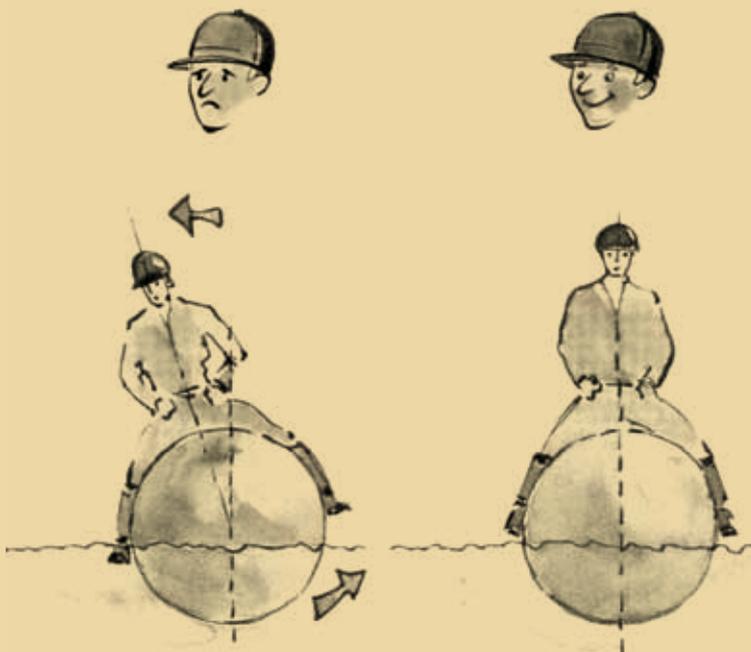
A horse will perform more easily under a rider who can maintain a consistent balance through utilising the aid of his joints (hips, knees, and ankles) where a still load is easier to handle than a mobile one.

The horse will be aware of, and affected by, changes in the rider's weight distribution, which are caused by loss of balance. As for a show jumping rider, your main priority is to find a way to stop your weight moving around and disturbing your horse's natural movement.

For a rider, it is not easy to jump with your weight in the saddle – and that is because you will be unable to stay in harmony with the horse's movement as he jumps. You have to keep your centre of gravity in line with that of the horse; therefore a light seat provides an ideal solution to stay in tune with the horse's motion.

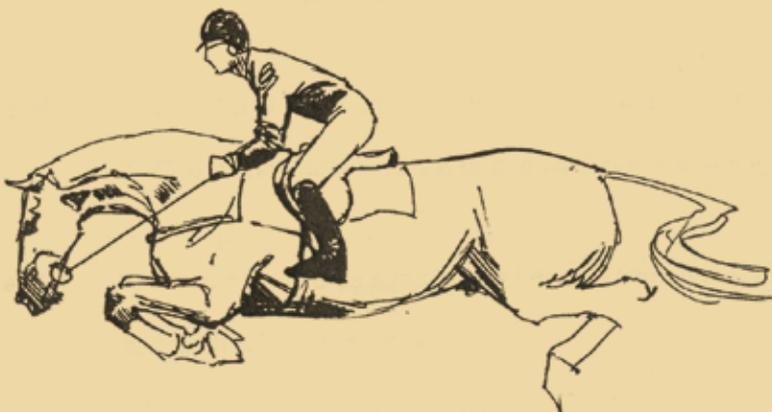
The rider's weight is carried through the legs with some weight dispersed inwardly through the knees, yet still the actual weight is taken on the saddle through the stirrups. As a result, all the horse feels is the rider's weight just behind his withers acting in the same vertical line. 

About the author: Khaled Assem is a certified Level 2 FEI trainer. He has been training for 15 years, competing internationally for 10 years and locally for 25 years.



Implications of an inverted vertical line

Correct vertical line leading to good balance



Ideal position showing the centre line over the fence

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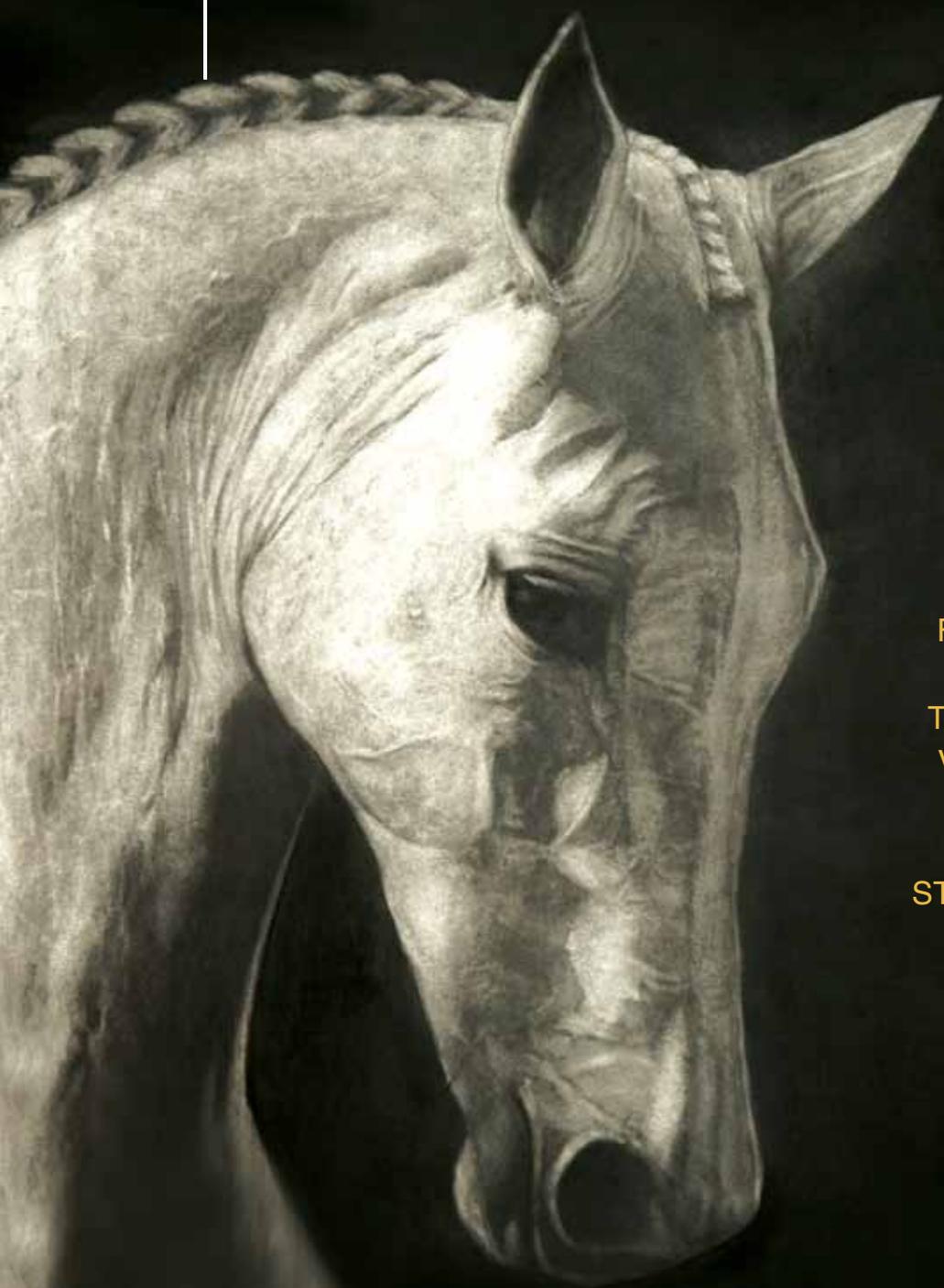
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HORSES IN ART

PADDY LENNON



PADDY LENNON WAS BORN IN 1955 IN DUBLIN, 8TH OF A LARGE FAMILY OF 12 CHILDREN. THE ONLY HORSE THAT WAS FEATURED IN THEIR LIVES WAS AN OLD IRISH COB THAT PULLED A FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CART, WHICH, HOWEVER, WAS ADORED BY EVERYONE IN THE STREET AND THE LENNONS CONSIDERED HIM QUITE STRIKING.



One of the first jobs which Paddy got and which also left an early impact on him was being an assistant to a sculptor's assistant. The job mainly involved picking lumps and stones from clay, but in order to continue supporting himself, he worked in an accounts office. He then started to attend Fine Art classes four evenings a week; eventually, Paddy gained admission to Art College and four years later received a First Class Honours Diploma in that field.

Paddy's main artistic technique is drawing. He explains, "I feel that drawing has everything that is most important in art. It is much harder work than painting but is deeper and richer. There is nowhere to hide in a drawing; it's all laid open to the world. Due to the fact that I can't source-card large enough to draw full life-sized horses, I concentrate on the upper part of their bodies; mainly the head and neck."

Regarding how Paddy started painting and painting horses in particular, he continues, "I have always tried to convey a certain feeling through my work, be it painting or drawing. When I lived in the West of Ireland, the landscape was overwhelming which had a strong effect on my work. However my wife is a horsewoman, and when we all, including our children, moved to live beside a lovely beach, she opened a riding centre and I now find myself surrounded by horses. And since I am now immersed in a world of these creatures, they have proved to be a rich source of inspiration for me regarding subject matter. I ride every day on a lovely strand, hunt and mess around with a bit of show jumping, though nothing to frighten the Irish show jumping team! My studio is in the equestrian yard so I don't have far to go for the source of my work. It's totally different but, funnily enough, I think I can express

the same feeling that I want people to feel when they look at my work."

As for his methods and materials used, Paddy continues, "I'm fairly wide ranging. For my drawings I use Siberian compressed charcoal for the larger work, and water colour pencils or polychromous or simply pencil for my smaller sketches. Also, oil on canvas for some of my paintings or something I developed myself which is a mixed media involving charcoal, board, turpentines and oil paint. This method I developed through trial and error and it can be difficult to pull off; as such, I don't use it too often." 🐾

Paddy Lennon will next be seen exhibiting at ADIHEX, September 2011

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Photo: Stefano Grasso

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SUMMER UPDATES

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▲ Rolf Goran-Bengtsson & Casall La Silla

GERMANY

BENGTSSON WINS IN HAMBURG

Sweden's Rolf-Goran Bengtsson and Casall La Silla captured the win in the \$285,000 Global Champions Tour Grand Prix of Germany in Hamburg on June 4th.

Of the top FEI ranked riders who were accepted to ride in this elite world-wide series, only four horses cleanly cleared Frank Rothenberger's designed course in the first round including two Germans, Ludger Beerbaum riding Chaman and Janne Friederike Meyer riding Cellagon Lambrrasco.

They were joined by Swedish rider Rolf-Goran Bengtsson on Casall La Silla and winners of the first Global Champions Tour in Doha, Brazilian Alvaro de Miranda Neto with AD Ashleigh Drossel Dan.

The best 18 jumped the second round with three double clears heading to the jump-off for the title and the chance to take home a large prize and a highly prized Jaeger-LeCoultre custom engraved Reverso watch.

Beerbaum went first on Chaman and set the pace with a clear round in a time of 47.93 seconds and a lucky chance at the Massimo Dutti vertical. The very composed Bengtsson completed a smooth and clear round over the nine obstacle jump-off track, to clear in a time of 46.97. The last to go, Meyer knocked two fences down, and at the fifth fence, she had already known that she had secured 3rd place.

The win in the Global Champions Tour Grand Prix of Germany gave Bengtsson a boost in GCT rankings with a firm placement at 7th place. It is Alvaro de Miranda Neto from Brazil who has remained in top billing on the GCT Rankings since the first leg of the 2011 series.



▲ Ludger Beerbaum & Chaman

▼ Alvaro di Miranda



FRANCE

EDWINA ELECTRIFIES CANNES



© Stefano Grasso

▲ Edwina Alexander & Cevo Itot de Chateau

▼ Sergio Alvarez Moya & Action Breaker



© Stefano Grasso

On June 11th, another Global Champions Tour Grand Prix of Cannes title went to Australian Edwina Alexander as she once again partnered Cevo Itot de Chateau to victory to score a major highlight of her career. She had the appetite for the win early in the day ecstatically stating, “I had a positive feeling this morning that everything was in readiness. I sensed that I would do well.”

48 starters challenged the course set by Serge Houtman and Luc Musette. The classic flowing course of the first round was as big as it could get, with very wide oxers. The toughest combination consisted of an oxer (1.50/1.70m), two strides to another oxer (1.50/1.60m) and one stride coming out to a 1.55m vertical. This proved a challenge, although it did not have a related distance to or away from it. The same combination was actually shortened and a fraction lowered in the second round.

From the 18 through to the second round, 12 were on four faults and one on a time fault to complete 5 clear rounds. Those clear, jumped in order of time taken in the first round starting with Switzerland’s Clarissa Crotta, followed by Germany’s Ludger Beerbaum, Spain’s Sergio Alvarez Moya, Edwina Alexander, and France’s Patrice Delaveau. As the event unfolded the major competition was carried out between those who jumped double clear; Crotta, Beerbaum, Moya and Alexander who sat in pole position as last to go. Delaveau who rode Ornella Mail, knocked down two fences putting him out of the jump-off.

Crotta, riding Imperial West Side V Meerputhoeve led the charge in the jump-off. It was technical and high, and the test required accurate riding. She rolled the rail on top of the skinny

planks as well as the front rail off the oxer, the first element of the double (45.82 seconds). Beerbaum, who was placed second in the last two Global Champions Tour events in Valencia and Hamburg, was hungry to gather as many ranking points as possible with a good result. Riding Gotha FRH, he did not take as many risks when aiming for the clear. With success, he made it in a time of 45.23 seconds. Moya, on his stallion Action Breaker, was quick to the second last fence, however took a slower turn up to the last and was home free in a faster time of 42.37 seconds. Itot may be small in stature but he is very, very quick. Alexander took all the risks and options available knowing that she would finish third if she had just one down. They had jumped clean on the first day of competitions and elected not to go for the jump-off in order to save energy for the Grand Prix. It was good planning as they jumped clean and three seconds faster than Moya as the crowd enthusiastically cheered the combination that they have taken into their hearts.

Alexander now leads to be the first GCT millionaire sitting with 992,399 Euros. Meredith Michael-Beerbaum whose unfortunate no-show at this event was due to a back problem hopes to be in Monaco. She has 976,982 Euros in her Global Champions Tour total prize money bank. Ludger Beerbaum has taken the leaders armband of the GCT rankings with 129 point, ahead of Alexander with 125 points and Denis Lynch with 120 points. Lynch finished in 5th place in the Grand Prix of Cannes with Lantinus 2 adding 32 points. Alvaro de Miranda Neto who had led the rankings for the first three rounds of the series has been relegated to 4th place with 117 points.



▲ Denis Lynch & Lantinus 2

▼ Clarissa Crotta & West Side V





© Stefano Grasso

▲ Christian Ahlmann & Talout Z

▼ Rodrigo Pessoa



© Stefano Grasso

MONACO

BENGTSSON WINS AGAIN IN MC

Skill, scope and agility are three very important components that mark the world's best show jumping combinations. It took all of this and more to win the Global Champions Tour Grand Prix of Monaco. And Sweden's Rolf-Goran Bengtsson was the only one of the 48 starters to jump double clean rounds to win his second GCT event this season. He took home a cheque for 92,000 Euros and his second Jaeger-LeCoultre Reverso watch.

The GCT Grand Prix of Monaco was set on a non-permanent arena at the Port Hercule back dropped by the palace. The social scene that accompanies this event has led to its heavy upscale sponsorships.

Precision riding over a very technical track saw Bengtsson produce two perfectly executed rounds with the same stallion that he won the GCT of Germany with. Bengtsson remains one of the most compelling forces in the game: World Champion, Olympic silver medallist at the Beijing Olympics and he now adds two GCT wins to his portfolio.

There was no shortage of stiff competition in the Grand Prix as the world's best riders and horses faced German course designer Frank Rothenberger for the fourth time this season. Rothenberger has built four of the five rounds of the Global Champions Tour this season, yet every arena presents a different palate and set of circumstances. The Monaco arena is small with very little room for adjustability on course and Rothenberger's track was big and technical. Twelve clear rounds, one on a time fault and five on four faults made up the 18 who went through to the second round.

Of those, one would have predicted that three or four would go through to the jump-off. However it proved a very difficult challenge for some; Lauren Hough, first to go with Quick Study, was eliminated with two refusals and Billy Twomey retired with Tinka's Serenade. Meredith and Shutterfly had a misunderstanding at the Eurosport vertical causing a sudden stop and further rails put them out of competition. Ludger Beerbaum, who was leading the GCT ranking after the Cannes leg, had three fences down.

The pressure was turned up in the competition as the heavily packed stands watched the clear show jumping rounds multiply for Rolf-Goran Bengtsson and Casall La Silla. No other combinations could match this and he was deemed the winner of the Grand Prix.

German Christian Ahlmann was the closest with just one time fault on Taloubet Z. Adding a stride between the Massimo Dutti fence and the Global Champions Tour oxer left him fractionally over the time but good enough for second place. Rodrigo Pessoa carried four faults from the first round and jumped clean in the second and placed third as the fastest combination on four penalties.

The GCT leader board has once again changed with Australian Edwina Alexander moving ahead of Ludger. She concluded the two rounds with four faults that eventually placed her on time into seventh place in the Grand Prix. She now stands with 155.00 ranking points, a little ahead of Ludger who has 151.50. 🏆



© Stefano Grasso

▲ Meredith Michaels-Beerbaum & Shutterfly

▼ Kamal Bahamdan



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▲ *Shiekh Shakhbout Al Nahayan*

▼ *Sheikh Ali Al Thani*



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POLO IN EGYPT
SPORT OF KINGS
AND THE KINGS OF THE SPORT

By Bridget McArdle McKinney



▲ Marwan Mostafa

THE PONIES TROT OUT
 ONTO THE FIELD, THE
 SPECTATORS DRAW
 TO THE RAILS, THE
 ANTICIPATION BUILDS,
 AND WHEN THE BALL
 IS ROLLED OUT FOR
 THE FIRST CHUKKA,
 THE ACTION BEGINS.
 THE EXCITEMENT OF
 THE SPORT, THE POWER
 OF THE PONIES, THE
 ATHLETICISM OF THE
 PLAYERS AND THE RISK
 OF DANGER COMBINE
 TO MAKE POLO ONE OF
 THE MOST THRILLING OF
 EQUINE SPORTS, THE
 SPORT OF KINGS.

The origins of polo are debated. Most historians of the sport, however, consider that the game was first actively played as a cavalry exercise in Persia as early as the 6th century BC, migrating with conquest both east

to China during the Tang Dynasty (7th century AD) and west to Byzantium, arriving in Egypt during the Ayyubid period (12th century AD).

Then, as now, the sport carried a combative air and, truly, to watch the sport today there can be no doubt of its military beginnings. But polo also has its softer side. The sport has been celebrated throughout its history in poetry, pottery, painting, and song. The 12th century polymath poet, astronomer, mathematician and natural scientist Omar Khayyam used polo to illustrate divine command and fate in this quatrain from his famous Rubaiyat:

'In the cosmic game of polo you are the ball
 The mallet's left and right becomes your call
 He who causes your movements, your rise and fall
 He is the one, the only one, who knows it all.'

The name itself, polo, comes from the Tibetan word 'pulu', or ball, and, indeed, it was with surprise and great breathless amusement that my husband and I a few years ago

witnessed townsmen in a dusty square in high altitude Ladakh on the Indo-Tibetan border play this very game, which they called "ta pulu" – horse ball.

While several variants exist, the game is played on a field 300 yards in length and 160 yards in width, by two teams of 4 players each, timed in six 7 minute periods or "chukkas". Each player has a role, whether defensive, offensive, or tactical, and in competitive polo each player has a ranking or "handicap", which is assessed with reference not only to the player's goals or skills, but also to the player's teamwork, strategy, and sportsmanship. The rankings range from minus 2 to plus 10, but a ranking of plus 2 is considered very good in this difficult sport.

As mentioned, polo has a long history in Egypt dating back more than eight centuries. In more modern times, the sport was organised originally through the Khedival Sporting Club, now the Gezira Sporting Club. Polo matches were established in the first days of the Sporting Club, perhaps as early as the late 1880's and the polo season became an international society essential, the place to "see and be seen".

Egyptian polo greats of the past included Saifalla Pasha Youstri in the 1920's, Victor Smeika in the 1940's, Salah Foda in the 1950's and the legendary Alex Ebeid who won the Coupe D'Or of Deauville seven times and the UK Queen's Cup twice.

Today, polo in Egypt is governed by the Egyptian Polo Federation, headed by businessman and long-time polo player and polo advocate, Farouk Younes, whose private Abu Sir Polo Farm is host to matches, polo clinics, and weekend practice sessions. The Federation, itself a member of the Federation of International Polo, the world governing body of the sport, arranges local and international matches and clinics in Cairo and Alexandria; it arranges, as well, the participation of Egyptian polo clubs in matches abroad.

According to Karim Loza, Member of the Board of the Egyptian Polo

Federation and Regional Ambassador of the Federation of International Polo, the Federation not only encourages the public to enjoy the beauty of the sport as spectators, but, as importantly for the maintenance and longevity of the sport, encourages junior riders to begin, develop, and grow into the sport. Just this past December, for example, a group of junior Egyptian players travelled to Jaipur for a polo clinic to learn the techniques of India's famous 61st Cavalry Regiment.

Federation clubs in Cairo, the Gezira Sporting Club and the Egyptian Mounted Police, and in Alexandria, Alexandria Sporting Club and Smouha Sporting Club, have polo teams of high calibre. The long polo season, lasting from September to June, compared to the relatively short European season, allows much more time and access to practice and perfect technique and train up young ponies as well as young players to competitive level.

The best polo players in Egypt carry a plus two handicap. On a beautiful Friday morning recently at Younes' Abu

Sir field, I met two of these top players: Marwan Mostafa of the Police Team and Aly Kashef of the Gezira Sporting Club.

Marwan has been playing for 10 years and says, "Polo is the best thing in my life. I began my life as a show jumper; my father was a general in the Egyptian Police Cavalry and was my first trainer as a horse back rider. Once I saw a polo match I knew that this was the sport I had to practice forever as this is a team sport, which is much more interesting for me than a single player sport. Since then I was addicted to polo. I travelled to many countries representing Egypt either with the national team or with the Police Team - which won the best polo team in Egypt - and we won many tournaments in Nigeria, Ghana, India, USA, and Scotland. As for the people who have influenced my polo career, one important one was Rege Ludwig, who left a special mark on me during his visits to Egypt as a trainer. I wish to see polo as the best sport in Egypt with wider spread and more teams. We have actually begun to build a new team in the company I work for

named El Sewedy Polo Team. Finally, I would like to thank the president of the Egyptian Polo Federation, Mr. Farouk Younis for his efforts in organising the tournaments and clinics and we players look forward to more".

Aly, a pilot for Egypt Air, says that polo is in his blood, a sport passed from grandfather to father to son, a comment I hear time and time again from players. From a pilot who flies the world it was interesting to hear Aly quote Winston Churchill's view that a polo mallet is the passport to the world. He adds philosophically, "I would like to be the best polo player but if I think that I have reached the top I'll stop training and become over confident and then, you're not the best player again."

"I love horses and I love football, so it's a combination of both. In any country under any rules, I get the same satisfaction – horse and man", says Aly. Well said all. 

Thanks for Mohmaed El Sewedy for [the polo action photos

▼ Aly Kashef





DON BELLO MA PLUS BELLE HISTOIRE D'AMOUR....

By Randa H. Barakat

JE NE SAVAIS PAS QUAND JE L'AI VU POUR LA PREMIÈRE FOIS QU'IL ALLAIT ÊTRE MA PLUS BELLE HISTOIRE D'AMOUR, JE N'IMAGINAIS PAS, NI MÊME EN RÊVE QU'IL ALLAIT OCCUPER TANT DE PLACE DANS MA VIE ET DANS MES PENSÉES NI QU'IL ALLAIT ÊTRE LE PIVOT DE MES OCCUPATIONS.....
TOUT A COMMENCÉ IL Y A 3 ANS QUAND JE DÉCIDE DE ME FAIRE PLAISIR ET DE M'ACHETER UN JEUNE CHEVAL DE DRESSAGE POUR COMMENCER À ASSURER LA RELÈVE DE CELUI QUI ÉTAIT TOUJOURS EN MA POSSESSION ET QUI SE FAISAIT VIEUX. « PANCHO » AVAIT ÉTÉ MON COMPAGNON PENDANT DE LONGUES ANNÉES ET M'AVAIT FAIT DÉCOUVRIR LES PLAISIRS DU DRESSAGE MAIS IL ALLAIT MALHEUREUSEMENT VERS SES 19 ANS.

Bien qu'ensemble nous ayons remporté la médaille d'argent aux jeux Pan Arabe de 2007 et qu'il était au top de sa performance et de sa carrière, je devais penser à assurer la relève..... 19 ans pour un cheval c'est quand même un âge avancé. Je voulais un vrai de vrai pour pouvoir goûter à toutes les finesses et les subtilités de cette discipline.

Je décide donc de partir en Europe et me voilà dans l'avion à destination de Bruxelles..... L'émotion, la surexcitation, l'appréhension tout y était. J'avais déjà en tête ce que je voulais, un bon cheval, noir de préférence, bon caractère, pas trop difficile et capable de me faire avancer en dressage qui était devenu ma grande passion. J'arrive à Bruxelles, on vient me chercher à l'aéroport, la ferme où nous nous rendions se trouvant hors de la capitale..... L'éleveur me propose un cheval assez exceptionnel, très beau et âgé de 5 ans avec un solide pedigree, fils de Don Bosco & Anabell, petit fils du fameux Donnerhall et de Ramina du côté du père ainsi que de Argentan & Pia du côté de la mère. Tout semble donc dans l'ordre des choses.... J'arrive à la ferme, rentre dans les écuries et me trouve nez à nez avec un magnifique hanovrien noir qui me regarde, avec dans les yeux toute la douceur du monde et cet étrange expression qui me disait «oui c'est moi ». Les battements de mon cœur s'accélérent, je me demande un peu si je ne rêve pas.

Et voilà mon prince des mille et une nuits qui sort de son box, harnaché, bichonné, pomponné, superbe dans sa robe noire et son allure majestueuse. La parfaite conformation du cheval de dressage. Et moi, la bouche ouverte.... Les yeux écarquillés... le souffle court. Est-ce lui ? Est-ce bien lui ? Celui pour qui je suis venue du Caire ? L'entraîneur le monte... Je craque... Je le monte ; pas trop mal quand même vu l'émotion, un peu aussi la peur au ventre. Je suis heureuse.

Le soir je ne dors pas.

Nous essayons quand même plusieurs autres chevaux dans différentes écuries et nous passons 5 jours à sillonner la Belgique. Bizarrement, je savais que j'allais revenir vers lui, je savais qu'il allait être à moi.... C'était simplement un coup de foudre, ce que

l'on appelle « love at first sight... ». Je passe mes nuits à me poser toutes sortes de questions, est ce que je vais pouvoir me débrouiller avec lui, est ce qu'on va trouver un terrain d'entente lui et moi ??????....Un cheval de 5 ans ce n'est pas facile surtout pour une cavalière amateur Mais au fond de moi-même, j'avais la conviction que ce cheval allait être à moi. Je sentais que j'étais prête à tout pour l'avoir, il me le fallait à tout prix.

Je donne mon accord en me demandant comment diable je vais pouvoir m'en sortir.....

3 mois plus tard, un 9 Octobre 2008, « Don Bello » débarque à l'aéroport du Caire où j'étais là à l'attendre. J'étais sur le tarmac et lui encore sur sa palette, je tends la main par l'ouverture du coin, il me sent, il sait que c'est moi, il flaire mon odeur, il entend ma voix, il se rassure. Etrangement, il cherche mon contact. Il a bien supporté le voyage et s'est comporté comme un grand. 3 jours plus tard, il sort de la quarantaine, arrive dans son nouveau monde et commence sa nouvelle vie....

Alors commence pour moi la découverte de « l'autre ».... doué d'une intelligence au dessus de la moyenne, avec un caractère et une volonté très ferme de vouloir s'imposer, « Don Bello » a mis du temps à se plier. Nous avons appris doucement à nous connaître et à nous faire des concessions. Avec le temps, la relation s'est développée : plus nous travaillons ensemble, plus je le comprends et plus il se soumet et s'applique volontairement et sans

résistance. Inconditionnellement. Il m'arrive parfois de perdre pied mais je suis heureusement secondée par un excellent coach ainsi que par des amis bien meilleurs cavaliers que moi qui remettent tout de suite un peu d'ordre dans la situation. Pour qui aime les bêtes, il suffit d'être à l'écoute de leur langage secret pour les comprendre.

C'est pour lui que je me réveille chaque matin à 5 h30, c'est avec lui que je travaille des heures sur des figures de manège, à essayer d'améliorer un pas ou une qualité de galop, un trot rassemblé ou un manque d'amplitude et d'impulsion, c'est avec lui que je fais mon autocritique continuelle pour redresser une erreur de position, une main trop dure, un dos pas assez souple ou une jambe trop rigide... Une remise en question journalière et perpétuelle, une vraie leçon d'humilité. J'ai appris à parler avec lui et lui est là, attentif, concentré, les oreilles pointues lancées vers l'avant à l'écoute de mes demandes. Plus le temps passe, plus se tisse entre nous cette complicité merveilleuse qui fait que je le sens en le voyant sortir de son box et que je devine à l'avance son état d'âme et son humeur. Avec le travail journalier, la relation entre nous a mûri. L'osmose est quasi parfaite car une fois que le dialogue est établi, le contact est total. Et la magie s'opère. Don Bello me donne le plus beau moment de la journée. Et quand il est au plus haut de sa forme, totalement soumis et au mieux de sa performance, faisant tout pour me plaire, le bonheur qui en découle ne se compare à rien d'autre. C'est simplement ma plus belle réussite, ma plus belle histoire d'amour. 



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Date of Birth: 26 October 1969

Star sign: Scorpio

Profession: Show Jumper & Trainer

What is your best achievement?

Yet to come, my new equestrian center.

Who is your favourite athlete (rider or other sports person)?

Alwin Schockemohle, in his time.

Do you keep any pets?

A dog at home.

What is your favourite movie?

Secretariat.

Who is your ideal celebrity (female or male)?

Nelson Mandela.

What is your favourite gadget?

My electric toothbrush!

What is your favourite music record?

Aam Bihlamak Bil Hilm Ya Libnan by Magida El Roumi.

What is your second favourite sport?

Skiing.

Do you like to cook?

Sigh...if only I could. I would rather hire a cook.

What is your strength and what is your weakness?

Strength: what doesn't break you makes you stronger. Weakness: chocolates.

What makes you happy & what makes you sad?

Happy: to be healthy and alive every morning. Sad: when surrounded by hypocrisy.

To your close friends & family, you are known to be?

Karim not Emile.



▲ Karim & Tatjana jumping at CSI Zwollecsi, January 2011

If you had the power to change something, what would you change?

I would ban dictatorship from this world.

If there is something about Karim that you would like to change, what would that be?

I would like to replace Karim's brain with Einstein's.

Do you support any charitable organisations?

I have been looking for a charitable organisation to support me.

Do you think there is any other question we should have asked but did not?

"To be or not be? That is the question". 🐾

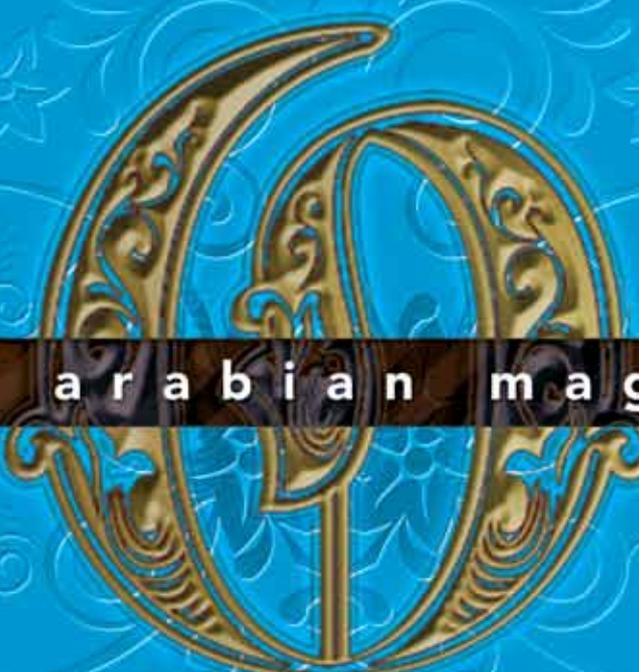


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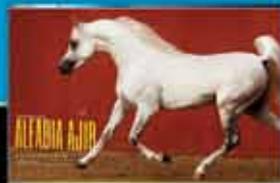
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HOW TO BE A TRAINER (PART 16)

DRESSAGE FOR JUMPING (PART 6)

By Dr. Mohamed Elsherbini



HAVING DECIDED ON YOUR LONG TERM AIMS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU THEN PLAN THE GOALS OF YOUR DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY, AND YEARLY TRAINING PROGRAMME.

SHORT TERM PLANNING:

If coaches and riders just take a day at a time, they will never reach their goals. Long-term planning is very important to reach high levels but it is essential to also plan daily rides. A **riding session** should be divided into five phases: warming-up, loosening, serious work, loosening again and cooling down. If we consider that a session lasts an hour, we can split it into five phases which might vary in time in relation to the degree of physical and mental

fitness of the horse together with his degree of training and experience. This doesn't mean skipping any one of the phases, apart from the strong work phase.

Warm-up helps prepare the body and mind of both horse and rider for the effort that is to follow. It reduces the risk of injuring muscles, joints and tendons by increasing blood flow to these parts. It also makes the horse mentally responsive to the rider, while cooling down gives the horse a chance to regain its normal body temperature

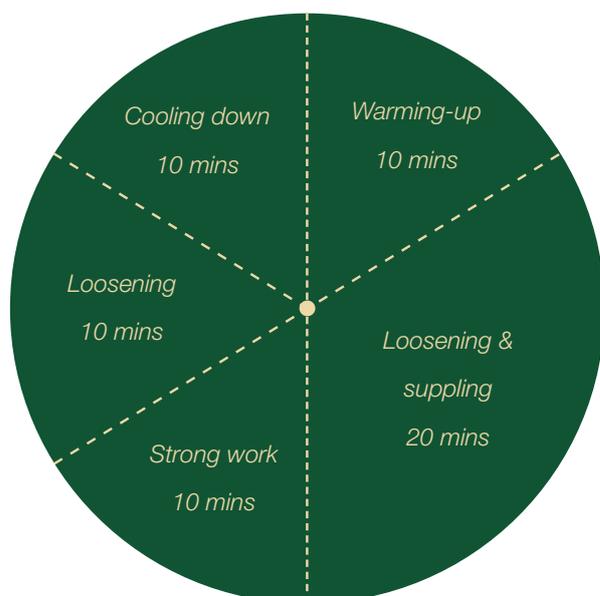


Fig 1: Example of the Five phases of a riding session

and respiration and heart rate. It also allows the body to remove waste products from the muscles (lactic acid) and reduces the possibility of stiffness.

The loosening and suppling phase is carried out in working paces. It includes some circles and serpentines combined with progressive transitions and little shortening and lengthening. For a novice horse, or when retraining horses, this stage is as far as you will go before cooling down. With more experienced and ready horses you can begin to work a little harder adding some strong work (two to three short four-minute periods, with one to two-minute rest periods in between) aiming for impulsion and collection.

THE TRAINING SCALE:

For all kinds of riding activities, the aim is to develop the physical and mental aptitude of the horse in order to make it an obedient and happy riding horse.

This is achieved by applying the training programme as shown in Fig. 2. This programme could be used to develop young horses or as a training session for older ones.

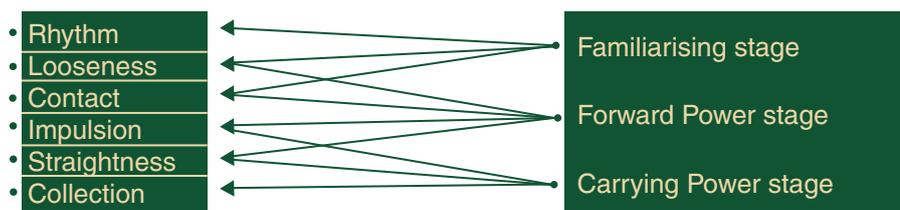


Fig. 2 The Training Scale, Horse is Supple and “Through”

Rhythm is regularity and equality of strides in each gait. The steps should also have the same duration. It is mandatory to keep rhythm during transitions and turns and not only in straight lines; there is no benefit of training with an irregular pace.

Looseness is essential for useful work. The horse should be physically and mentally free from tension. It should move through its supple back and muscles free from tension. This relaxed horse should not rush forward or resist the forward-driving aids of the rider. A good sign of looseness is when the horse stretches its head and neck forward and downward in all gaits.

Contact is the soft and steady connection between the horse’s mouth and the rider’s hand. It should never be achieved through a backward action of the

hand, but be achieved by the rider’s driving aids affecting the hind legs of the horse delivering forward thrust. The horse is trying to find the contact and the rider is providing it, as a wise common saying in Germany. After some period of correct training with contact, the horse will develop to be **on the bit**.

Impulsion in a very illustrative expression, is the desire of the horse to move forward with active hocks and supple back. Impulsion is reached after rhythm, looseness and contact. It is only possible in gaits with suspension (trot and canter). Even if the rhythm is maintained, if the tempo is too fast the impulsion will suffer as a result due to short moment of suspension.

Straightness is keeping the horse’s forehead in line with its hindquarters which is best seen from behind if the horse is moving parallel to a straight border. If the horse is straight, the hind legs will equally push in the direction of the centre of gravity making the action lighter and more active. The restraining aids will also pass through the mouth, poll, neck and back to the hindquarters acting equally on both sides. Straightness is a precondition for collection so that the weight can be transferred equally onto both hind legs.

Collection means reducing the amount of weight on the horse’s forelegs to be carried on its hindquarters where the hocks and stifle joints bend more underneath the horse in the direction of the centre of gravity. This mechanism will lighten the forehead and increase the uphill look of the horse. Collection will make the horse move in balance and self-carriage in all three gaits.

A Supple and “Through” horse is a correctly schooled one which is a joy to ride. This horse is ready to accept the rider’s aids obediently and happily. This horse should also remain loose while applying the driving, restraining and sides-ways acting aids on both reins. These aids should not be blocked at any point by tension. The supple and “through” quality is the hallmark of a well trained horse for all equestrian sports.

Reference : The Principles of Riding (German FN)



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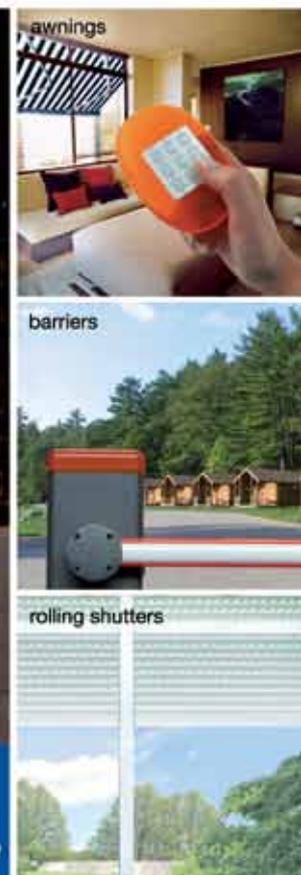


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