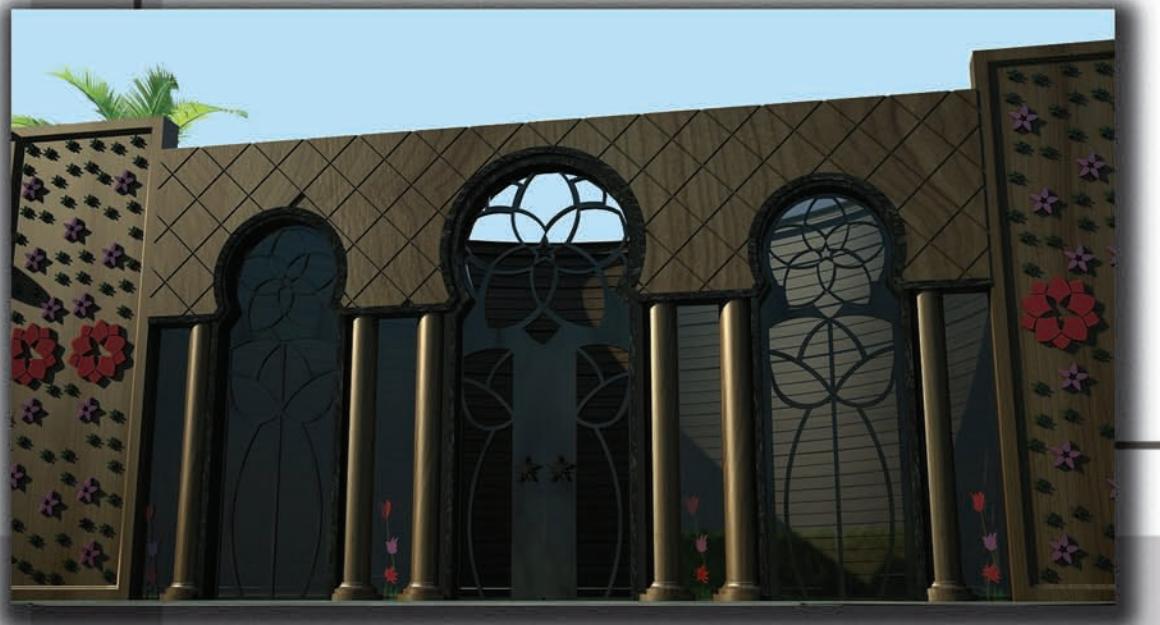
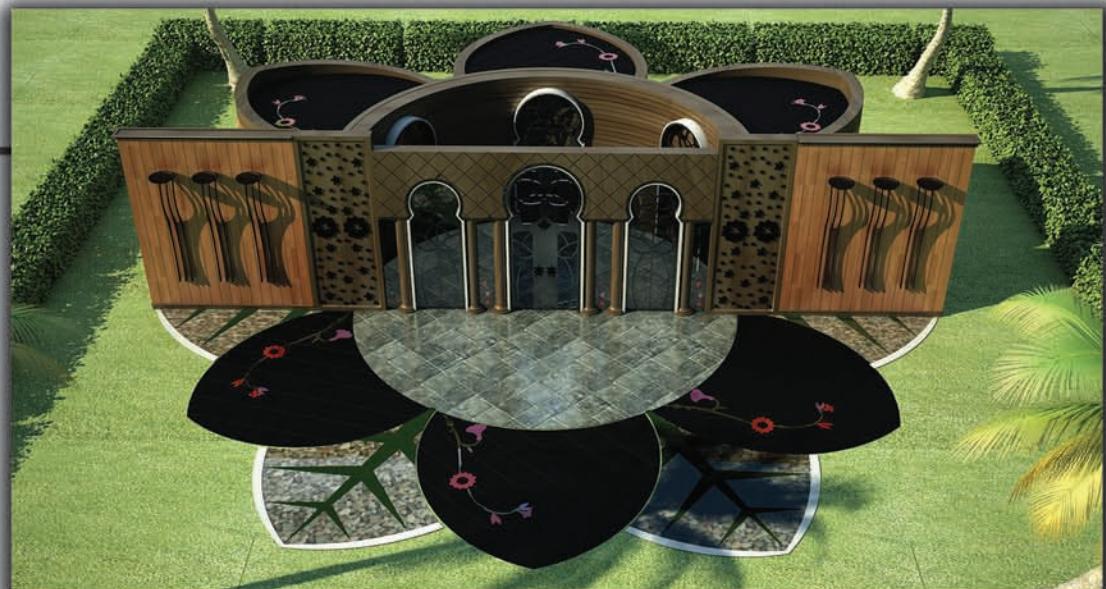


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VIEW POINT

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear readers,

Every time we put all our magazine content together, I realise the amount of details, material, and news updates within the issue. Trying to stay on track with as many international and local events as possible, and bringing over to you a good feel of how things went along, gives us a great sense of achievement and keeps us striving for more.

It is always of high concern for everyone in our industry to know how the FEI is planning for the future especially with the elections coming up; HRH Princess Haya bint Al Hussein President of the FEI reflects to Horse Times on her achievements, concerns and plans for the future.

Read on Hickstead celebrating its 50th anniversary and continuing to stay as one of the most important shows on the equestrian annual calendar. Peter Jeffery gives us an idea about this year's variety in competitions, and young promising talent Craig Payne - also featured individually in this issue - gives us a demonstration of beautiful photographs.

'The Egyptian Alternative Breeding The Egyptian Arabian Horse', a book by Philippe Paraskevas; for lovers of the Arabian horse and of the Egyptian Arabian in specific, read the book review.

Follow coverage on the Global Champions Tour, a profound prestigious mark on the equestrian scene with details from the competitions in Monte Carlo and Valkenswaard.

In an interview with the magical talent and rider of the century John Whitaker, presented to us by our associates Horse & Hound, you will read more about his personal side and lovely sense of humour.

Ahmad Hamsho, an 18 year old Syrian talent is the youngest Arab rider to have qualified for the World Equestrian Games, gives us a statement on his fears along with his aspirations for raising the Syrian flag during the Games.

Ahmed Talaat and another milestone in his career of being an International Course Designer.

There is more to Steve Guerdat! Read about him along with Richard Spooner in a closer picture of their personal lives, likes, dislikes, and hopes.

Last but not least, Dr. Mohamed Elsherbini ends our autumn issue 33 with his regular and one of the most requested articles, How To Be A Trainer.

Enjoy. Sincerely,

Khaled Assem
Chairman

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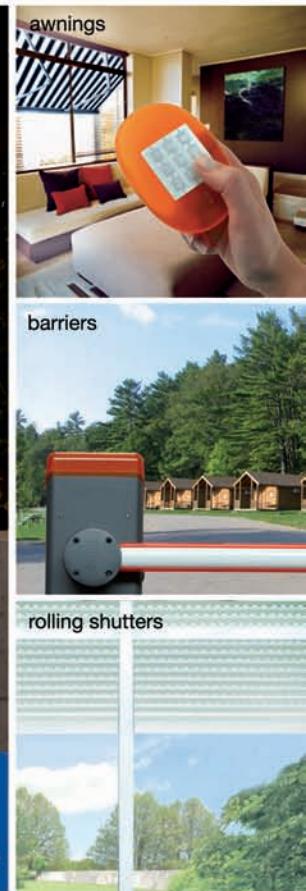
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HRH PRINCESS HAYA AL HUSSEIN...

HAS A SAY

By Ina El Kobbia, *Germany*

ELECTED 13TH PRESIDENT OF THE FEI IN MAY 2006, SHE COMMITTED HERSELF TO THE MODERNISATION OF AN ORGANISATION THAT HAD COME INTO CRISIS LONG BEFORE. SHE HAS CARVED OUT A HIGHER PROFILE FOR THE FEI PRESIDENCY THAN ANY OF HER PREDECESSORS AND HAS WORKED HARD IN HER ROLE TO ENSURE THE GLOBAL REACH OF EQUESTRIAN SPORT - YET HER PRESIDENCY HAS NOT BEEN FREE FROM CRITICISM. IN NOVEMBER THIS YEAR THE EQUESTRIAN WORLD WILL VOTE FOR A NEW PRESIDENT WITH PRINCESS HAYA BINT AL HUSSEIN ANNOUNCING HER INTENTION TO RUN FOR A SECOND TERM, AND WHILST BEING CHALLENGED BY TWO EUROPEAN CANDIDATES: THE CURRENT FEI VICE PRESIDENT, SWEDEN'S SVEN HOLMBERG AND THE NETHERLAND'S HENK ROTTINGHUIS. THIS IS AN EXCLUSIVE HORSE TIMES MAGAZINE INTERVIEW WITH HRH THE PRINCESS IN VIEW OF THE UPCOMING FEI ELECTIONS



▲ Princess Haya relaxes with her 14 year old gelding, Olanar. Newmarket, Summer 2010

Your Royal Highness, when I see you in the international circuit, I cannot but think of your late father King Hussein of Jordan, one of the world's greatest politicians who made history and is deeply missed in the Middle East. May God bless his soul.

Remembering the 2006 World Equestrian Games in Aachen, Germany, hearts and minds went out to you from all sides: the public, the riders, the officials and the media. To those especially from the Middle East, you have been a delightful and radiant representative of the Arab World and one which has made us proud as the first ever elected Arab FEI President. Looking back, how would you describe the past years being in this position? Moreover, what were your happiest and your saddest moments, in addition to your greatest challenges during your term so far?

You are so kind. I have truly loved this job, and it has been such a great

privilege to serve the sport that has given me so much over the years.

There were some magical events, such as the World Equestrian Games in Aachen in 2006, which I will hold close to my heart forever. And those events were a wonderful reminder of what this job is about; serving our wonderful sport.

There were so many gratifying moments behind the scenes, too; moments where all of the hard work came together and contributed to an outcome that would serve the future of our sport. There was the day that the FEI Statutes were modified to better suit the organisation's current need. There were milestones in reducing the turnaround time in testing, and there was the point at which the Athletes' Commission became a reality and I knew that finally, our Athletes had a formalised voice within our organisation. There were the fantastic moments when HSBC and Meydan signed on as sponsors and we were just thrilled to see all of the work we'd put into elevating the sport and increasing

its commercial potential bear fruit. And recently, I was thrilled when the Development Task Force, something that had been in the pipeline for four years, became a reality. There were so many more moments; big and small victories - too many really to mention.

I think the common thread is that the most gratifying points were those in which, having traversed some often difficult decisions and issues, we began to see green shoots of the future appearing and starting to flourish. I have taken most satisfaction from those moments in which the future of our sport has felt brighter than ever before.

The challenges have really all been about growing pains. Change is never easy, but I knew that when I took the job; I knew that the FEI needed a leader who could be an ambassador for the sport on the global stage and at the top tables of international sport, but it also needed a leader with the strength of their convictions, someone with a thick skin who could

stand firm and always ensure that the sport's best interests, rather than those of any one region or discipline, remained at the heart of decisions.

There have been learnings along the way, and I'm human; so of course there are things which, with the benefit of hindsight, I might have done differently, but I believe we have come such a long way and truly, I have loved the job; the highs have really outweighed the lows and even the difficult times have mostly been about forging a way forward.

How free have you really been in your decision taking; meaning how far were you bound by the given facts of an institution like the FEI?

Our International Federation, like most others, has strict rules and regulations and checks and balances in its Statutes. No one person can act alone in the FEI – certainly not as President – decisions are made with Vice Presidents, the Executive Board, Bureau and Secretary General.

I recall that during international press conferences, especially those at the beginning of your term, you were often enough confronted with questions about how open the Arab society generally was, particularly towards women and women riders. To which extent, your Royal Highness, has the fact of being an Arab woman made action and decision taking in your work as President of an international body difficult for you, with regard to either side, the Western and the Arab World?

When you take up a post like the Presidency of an International Governing Body, you must give up your own personal identity and lineage. In order to make decisions in the best interest of the Federation, and the Sport, both the fact that I am a woman and that I am Arab had to be put aside. I earned the job because of credentials, and those credentials were the tools I promised to use and have used in my time as President. Certainly there was interest in my heritage and background, especially when I was new to the job, but if the fact that I was an Arab woman had

come into play in any way when it came to actually doing the job, I would feel that I had definitely failed.

Did you feel you were able to have an impact on how the Arab society is being viewed in the world?

I am very proud to be an Arab woman, but also, and most importantly in this role, I am someone who wants to give back something to a sport that has given me so many wonderful experiences. In order to make decisions in the best interest of the Federation, and equestrian sport, the fact that I am a woman and that I am Arab really had to be put aside. I wanted to put my heart and soul into working to the advantage of our sport. And there was so much work to be done, that you couldn't achieve anything at all if you spent the entire time worrying about who you are. It's what you achieve that makes the

difference and I would rather that people remember my achievements than my gender or origin – but if in some small way, any of my work, either for the FEI or elsewhere, has had a positive impact on perceptions of Arab society, that would be a wonderful by-product and certainly I am very proud of my heritage.

One of your first announcements as FEI President was the insertion of Para Equestrian into the FEI family; meaning that Para Equestrian forms part of the regular equestrian sport and is no longer isolated. The World Equestrian Games in Kentucky this year will be the first to prove this new decision. It is undoubtedly a great achievement for disabled riders and their teams. Will and can the FEI at all play a role model here and take influence in order to allow Para sport in general to become part of the regular Olympic Games?

▼ Princess Haya speaks at the opening ceremony of the 2010 Sport Accord International Convention, a 5-day gathering of 1,500 leading representatives from international sport. Dubai, April 2010



The Paralympic Committee stands alongside the Olympic Committee; the two operate side by side as part of one family, sharing the same values and goals; they work in wonderful harmony. With that said, one of the things we are very proud of at the FEI is that we're one of the only International Federations that regulates able-bodied and disabled athletes under the same umbrella. No disabled athlete feels that they are any different from able-bodied athletes and as an International Federation, we treat all of our athletes the same.

The FEI has been strongly criticised for its doping and medication regulations, issued after the General Assembly in Copenhagen, especially by big European Federations. Criticism at first has gone so far to some calling it the end to equestrian sport. The FEI has partly reacted already by implementing sharper rules. Yet, the controversies in this important area have not been completely overcome and overshadow the clean sport campaign. How would you meet this criticism?

The FEI took a clear and unequivocal stance against doping when the General Assembly approved the new Equine Anti-Doping and Controlled Medication Regulations and the Clean Sport recommendations by a 95-5 vote last November. No-one in our sport publicly advocates the use of performance enhancing drugs.

We are unique in the Olympic Movement in that we have human and animal athletes. That greatly complicates our task. There is strong disagreement over non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). We have to rely on science to tell us whether NSAIDs can provide therapeutic benefit for horses without enhancing their performance or putting them at risk of injury. However, this is a debate that cannot be viewed purely from a scientific perspective; ethical values and legal issues also have to be taken into account.

We have certainly made strides in the right direction against doping, but we do not have the clarity we need on

prohibited substances or complete agreement on the proper procedures to detect and punish violators.

Doping is always going to be a sensitive, complex and difficult issue. So many opinions exist about what constitutes doping and what constitutes medication. It is precisely because of these differences that it is important for us to examine and, ultimately, agree on the best way forward for the sport. I cannot force agreement on this issue. We have to work together in a calm and rational way to forge a consensus based on science and common sense, and I am hopeful that the recent NSAID Congress in Lausanne created a bridge towards exactly that.

Your Royal Highness, we all expect you to run for a second presidential term; what measures are you taking to potentially ensure the success of your second run?

I know that, ultimately, the National Federations will judge me on my performance, not my rhetoric. So the most important thing for me to do in the lead-up to the General Assembly in November is to continue to give my all to the job at hand. But I also know that it is important to bring the same amount of energy, enthusiasm, passion and ideas to a re-election campaign as it was to have those qualities in my first campaign. I am developing specific policy proposals by soliciting suggestions and ideas from National Federations, athletes and other stakeholders. I am carefully considering those views, as well as the lessons learned in my first term, to develop a detailed plan to collaboratively build on the progress made over the past four years.

If I am re-elected, my second term will focus on consolidating the progress made over the past four years while bringing more unity to the FEI. I recognise that, following periods of significant change, you need to allow time for everyone to take a breath, consolidate the gains and allow the dust to settle. I am very aware that new systems and procedures need time to percolate and become routine. New approaches aren't embraced by all overnight.

"SO MANY OPINIONS EXIST ABOUT WHAT CONSTITUTES DOPING AND WHAT CONSTITUTES MEDICATION"

Maintaining unity is critically important for the survival of our sport. We have to stick together to remain valued members of the Olympic Family and to meet the many challenges facing our Federation and equestrian sport. Together, we can build on the progress we have made.

What are your hopes and wishes for the international horse sport?

I still dream of seeing our sport return to the top 10 international sports, and that vision drives many of the policy proposals that I have for the development and growth of our sport. I feel so strongly that it is important for us to reach for the stars, and the fact that horse sport was once a prime-time sport tells me that it could one day be that again.

In terms of milestone goals, over the coming 12 months I would like to see a Framework for Development as an output from the Development Task Force, and a five-year plan.

I would also like to see a solid commercial transformation, moving from sponsorship packages to partnerships, and I would like to see the restructuring process through, with athlete representation on the board.

From a longer-term perspective, over the next four years I would like to see a period of calm, marked by the consolidation of the structures and programmes that we have already put in place.

Princess Haya speaks at the 78th OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) General Assembly, calling for a more rational approach to international trade requirements for the transportation of competition horses. Paris, May 2010



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IN FOCUS ON

HICKSTEAD

By Peter Jeffery, *England*

THE ALL ENGLAND JUMPING COURSE – POPULARLY KNOWN AS JUST “HICKSTEAD” – IS FAMOUS THE WORLD OVER. THE ROYAL INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW HAS EARNED AN AFFECTIONATE RESPECT WITH EVERYONE DUE TO ITS IMPORTANCE ON THE EQUESTRIAN CALENDAR AND BECAUSE IT IS WELL OVER A CENTURY OLD.

SO BRING THE TWO TOGETHER AND YOU HAVE AN EVENT NOT TO BE MISSED.

THE SHOW, CURRENTLY SPONSORED BY EXCLUSIVE SWISS WATCH MANUFACTURER LONGINES, HAS JUST FINISHED ITS 2010 SIX-DAY PROGRAMME, ATTRACTING LARGE CROWDS TO THE PICTURESQUE SUSSEX SHOW GROUND. FOR THIS IS A TRUE, TRADITIONAL BRITISH HORSE SHOW AND ON A LARGE SCALE – SEVEN ARENAS IN USE EVERY DAY TO HOST MORE THAN 1,000 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SHOW JUMPERS AND OVER 1,600 OF THE BEST AND MOST ELEGANT SHOW HORSES IN THE COUNTRY.







▲ Will Funnel, Tina Fletcher, Peter Charles & Michael Whitaker won the Nation's Cup for Britain

Hickstead and the Royal International are each unique in their own way. The show because it has spanned two centuries and seen horses adapt from being tools of industry, agriculture and transport to a creature of sport and leisure, and Hickstead because it began as one man's dream and turned into the nearest thing to a living legend...created to improve a sporting performance and growing into the home of British show jumping. And this year has been an extra-important one – Hickstead's 50th anniversary. Douglas Bunn, its creator opened it in 1960. He was himself an international rider and like others, frustrated because when he went abroad both he and his horses found it difficult to adapt to the big flowing courses in Europe. So he decided to found and build his own centre where riders and horses would meet the type of obstacles and courses they would ride over in other countries.

Fittingly, the British round of the Meydan FEI Nations Cup series at this year's show proved just how successful he was. The British team of Tina Fletcher,

Peter Charles, William Funnell and Michael Whitaker triumphed over eight other nations, and over a massive course. Only Whitaker had faults – none of the other three even rolled a pole through the two rounds.

It was a particularly sweet victory for the British team and their new Chef d'Equipe Rob Hoekstra. It was their first victory at Hickstead since 2006, but more important was their contentious relegation last season from the top league, something fought ferociously and eventually successfully by the British Equestrian Federation. Suffice to say, their current standing in the league banishes the threat of relegation this year!

On the last day of the show, veteran Tim Stockdale – who describes himself as "a bit long in the tooth" – clinched any doubt about the quality of British show jumping when he triumphed in the Longines King George V Gold Cup riding Fresh Direct Kalico Bay.

This is a class steeped in show jumping lore. Introduced in 1911, and

with a trophy commissioned directly by the then reigning monarch and show patron, King George V, it has been contested by most of the sport's great riders and bears the names of many of them – Foxhunter and Harry Llewellyn, The Rock and Pierre d'Inzeo, Philco and David Broome, Deister and Paul Schockemöhle, Virtual Village Welham and John Whitaker are just a few.

Winning this trophy – solid gold and worth very much in excess of £250,000 – earned Stockdale a 54,000 Euro purse but also the achievement of an ambition he has held since he was 12 as he beat, amongst others, European champion Kevin Staut.

What Douglas Bunn was, above being a supreme horseman, was an entrepreneur and a man who knew instinctively what would appeal to the masses. Possibly the last example of that was the creation of the Hickstead Eventing Grand Prix, now sponsored by insurer Amlin Plus.

For this invitation-only competition,



Britain's Tim Stockdale who describes himself as "a bit long in the tooth" won the Longines King George V Gold Cup

riders from the two disciplines of show jumping and eventing are pitched head-to-head over a course that not only requires them to negotiate the big obstacles of Hickstead's International Arena, but to actually leave the arena to negotiate a series of cross-country obstacles as well.

It is a searing test for both disciplines, the eventers because the fences come up so fast and the show jumpers because they are not used to going through water or jumping out of an arena. The result is a crowd-puller, especially so this year when eventer Gary Parsonage was going for a fourth win, something not done before.

His time was quick, but he picked up 10 penalties on last year's winner, Peter Street, and had to give way to show jumper Shane Breen and Dorada. Breen, married to Douglas Bunn's daughter, Chloe, was on a roll that day having already won the other feature class, the Bunn Leisure Trophy, on World Cruise, a horse only



▲ The All England Course at Hickstead

▼ Britain's Shane Breen, winner of the Bunn Leisure Trophy



recently returned to work after a two-year lay-off.

This is a show, too, which tends to produce new stars. And so it was for 26-year-old Anna Edwards, daughter of a West Country builder, who runs a small yard of only six horses. She made the journey to Hickstead with her own nine-year-old Unique IX, who was making his first appearance in the International Arena.

Edwards set her target high, and tried her hand at the Old Lodge Queen Elizabeth II Cup, and against all odds won at her first attempt, joining a list of previous winners that has included Pat Smythe, Liz Edgar and American Laura Kraut.

"This is the biggest class I have ever won," she said afterwards. "I have been aiming for this one but to come here and win it is quite unbelievable. It is such a hard competition to win, so to have achieved it is quite fantastic."

Often, however, the stars keep shining, and so it was in the Bunn Leisure Salver class, where former world number one Pius Schwizer and Carlina IV returned one of five clear rounds and then returned to scorch ahead of rivals Robert Whitaker, Mario Stevens, Denis Lynch and Nicolas Delmotte to claim first place. And in the Sky Sports Speed Classic, French challenger Julien Epaillard romped home in first place, with only 28 hundredths of a second separating the top three.

The Longines Royal International Horse Show holds a unique place in the British Horse World, not just because of its age, but also because of the diversity of the schedule. Hickstead, unlike many shows, relies on its equine participants for entertainment – no displays or "acts" of any kind. The nearest is a scurry competition, where tiny ponies pull small carriages at breakneck speed around an obstacle course. But even that is classed as driving.

The show, rescued from possible oblivion in 1992 when it was rejected from the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, because of rising costs, provides not only a career high for the



▲ Pius Schwizer, Switzerland

▼ Scurry competitions entertain the Hickstead crowds



▼ Robert Oliver riding Loughkeen Dancing Lord, The Patey Hats Supreme Hunter Champions





▲ Martin Clunes, President of the British Horse Society

show jumpers, it is the ultimate ambition of most serious showing riders, owners and producers. Showing classes – and the expanded schedule caters for most British breeds of horses and ponies – attract the very cream of the equine world.

The show's showing director, Roger Stack – himself a former, top-level rider and producer – sums it up, "the standard at this show is high. Very high. And because of that even a place is something special and a win is, for many, really out of this world! The high standard of the animals means we have the highest standard of judges, and their scrutiny of them is detailed and meticulous. To have a winner here means you have a horse or pony that is very special." And he laughs. "It is not easy for the judges either. At this show we had a ride judge who rode

more than 70 horses in one day and was then able to talk individually to her fellow judge about each one!"

Margaret Shaw, highly respected showing correspondent for the UK's leading equestrian publication, Horse and Hound, describes it as "the best of the best." She says: "the best horses always rise to the top and you know that the champions are true champions. The atmosphere is always wonderful. I can't think of another show where I am still at ringside at seven o'clock at night."

First round classes are held in outside rings, with championships decided in the world-famous 4.5 acre International Arena, where the space and turf bring out the best. So it was with leading rider Robert Oliver and Bernie White's heavyweight hunter

Loughkeen Dancing Lord. After standing top of the line in its class, the pair went into the International Arena where the going and the atmosphere produced a stunning performance – and amazing gallop – to earn the Supreme Hunter championship.

Hickstead organiser and show secretary Lizzie Bunn, daughter of Douglas, puts high emphasis on pitting professional against professional and amateur against amateur, all in the interests of fairness. It paid off well for Clare Heseltine where in the amateur riding horse championship her eight-year-old Funtime Frankie – known better to her as "Mr Perfect" – gave her and judge Gregory Goss outstanding rides to clinch the championship.

Hickstead has a continuous policy of improvement, and within days of the show closing, heavy machinery moved on to the hallowed turf of the International Arena – to dig it up! "Most of the riders have had nothing but praise for the going," said director Edward Bunn, "but in recent years we have had times when torrential rain has made the going deep. Two years ago we had to restrict the classes in the Arena and move a lot of them to our big all-weather arena to save it for the main international competitions. We have spent substantial sums of money in improvements, but to maintain our standing worldwide we have decided to take drastic action and install entirely new, high-tech drainage."

The work will include laying new drainage and a gravel raft, before relaying the topsoil, mixed with additional sand, and re-seeding it.

"We are spending about £500,000 on the project, but visitors next season should see nothing different," said Edward. "The new arena will even have the same side-to-side drop of 2.5metres and all the permanent obstacles, including the Derby Bank, will be the same as they have always been." 

All photos courtesy of
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THE EGYPTIAN ALTERNATIVE

BREEDING THE ARABIAN HORSE

A BOOK BY PHILIPPE PARASKEVAS

By Pat Canfield

A BOOK HAS RECENTLY BEEN PUBLISHED IN CAIRO WHICH PUTS A THOROUGH AND SOMEWHAT CONTROVERSIAL FOCUS ON ARABIAN HORSE BREEDING IN EGYPT. THE BOOK, 'THE EGYPTIAN ALTERNATIVE - BREEDING THE ARABIAN HORSE' BY PHILIPPE PARASKEVAS, TAKES A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF BREEDING IN EGYPT WITH PRIMARY FOCUS ON THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY THROUGH THE PRESENT DAY. HE COVERS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DESERT HORSE IN THE EARLY ISLAMIC YEARS AND THE BEDOUIN LIFE STYLE THAT PROMULGATES THE ROLE OF THE DESERT WITH CONFORMATIONAL ATTRIBUTES BUT MORE .IMPORTANTLY THE CHARACTER AND SPIRIT OF THE HORSE

Paraskevas has been a serious breeder of the Egyptian horse, primarily of EAO (Egyptian Agricultural Organisation) bloodlines for over 25 years. He has brought this experience as well as an in-depth study of history and bloodlines to a well thought-out presentation of what he views as the desperate current situation in breeding which focuses mainly on the show ring with strong emphasis on the situation among local Egyptian breeders. He quotes a number of well regarded writers on the Arabian horse primarily those of the previous six decades with occasional reference to authorities from the Nineteenth Century.

The book is of particular relevance because of the tremendous expansion of breeding in Egypt. In the early days of the EAO, which was established in 1956 taking over the RAS (Royal Agricultural Society), there were just over one dozen breeding farms. Today there are over 450 farms registered under the EAO. This has dramatically increased the number of Arabians in Egypt. Subsequently, this has led the author to question the influence of Western imposed standards on judging and setting the "Ideal Egyptian" as the accepted standard. He feels this has been done with the complete acquiescence of many of the people who are more market driven than preservation driven.

The book is presented in a carefully researched and thought through manner. A number of highly respected writers and breeders are quoted throughout the text. Some of Paraskevas's views are bound to create controversy among today's breeders as he challenges current practices but always in a respectful and carefully presented manner. However, no matter what their personal views may be, this book may incite readers to think and evaluate their own programs based on the writer's deeply held beliefs and those of the many authorities whom he quotes in the text.

The author shows how the role of Islam and the fate of the horse are inextricably linked and quotes some highly respected writers of the mid-nineteenth century. He refers to the role of the Bedouin in the propagation of the horse, and writes that survival of the man and the horse in wars and extreme environmental conditions led to selection of the qualities that would indeed develop and preserve the breed. The writer goes in depth about the role of the show ring and how the uniform standards set by Western judging along with artificial methods of showing have led to a deterioration of the original Desert horse. He sees the Egyptian horse in a time of crisis.

Paraskevas refers to many of the original sire lines from the EAO and discusses their individuality and the lack of uniformity in their overall look. He appeals for a return to

THE EGYPTIAN ALTERNATIVE

Breeding The Arabian Horse

Volume 1

PHILIPPE PARASKEVAS

diversity as a way of preserving the heritage of the horse as opposed to everyone trying to adapt to the "Ideal Arabian" concept that evolved without challenge and has led to an ideology of its own in the general approach to breeding. An extremely controversial issue of importing the progeny of horses who were sold out of Egypt is put forward with logic and deep feeling. He addresses a growing tendency of mixing Polish and Russian bloodlines with the Egyptian lines.

There is an extensive discussion of the pros and cons of both inbreeding and out-crossing. He cites the major sire lines from the EAO and the mare lines that trace back to Inshass stock as he quotes many of the recognised authorities on breeding. Careful attention is paid to the advantages and disadvantages of close inbreeding fuelled by the desire to win in the show ring with both short and long term results of the two approaches.

Paraskevas presents a spirited defence of the EAO against many of the attacks that are currently being made against it in a chapter sub-headed 'The High-Wire Act of Defending the Safe-Haven Concept in a Market Environment'. He makes a strong case for the survival of the EAO as a "safe-haven" for the preservation of the Egyptian Arabian horse out of love for both the horse and the country by following its history through changes in fortune during the years since its founding. A case is also

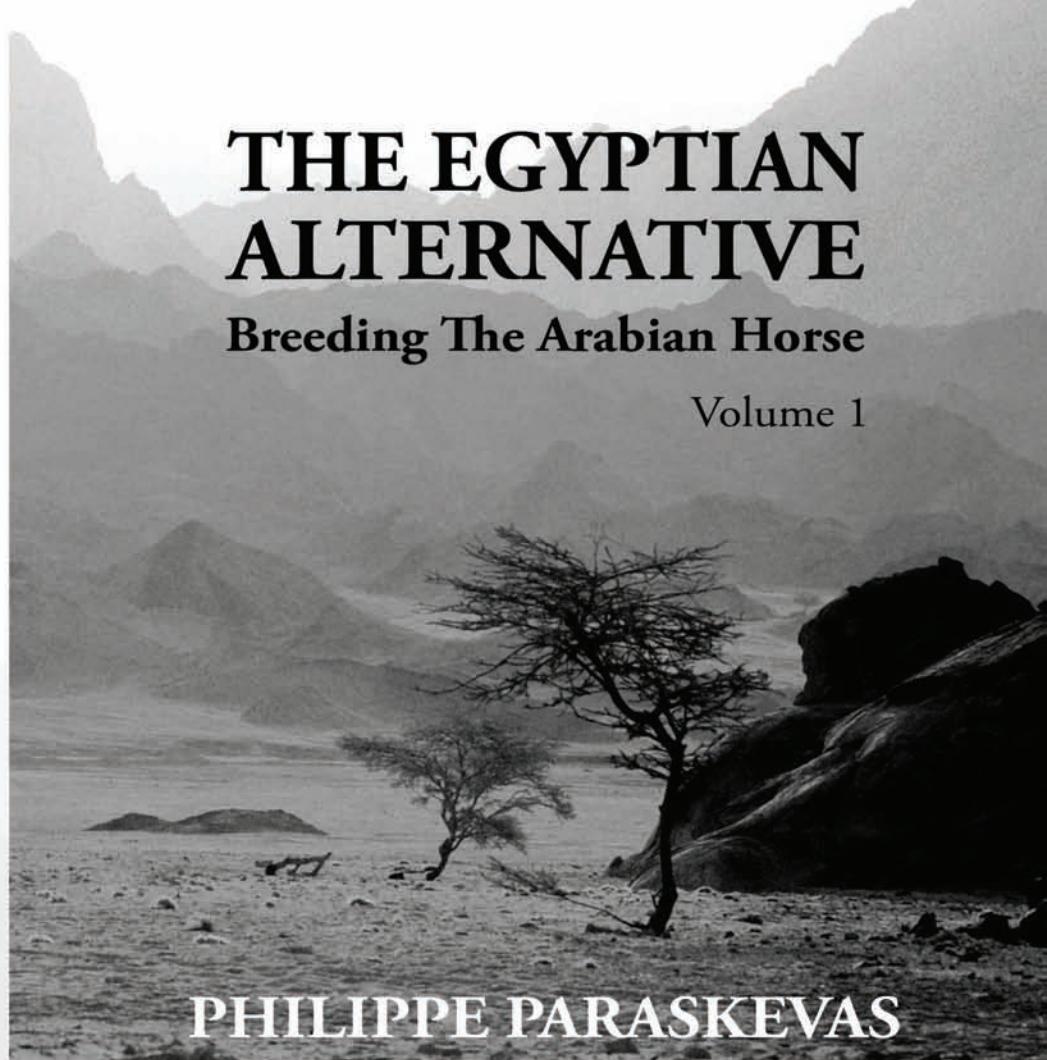
made that the EAO is the last refuge of the true Desert Horse as their pedigrees trace back to their desert roots and many lines are now extinct or very rare.

In his Conclusion, the author asks:

"Who is responsible for the current state of the 'Egyptian Arabian' in Egypt? In a nutshell, the market is. In equal measure, perhaps, so is the Egyptian breeders' reaction to the market's predictable influence."

He submits the proposition that the Egyptian breeders, as temporary custodians of the breed should aim for noble goals and look for a purpose beyond commerce while not espousing the elimination of the free market. He appeals for a better understanding of the heritage of the Egyptian Arabian and breeding closer to the lines of the 'Desert Arabian' by presenting an 'Egyptian Alternative'. The author decries the possibility of the emergence of the 'Multi-ethnic Arabian' that could displace the 'Egyptian Arabian' in its own home.

In Volume Two, which will be published shortly, the author delves extensively into the qualities of the various strains that have survived through the years of breeding at the EAO and how they can be used today in the local programs to further the information offered in Volume One in practical applications.



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THE GLOBAL CHAMPIONS TOUR OF
MONACO

Monte Carlo, June 2010

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

Marco Kutscher, Germany

BETS WERE ON? NO, BETS WERE WITHDRAWN. IT WAS HARD TO WIN AS THE GLOBAL CHAMPIONS TOUR (GCT) CONTINUED ON WITH ITS SERIES OF COMPETITIONS DURING A THREE DAY SHOW JUMPING EVENT IN MONACO.

FROM JUNE 24TH TILL THE 26TH, THE COMPETITIONS WERE NEATLY FROSTED WITH HIGHLY DISTINGUISHED RIDERS COMPETING FOR SUCCESS ON A TIGHT COURSE PERFECTLY DESIGNED AND METICULOUSLY PREPARED BY INTERNATIONAL COURSE DESIGNER, GERMANY'S FRANK ROTHENBERGER WHOM HAD ALL THE TOP 30 WORLD-RANKED RIDERS AGREE ON ONE FACT, "THAT SHOW RING WAS AWFULLY TIGHT AND THOSE COURSES WERE ROUGHLY TECHNICAL".

LOCATED ON A REFRESHING AND RELAXING SETTING ALONGSIDE PORT HERCULE, AND SITUATED AT THE FOOT OF THE ROCHER'S STEEP ROCK RAMPARTS, WITH FACILITIES OF THE HIGHEST STANDARD, THE RIDING ARENA PRESENTED THE TOP RIDERS ON THE BEST MOUNTS, WITH THE SEA AND WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL YACHTS ON ONE SIDE, AND THE PRINCE'S PALACE ON THE OTHER.

WITH THE FOOTBALL WORLD CUP GAMES SHOWING ON THE SCREENS IN THE RIDER'S LOUNGE, THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF THE COMPETITION MOVED ON SUBTLY WITH SWITZERLAND'S STEVE GUERDAT RIDING TRESOR AND WINNING THE 150CM ROUND OF THE FIRST DAY AND THE ALL NEW MOTHER, GERMANY'S MEREDITH MICHAELS-BEERBAUM RIDING CHECKMATE 4 AND WINNING THE 150CM ROUND OF THE SECOND DAY. THE FINAL DAY OF THE COMPETITIONS BROUGHT ABOUT THE FIVE STAR GRAND PRIX WITH 44 TOP RIDERS COMPETING IN TWO ROUNDS AND ONE JUMP OFF TO 160CM FENCES MAKING IT HARD TO PICK A WINNER.



▲ HRH Princess Caroline of Monaco & Jan Tops

JAN TOPS, NETHERLANDS *President of the GCT:*

On organisation: "Monaco already has a show jumping event and we thought of bringing the GCT here five years ago. I personally think we have matured after all these years and at the moment, it looks good!"

On win expectations: "It's such a thin fine line. Anyone can win since all the best are here. Even amateurs, why those can also win. We have seen that in Estoril in 2009. I have to say this is the beauty of the GCT; we expect the

unexpected."

On sponsors: "Every event has its own sponsors. It's important for us that the conditions and the prize money meet the requirements. Here in Monaco we have Massimo Dutti, Libya Sahara Gate, Triumph Project, Eurosport and Jaeger-Le Coultre as sponsors which give the event its own character. The arena here is small, it has a special atmosphere by the harbour and I'd like to keep it as such!"

STEVE GUERDAT, SWITZERLAND

Day 1 winner of Prix Jumping International de Monte Carlo, 150cm:

On Monaco: "I try to compete at all GCT events everytime I have the chance. I've been coming to Monaco for the past five years which is pretty amazing given it's in the middle of the city, everything is tiny and tight, it's much like a holiday and I think it's a good opportunity for sponsors to be relaxing whilst seeing their horses jump."

On levels of competition: "The horses need to be able to jump such a tight course and it just happens that in any show, any horse can knock down a certain amount of fences. Concentration is important."

THE EVENT saw competitions from Arab countries represented by Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Qatar.

GHASSAN KASSAR, JORDAN:

On challenges: "This is my first time here. I did not really face many challenges while competing; fences are fences. The arena is just too tight and there isn't enough time to pick up the pace. It's good to be here in Europe since during the summer season, we as Arabs do not compete much due to the heat in our region. I

had four faults only today during the Grand Prix of the 130cm course and I am happy with that since my nine year old horse Top Quality is still gaining some experience."

On levels of competition: "The invitational show, 130cm classes, had some good competitions. Some riders did better than others. At the end of the day, we all need experienced horses."

ON TO THE FINAL, the two time GCT Monaco winner, the USA's Richard Spooner riding Cristallo minimised his chances to win a third title when he didn't qualify for the second round. With Spooner out, the first round saw only 14 riders clearing within the time allowed and with four more at only one fault. The latter started off the second round but lady luck was not on their side when they knocked down more fences.

ALVARO DE MIRANDA, BRAZIL:

On the show jumping: "The competition is amazing with all the best riders here performing in a special place. It's the summer season and we are competing right next to the sea. We jump all year long in big arenas and then we find ourselves in a tight one like the one you see."

On preparations: "I think all riders are prepared for a tough final and cannot risk not being prepared! We all have to be at our best and all the best are here. Did you see the start list? It's hard to point a finger at a winner. I think this is amazing for the sport."

FROM ALL 14, eye brows were raised when the 60 second jump off presented six riders: Sweden's Rolf-Goran Bengtsson riding Ninja La Silla, Spain's Sergio Alvares Moya riding his new stallion Action-Breaker, Belgium's Jos Lansink riding Cavalor Valentina, Ireland's Jessica Kurten riding Castle Forbes Libertina, Germany's Meredith Michaels-Beerbaum riding Shutterfly, and finally Brazil's Bernardo Alves riding Bridgit.

The all composed Olympic medallist Bengtsson and the young Moya, both jumping flawlessly in both rounds, decided to continue carefully in the second round but took some twisty turns to save time except were not

▼ De Miranda Prix Monte Carlo SBM, 150cm
2nd place winner



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ROLF GORAN-BENGTSSON, SWEDEN:

"It's always tough when one goes out first; you don't really know what to do. You either go fast but knock down a fence, or go slow but not make the time. My tactics were not to overdo the course and stay clear, but I'm afraid I was a little too careful at one turn. After two big rounds, we saw two double clears which says something about the technicality of the course."

SERGIO ALVAREZ MOYA, SPAIN:

"I was not the fastest. This is a new horse so I'm happy to have such a result. I am very lucky to be riding with such a selection of top riders on such top horses."



▲ Goran-Bengtsson, Prix du Prince Albert II de Monaco International Jumping Competition 160cm 4th place winner

▼ Moya, Prix du Prince Albert II de Monaco International Jumping Competition 160cm 5th place winner





▲ Lansink stayed careful & came in 3rd at the Grand Prix

Lansink and Cavalor who seriously make the crowd pause as they come in with their warrior-like aura - also decided to stay careful and try to jump clear without going for time - cleared in 40.21 seconds.

Now, the crowds just love her; that Kurten who always pumps up adrenaline levels, went in fast to make the Looney Toons Speedy Gonzalez seem overrated. She and Castle Forbes set the bets on them when they cleared in 35.29 seconds.

Two more riders had to push their horses hard to beat that time.

The world's favourite Michaels-Beerbaum and Shutterfly made crowds withdraw their bets when they immediately speeded in. With only one fraction of a second short (35.30 seconds), Shutterfly knocked down the last fence just to the crowd's dismay.

He was absolutely forgotten.

© GCT



▲ Michaels-Beerbaum knocked down the last fence

Last to come in was Alves and Bridgit. The man must have whispered to Bridgit the most romantic words to ensure that she believes they could both win. It worked. They jumped impeccably in 35.27 seconds and won the 2010 Prix Du Albert just to the surprise of Alves himself as he immediately looked at his entourage to ask if he had beaten Kurten's time.

JESSICA KURTEN, IRELAND
*Prix du Prince Albert II de Monaco
International Jumping Competition
160cm 2nd place winner:*

"I have to admit that after my error in Cannes which was completely my fault, I remembered what my father always told me, "you cannot gallop into every fence. Sometimes you will make it and sometimes, more often, you won't." Although I was more careful this week, and as I jumped the

last, I knew I would be second even though I was expecting Meredith to be the one to beat me! As for Bernardo's horse, I have been trying to get her from him for the last year, and he wouldn't sell her to me before today, so I think my chances now have become slimmer!"

BERNARDO ALVES, BRAZIL:

"Today was the third time my horse has seen a course this big; I didn't know how she would react but she jumped well this week and I had a good feeling about her. I think this is the best horse I have ever ridden; she is fast, careful and has everything you need! I must say the public in Monaco helped me plenty; as I came to the last, they were cheering and whistling so I knew I must keep going and trust my horse to jump the last."

Brazil's Bernardo Alves & Bridgit,
winners of Prix du Prince Albert II
de Monaco International Jumping
Competition

© GCT



JOHN WHITAKER



THE OLYMPIC SHOW JUMPER ON SITTING ON A STAR, FORGETTING THE FAMILY AND MAKING OUT HE'S MICHAEL

WHEN did you first... start riding?

I had my first pony, Silver, at six. He was quite naughty, but that didn't put me off — it made me more determined. I thought it was great to have some transport at that age. I rode him across the fields to school and back.

Who was your first... hero rider?

I watched all the top riders as a youngster and tried to copy them, but Harvey Smith had more influence on me than most. He's a Yorkshireman and he did it the hard way.

When did you first... jump the top of the wings?

We didn't have wings, we had barrels. My brothers, Steven and Michael, and I would build them two-high to jump with the ponies. We were always egging each other on and trying to outdo one another.

What's the first... funny story you can think of?

When Michael was late for a big show, I put his hat and jacket on and jumped his horse in the ring. I was riding into the jump-off when a steward said, "You're not Michael." "I am," I replied. The judges weren't sure but I think some riders had tipped them off, so I was eliminated.

What would be your first... choice from a menu?

I'll look at a menu 10 times, but I still

always choose soup and a steak. Traditional English Sunday roasts are very few and far between in our job, so they take a bit of beating, too.

When did you first... feel like you'd made it?

In 1975, when I won the Cock o' the North at the Great Yorkshire Show on Ryan's Son. It was a big turning point in my career.

When did you first... appear in a newspaper?

Michael and I once won all the gymkhana games at the Huddersfield Show and appeared in the Huddersfield Examiner, which was quite a big thing at the time.

When did you first... ride for your country?

My first Nations Cup was in Poland in 1976. When I walked the course and saw an oxer of two walls, I thought, "Bloody hell, this international showjumping is serious." Ryan's Son jumped it all right, but it was the first and last time I ever saw a fence like that.

When did you last... do something romantic?

I took my wife, Clare, to a horse show in Dublin for our honeymoon, but we did share a room with my brother Steven and Geoff Billington.

When did you last... lose control of a horse?

Years ago on Red Dawn, who had a reputation for being highly-strung. I lost him in a Foxhunter regional final, but couldn't pull up because I wanted to qualify. He took the final double of oxers in one stride instead of two and as he galloped through the

finish I took my feet out of the stirrups and jumped off — I was a lot younger then. We qualified for Horse of the Year Show.

When did you last... go on holiday?

I do occasionally get roped into it, but this showjumping game is like one big holiday. You're travelling every week on planes, boats and in cars. My idea of a good holiday is two weeks at home.

When did you last... lose your temper?

I very seldom do, but I've not been quite as placid since I suffered a brain aneurism in 2000.

When did you last... suffer a major disappointment?

At the Hong Kong Olympics in 2008, when Peppermill couldn't jump [he was controversially barred after being declared unfit for the first round].

I'm sometimes depressed for an hour or two after a bad round, but it took me a couple of weeks to get over that. It was really hard to deal with, as I thought we had such a good chance.

When did you last... make a faux pas?

I'm forgetting people's names all the time — even the family's.

When did you last... feel patriotic?

Being chosen to ride for my country is an honour and it brings out the best in me. My first Nations Cup was something special and being selected still is, after all this time. H&H

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MY SECRET WEAPON

PATIENCE and perseverance — you need a hell of a lot of both to get the best out of horses. Grannusch [one of John's top horses in the 90s] was very difficult at first, as he'd back off and be too careful, but I knew he had a lot of ability. For three or four years I struggled to get out what I thought he had in him. It was useful that I had Milton and Gammon at the same time, so I didn't have to put him under too much pressure.



▲ John & Grannusch

A HORSE I'D LIKE TO OWN... GEM TWIST

APART from Milton, Gem Twist was the best horse I've ever sat on. I jumped clear with him when we had to swap horses in the final of the World Equestrian Games at Stockholm in 1990 and he felt fantastic [John and Milton took silver, while Greg Best came fourth with Gem Twist for the USA]. He was very fast in a jump-off and so quick off the floor that he actually hit me on the chin with his withers over one fence. For me, Gem Twist had everything you could want in a grand prix horse. He was a superstar — I wouldn't have minded keeping him. I know he's been cloned [Gem Twist died in 2006], but it remains to be seen if the replica will have the winning attitude of the original.



▲ Gem Twist: 'The best next to Milton'

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VALKENSWAARD

THE HEART OF SHOW JUMPING



Roger Yves Bost, France

A NEW LEG, A NEW SHOW AND ONLY SEVERAL LAST TROTS AWAY FROM THE GLOBAL CHAMPIONS TOUR FINAL. THE GCT'S EIGHTH LEG COULD NOT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN A MORE SUITABLE SPOT OTHER THAN VALKENSWAARD, KNOWN AS THE "HORSE HEAVEN", THE HEART OF WHERE SHOW JUMPING BEATS.

REPORT BY GHITA ZIANI

When the top 30 world-ranked riders came together to compete and show for a remarkable weekend, the Tops home gave a warm and humble welcoming hospitality to all horses, riders, sponsors, owners and guests. The Commercial Village named the "Top Gun" allowed everyone to gather under one spot to cool off. Photographers, press, managers and performers gave the horse scene a worldwide taste of the event.

The eighth leg of the GCT welcomed new faces such as Princess Charlotte of Monaco whom has been competing in the GCT 2* classes from the beginning of the season. Martina Hingis, the international tennis champion now competing in the show jumping sport, also rode in the special invitational 2* class and showed some impressive results. HRH Prince Albert and Princess Caroline of Monaco honoured Stal Tops with their presence and gave the atmosphere a royal essence during the Grand Prix.

A spectacle to watch for every person on the Valkenswaard grounds with each rider competing against their very favourite best, all were aiming at the prize money of 95,000,00 Euros. Course designer Uliano Vezzani built an impressive technical course and claimed it to be one of his most difficult set-ups and wished the riders luck. Still, there seemed to be no obstacle high enough for any of those horses and riders.



In the Grand Prix first place, came in the USA's Olympic Champion Laura Kraut riding three exquisite clear rounds with the fastest time of 36.72 seconds and of course winning the class. Cedric the "happy horse" says Laura did not deceive any of the audience; the crowd was in a magnificent cheer after his fascinating parcour.

LUDGER BEERBAUM, GERMANY:

"Well of course, I think the course itself was pretty straight forward, a nice course for the first round with 50 starters. I believe we had 12 clears, almost the same number with four faults. I think it was very well set; a little bit technical but not crazy big. My round in general was not bad and I was pleased with the way my horse rode."

On preparation: "There is no special trick to what we do or to how we perform

perform in this sport, it's all about the daily work we build, all these horses you see here are worked twice a day, ridden once and lunged once, depending on the horse. My horses are jumped once or twice a week, depending weather they'll be going to a show or not. Before a show I'll jump them only once, two or three days before. They also go to about 15 to 20 shows a year which accumulates a lot of mileage for the horse and rider. At home the horse is ridden for 45 minutes to one hour, not less. I like to come to shows and see at the end that all my effort and time at home was well spent, that is where I get my ultimate motivation. Throughout my riding career I always like to keep my mind refreshed and vivid. I enjoy watching fast younger riders like Marcus Ehning and Marco Kutscher whom also give me great motivation. It gives me a kick!"





▲ Laura Kraut, USA

▼ Judy Ann Melchior, Belgium



REPORT BY LULU KYRIACOU

On August 14th, there was no stopping Laura Kraut at Valkenswaard's GCT Grand Prix. Having already won the warm up speed class on Unique, she proceeded to cap a memorable day by jumping three clears for the second time in two weeks to clinch her second GCT Grand Prix victory in the same period! The American, who prior to Chantilly had never won a Grand Prix on the series, now has a back to back double; something that has not happened in recent GCT history, if ever. The show was also especially notable as HRH Prince Albert of Monaco was among the audience.

The first round was another Uliano Vezzani masterpiece. With nearly every fence falling at some point the bogey fences were probably the combination (vertical, two strides, oxer, one stride, and vertical) and the early line which included the open water with five strides to a double. But the course still produced 12 clear rounds from 50 starters, including Laura, GCT rankings leader Marco Kutscher (Cash) and former GCT Champion Jessica Kurten (Castle Forbes Myrtle Paulois). With a share of the million Euro bonus at stake and only the Rio de Janerio final left to score points towards winning it, there was a lot to play for as the second round started over a changed but slightly shorter course. Pressure was put on the leaders by the first of the four faulters from the first round, Judy Ann Melchior with Levisto Z. The grey made it all look easy although Kevin Staut matched the feat on another grey, Silvana, but it was looking for a while as if a double clear would never happen. The capacity crowd groaned as Patrick McEntee (Chivas Mury Marais), Penelope Leprevost (Topinambour), Jos Lansink (Valentina Van T'Heike), Beezie Madden (Coral Reef Via Volo), Alvaro de Miranda (AD Ashleigh Drossel Dan) and Jessica Kurten all lowered one rail each leaving all of them on a total of four over two rounds. Laura was the first to go double clear and then she was joined by Christian Alhmann and Taloubet Z, Denis Lynch with Latinus and almost inevitably, Marco Kutscher.

These four were presented with another course, this time a little more twisting and every centimetre of 1.60m in height. Laura went first and set out as if she meant business from the first and crossed the line in 36.72. Christian followed and was definitely going for it, when Taloubet hit one part of what remained of the second round combination. Denis Lynch absolutely hurled Latinus round every turn and the horse couldn't have tried harder to respond throwing some spectacular leaps that drew gasps from the watchers. 37.88 was not quick enough. That time did leave the door open for Marco to win but he was



▲ Christian Ahlmann, Germany

▼ Pius Schwizer, Switzerland



already down on the clock when Cash made exactly the same error as Taloubet which left his rider fourth. Newly promoted World Number One Kevin Staut ended up top of the eight combinations with four faults to finish fifth. Marco Kutscher remains the Tour overall leader but although Marcus Ehning dropped a couple of points further behind, Jos Lansink is closing the gap and the eventual recipient of the winner's share of 1,000,000 Euros is still undecided. As the winner will collect over a quarter of a million Euros, the battle in Rio is likely to be fierce.

Although fog had shrouded Valkenwaard in the morning, the reduced visibility did not prevent Laura Kraut from seeing her way to the fastest time in the opening speed class. One of the first into the ring, Laura set a standard of 55.56 over the 12 fence course that no one else could match. Pius Schwizer (Classica LS), Denis Lynch (All Inclusive) and Lauren Hough (Casadora) were the closest but the 6,400 Euro purse was never really in danger of being won by anyone other than the American lady rider who is on a bit of a GCT roll after winning the Grand Prix in Chantilly two prior to this show. The horse, who was originally ridden by Laura, is now her partner Nick Skelton's ride and he has won several good classes on him including one at Hamburg this year. But Nick is due to have a hip operation this week which has prevented him from competing here and so he was loaned out! "And I have to say I will be sorry to give him back and I am certainly going to make the most of it until I do" laughed Laura.

GRAND PRIX PRESENTED BY VDL GROEP CLASS 3

RANK	NAME	COUNTRY	HORSE	TIME	PRIZE MONEY
1	Laura Kraut	USA	Cedric	36.72	€ 95,000
2	Denis Lynch	Ireland	Latinus	37.88	€ 57,000
3	Christian Ahlmann	Germany		37.17	€ 38,000
4	Marco Kutscher	Germany		37.52	€ 28,000

▼ Grand Prix winners



LAURA KRAUT:

"Cedric has just been unbelievable lately but this was different from Chantilly. There I was last but one to go and I knew what I had to do but here with these three behind me, I just went as fast as possible from the start. I figured one of them was bound to beat me so I had nothing to lose by giving it a good shot. Cedric is getting short break now, then we go to Madrid and then the WEG. I just hope my run continues there as I have a feeling Team USA will be in big trouble if we don't get a medal there, on home soil!"

DENNIS LYNCH:

"It is just great to have Latinus back to his best. This is only his sixth show after a long layoff due to injury, so I could not be happier with him."

CHRISTIAN ALHMANN:

"I am very lucky that the Melchior's let me ride him, he is getting better and better but I think I took a bit too many risks in the jump off! But it is great to be third." 

Photos by Cymon Taylor



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AHMAD HAMSHO
CELEBRATING FOR
SYRIA

By HT Staff

**SYRIA CELEBRATED
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HAMSHO QUALIFIED FOR
THE WORLD EQUESTRIAN
GAMES DUE TO TAKE
PLACE IN KENTUCKY, USA,
THIS COMING OCTOBER.**

The youngest Arab rider ever to qualify for the WEG, at 18 years of age, Hamsho is currently based in Europe and has been training with German trainer Oliver Lemmer for a year.

Young Hamsho has been competing during the summer in several shows in Europe some of which were the GCT of

Cannes, Monte Carlo, and Valkenswaard where he qualified for the WEG.

Three months back Hamsho started on Wonder Boy, an 11 year old Belgium Warmblood and previously ridden by British number one Ben Maher.

When asked on his expectations, Hamsho answered, "Well, I wish I had enough time to ride Wonder Boy since I'll be competing with him, but I'm wishing for the best. I'm not nervous what so ever even though I know those competitions are going to be of a higher calibre than the shows I compete at – except I'm very excited, naturally. This is an achievement for both my country and I, and I look forward to being there." 

**"I HAVE NO
EXPECTATIONS...I HOPE
TO COME OUT WITHIN
THE TOP. MY BEING
THERE IS AN
ACHIEVEMENT FOR
BOTH MY COUNTRY
AND I, AND I LOOK
FORWARD TO THE
COMPETITIONS"**

*Photo captions:
Hamsho riding at the GCT
in Valkenswaard*

Photos by Cymon Taylor





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AHMED TALAAT
AN INTEGRAL ACHIEVEMENT

By Sandra Adams

COURSE DESIGNING IS THE ART OF BUILDING A JUMPING ARENA THAT IS SAFE ENOUGH, ENTERTAINING ENOUGH AND CLEAR ENOUGH TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN COMPETITIONS OF PARTICULAR LEVELS. THIS TASK IS INTEGRAL IN EQUESTRIAN SPORT. A RECENT ACHIEVEMENT FOR EGYPT WAS THE COMPLETION OF THE FEI LEVEL 3 IN INTERNATIONAL COURSE DESIGNING EXAMS BY EGYPT'S OWN, AHMED TALAAT.

How did your love for horse sport start?

When I was five years old, I used to draw a horse every day. At ten, I started to ride in the Police Sports Club with Sherif El Demerdash.

How long have you been a Course Designer?

Been so for 11 years now. I designed my first show in 1999 with Atef El Attar and then I started my real career by assisting Dutch Course Designer Rob Jansen for almost a year. Afterwards I worked with German Course Designer Olaf Petersen Jr. for another year, then also German Course Designer Werner Deeg several times. I truly feel I owe those three men; they have taught me so much.

What requirements are needed to become a course designer?

I believe Course Designing is some kind of art, so you need to have a talent for it. You must know plenty about the sport because simply, you are the one testing the riders. If you yourself don't know the solution for the test and tricks you are using in your course, it would be disastrous. You also need to feel good about the arena space given; it's not just about having one and putting some polls along with wings, then literally implementing what's on paper.

Without "feeling" for the space surrounding you, you will be lost a little. Finally, you need to have good taste for colours since it's a kind of art as I said before.

What kind of challenges do you face as a Course Designer?

The most important thing you always have to put in mind when designing or building any course is the safety of the horses and the riders. Other than that, the challenges come at a minimum. It's a spectator sport so still, I think it is a challenge to try to entertain them somehow; you have to build a course that suits the class in question and quality of riders and horses involved. In addition, you always have to put the prize money into consideration when you are designing.

You were a candidate to Level 3 of the FEI International Course Designing Seminar and you have completed the course. Could you tell us more about the experience as a whole?

Had five tough days! The course was in Vienna and was the first seminar promoting Level 3 International Course Designers after two years. We were 18 Course Designers attending this seminar and I was the only one from the Middle East. We sat for many exams in a short period of time and we also had to design courses in very tough and odd arenas; all in a short time as well. But I can tell you it was a very good challenge for me and I was so happy at the end! Only six out of

18 got promoted as Level 3 Course Designers and I was one of them. Enough said!

Now since you have completed the course, which events would you hope to participate at as a Level 3 Designer?

Oh what a question! Since am Level 3 now I can build shows up to 5 stars, so it would be a dream come true if I had the chance to build any of two shows: the first is Aachen CHIO***** in Germany and the second is Spruce Meadows CSIO***** Calgary. And I would like to build a course during one of the regional games one day; the Pan Arab or the Asian Games.

The sport is still developing in the Middle East and North African region, do you think your completing the course is an achievement and will push others to take on Level 3?

I think we have good Course Designers in our region and they will make it one day. The sport must develop with the whole system, you can not only have good horses and good riders with bad Course Designers and Judges, you need a full package that must develop gradually and all together. And I wish that all Federations help their young and talented Course Designers to improve; without their help it will be so difficult. I thank God I had a lot of support from the Egyptian Federation when I started my career and till this moment, I still get their support. I wish good luck to everybody in this sport and want to thank Horse Times for its great effort. 

▼ Courses at CSIO*** Spruce Meadows**



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Country: Switzerland

Date of Birth: 10 June 1982

Star sign: Gemini

Profession: Professional
show jumping rider



What is your best achievement?

Probably my good placement during this year's World Cup in Geneva.

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

I am Swiss and I know I should not say this, but since you asked, it is Rafael Nadal! And Michael Jordan.

Do you keep any pets?

Yes, two dogs around the stable.

What is your favourite movie?

The Right to Kill, an old black & white film.

Who is your ideal celebrity (female or male)?

I am not really into this celebrity madness, but maybe Roger Federer.

What is your favourite gadget?

Oh entirely my phone!

What is your favourite music record?

I killed The Man In Reno by Johnny Cash.

What is your second favourite sport?

Tennis & football.

Do you like to cook?

Yes. I can cook some dishes and fortunately the people who ate my food never complained which I guess is a relief!

What is your strength and what is your weakness?

Strength: I am a hard worker.
Weakness: I am maybe a little bit sensitive.

What makes you happy & what makes you sad?

My horses make me happy, and many things make me sad. But what makes me sad is what makes me stronger.

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

Many people told me that I do not seem so, but I am generous.

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

Throw all money away from the world. It's the reason for problems everywhere.

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

Maybe to be an easy person as I am a very difficult one.

Do you support any charitable organisations?

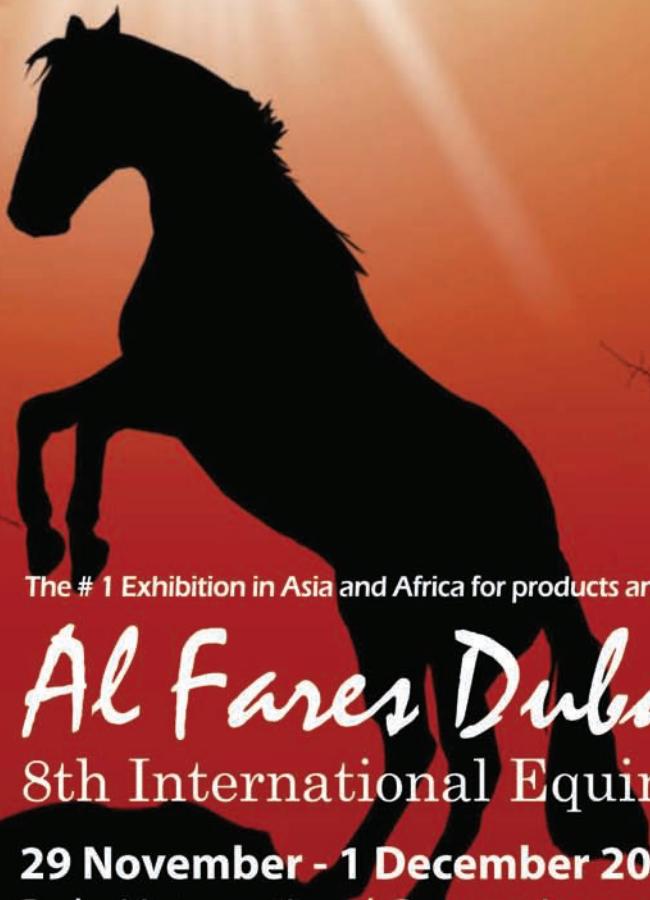
It's always important to give something back to the world and so I support several organisations in Switzerland. They are small contributions, but hopefully ones that make a difference.

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

No (smiling). 



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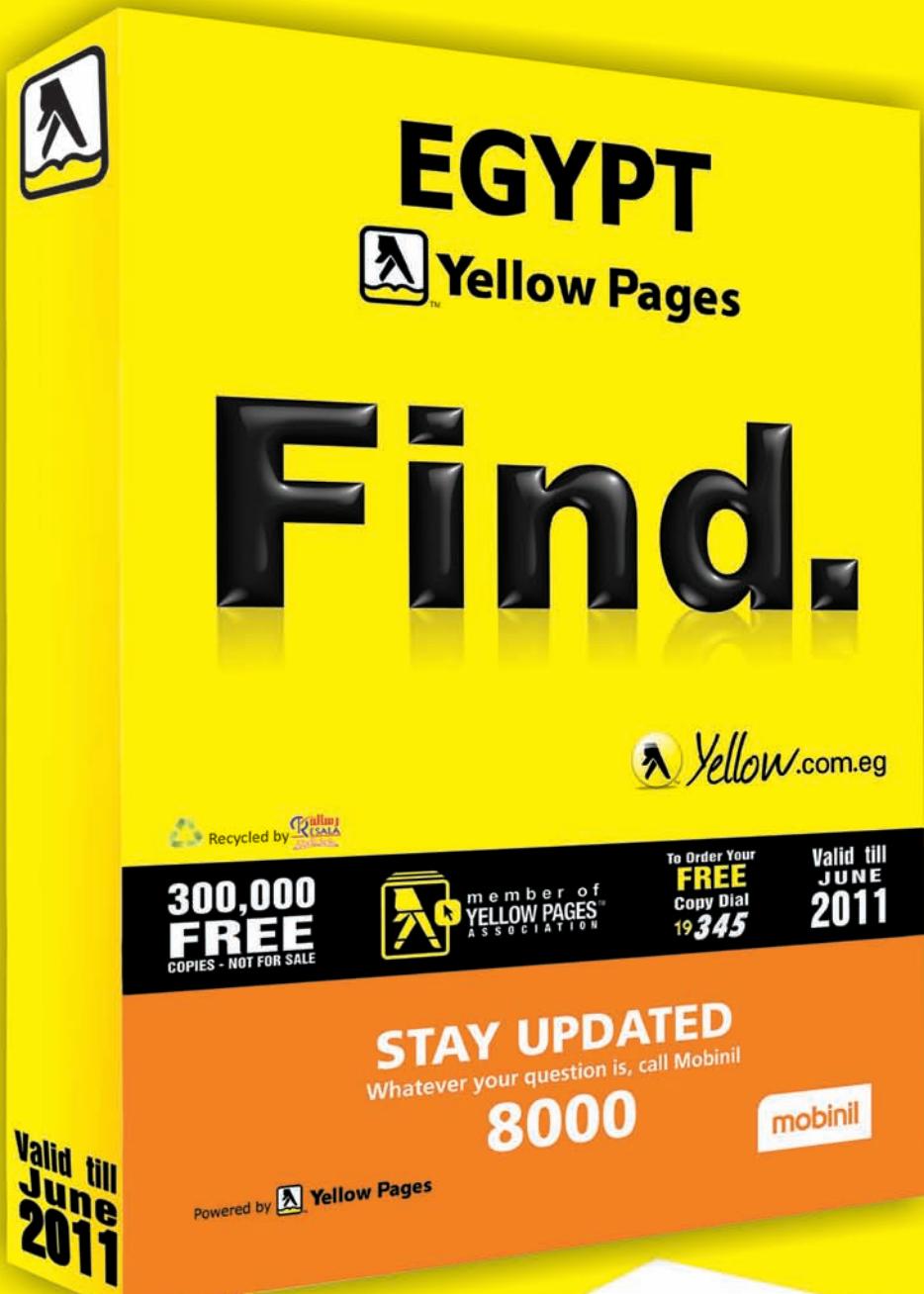
It is also useful for events which do not necessarily require log printing of times such as (Jumping) and is also useful as a backup timer.

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PERISCOPE ON RICHARD SPOONER

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

WITH A TALENT FOR DISCOVERING THE TRACK THAT TAKES A FRACTION OFF HIS COMPETITOR'S TIME AND HORSES THAT ARE TRAINED TO STICK TO THE PLAN AND TRUST IN HIS JUDGMENT, RICHARD SPOONER HAS HIT ON A WINNING COMBINATION. AND IT IS THIS COMBINATION THAT HAS KEPT HIM AT THE TOP OF THE SHOW JUMPING WORLD FOR OVER A DECADE.

NOT ONLY HAS HE BEEN THE PACIFIC COAST HORSE SHOW ASSOCIATION GRAND PRIX RIDER OF THE YEAR TWELVE TIMES, HE HAS ALSO DOMINATED ON THE PACIFIC COAST DURING THIS TIME AND ACHIEVED GREAT SUCCESS IN CANADA AND EUROPE AS WELL.



The gentleman from California and one which has won over 100 Grand Prixs mainly competes with his famous Cristallo, an eight year old Holsteiner gelding bought when five years old and one which has certainly matured into a stylish show jumper. Schooled by Spooner's wife, Kaylen, Cristallo has helped Spooner achieve many wins; recently they won the last round of the 2010 World Cup Final with the only double clear, and were also well placed overall. They then repeated the double clear in the opening Nations Cup of 2010 at La Baule, France, where the USA finished second.

During the Global Champions Tour of Monaco, the man nicknamed "The Master of Faster" for his excellence against the clock sits for an interview with Horse Times magazine. He spoke about his fantastic parents along with his wife and 17 year old daughter Taylor and then moved on to his passion for horses which began when he was ten. He says, "I've been around horses for almost 30 years and was never interested in riding. Actually, it was somewhat an accident that I was introduced to horses. Once that happened, I had no option really but to be more around them. I was not a great rider then, but I took it slowly and by the age of 16 I developed and rode within the equitation division in the USA. I only became a professional show jumping rider and ridden a jumping horse when I was about 20 years old.

From 1986 until present, Spooner's achievements and results undoubtedly say much about the man. He explains, "To have a top-of-the-list equestrian achievement would be to have a horse

like 'Robinson', a winning horse in the history of USA show jumping and one I have had a big relationship with." Robinson won the Queens Cup back to back in Spruce Meadows Derby where Spooner cleared the \$1 million mark, the 10th rider to reach that milestone in the show's history. Spooner continues, "With my other achievement of a horse, I would say Cristallo has helped me win the Global Champions Tour of Monaco in 2006 and 2007, accordingly I would say this was also a good achievement. It was fantastic to win this event once and felt good to win it twice, although winning it the first time felt more special than the second; the crowd was just great, it meant a lot."

Before becoming a professional competitor, Spooner took on training, however stopped ten years ago. He is currently concentrated on competing, and along with his wife Kaylen, they do all the training for their horses, and occasionally trains with his mentor Hugo Simone.

On sponsorship and champion horses, Spooner adds, "Antares Saddlery has been a great sponsor of mine for such a long time: they provide me with saddles and equipment. But currently I do not have any horse sponsors something which I am looking for! In the meantime, all can do is simply sponsor myself. As for the success of my horses, to me personally, it has always been trying to find the right horse. I try to have no system and try to allow my own to adapt to what suits the horse. You see, picking a horse is one of the hardest things to do - obviously there is a financial and emotional commitment, and the largest is time. I like to pick them young and when that happens, when you buy a young horse, you are then committed, potentially for the next decade of your life to be spending

many hours with him. Consequently the responsibility of choosing the right horse is far greater than the financial one. I started with Cristallo when he was five, and for the last seven years of my life, I've been spending a minimum of two hours a day working with that horse; that's a lot of time. The greater expense is not the money, but the investment of your time, passion and energy. One has to be very certain, 100% about the horse's future potentials."

Spooner spends most of the summer season competing in Europe. He comments. "I enjoy Europe, its atmosphere, people and food! It's just wonderful. And most importantly, the show jumping is of the highest levels in the world. I jumped for many years in the USA where the sport is phenomenal, but for me I've reached a point in my life where I want to do something different. Each show in Europe has its own character, given that shows can be generic when one participates continuously."

On aspirations and changes in life, Spooner reflectively and smilingly adds, "As professional riders, we devote our lives to the passion of this sport, therefore there is really nothing better than having quality horses, participating at top events, and enjoying oneself. The art of show jumping is important to me; I want to keep improving my abilities and skills and at the same time, the weight of winning counts. There are many things I'd like to improve and change as a person and as a rider; the desire to do that is actually one of my greatest qualities. I'd like to improve my relationship with the people around me and I'd also love to learn French! If I can get those things done, then I'll be set." 



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Spooner & Cristallo at the GCT of Monaco 2010

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PHOTOGRAPHER

BASED IN THE SOUTH EAST OF ENGLAND, CRAIG PAYNE IS A TWENTY-ONE YEAR OLD WITH A PASSION FOR EQUINE AND PHOTOGRAPHY. ETCHING HIS OWN PATH WITH HIS PORTRAITURE WORK HIS STYLE CONTINUES TO GROW AS DOES THE INTEREST FROM THE EQUINE COMMUNITY.

Craig's passion for photographing equine naturally occurred when he was asked to take some photos of his best friend braying in a horse one evening after school; from that moment on he had found his favourite subject matter. Whilst at college he was taking on a range of commissions and turned professional the day he left college at the age of eighteen. Three years on, Craig works full time and the enjoyment for taking challenging and contemporary photos of horses continues to grow.

Patient and reserved in his nature Craig does not look for attention, preferring to come up with fresh ideas and allow them to naturally develop. The bond between horse and rider has been documented in text since humans first backed equine, but capturing this in photography has always been more of a challenge. His portfolio attempts to differ to this, delving into the unique relationship every horse and rider share, and capturing each in a new light. Working

in black and white as well as colour he removes any clutter with in the frame to focus solely on the horse and rider as well as their remarkable bond.

With family history based around farming, he is now turning his eye to capturing the traditional British breeds used in farming for generations such as the Suffolk Punch, Shire and Clydesdale. With very few working heavy horses left in the British Isles it seems apparent that once again, the heritage of a country is slowly being lost to the "live to work" and not "work to live" society of the 21st century.

"Photography is not an art form or way to document; photography is capturing emotion through photographs."



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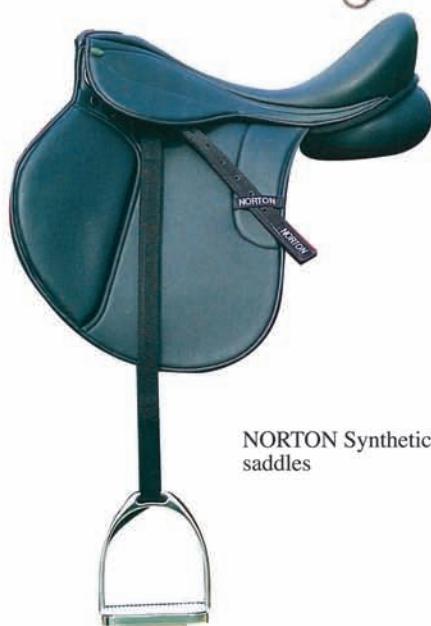


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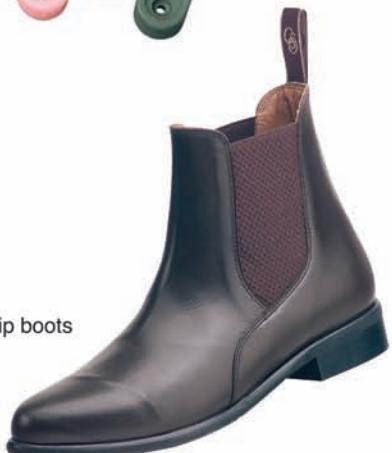


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HOW TO BE A TRAINER (PART 13)

DRESSAGE FOR JUMPING (PART 3)

By Dr. Mohamed Elsherbini

IS IT NOT POSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO BE A PERFECT RIDER? THERE ALWAYS COMES THE TIME WHEN ONE ASKS HIMSELF, "WHY IS THE HORSE DOING THIS? WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?" THIS IS THE TIME WHEN ONE HAS TO GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING AND CHECK ONE'S AIDS AND THE HORSE'S REACTION. A RECISION NOW AND THEN OF THE **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RIDING** CAN BE VERY USEFUL.

POSITION OF REINS:

The **snaffle reins** run through a loose fist, between the little and the third finger and over the index finger, and are held in place by the thumb. The position of the hand is such that the thumb is always on top. The back of the hand should be in the line with the lower arm. The hands are held close to each other, and about the width of a hand above the wither.

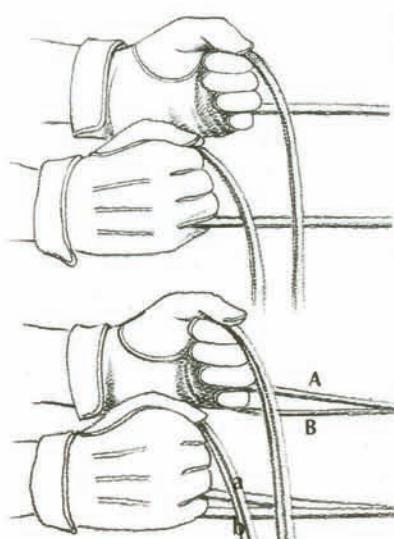


Fig. 1: Position of hands

The **double bridle** is made up of the curb bit and bridoon. The left (A) and the right (a) reins, connected to the curb, run between the little and the third finger. The left, connected to the bridoon (snaffle) (B), and the right rein (b), go under the little finger. Both reins join over the index finger, the thumb preventing them from slipping. The pressure of the snaffle-rein can be increased by closing the hand tightly and turning it slightly towards the body, with the little finger leading.

THE RIDER'S AIDS:

These are the leg, the hand, the seat, voice, spurs and whip. None of the aids are used on their own – always in conjunction with each other. It is therefore very important that they are used properly as the horse can easily get confused and upset.

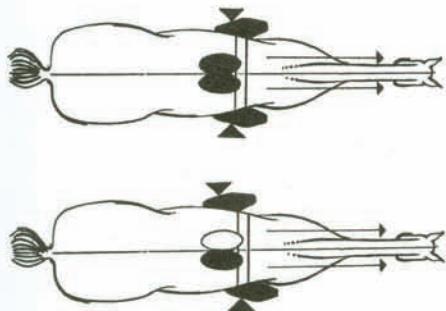


Fig. 2: The riding aids

THE USE OF LEGS:

The main forward driving aid is the **leg** which presses against the side of the horse. Seat, upper and lower leg, knee, and heel all act together, sometimes strengthened by the spur. The lower leg can lie on or behind the girth. The pressure should be reduced as soon as the horse responds to the aids as a constant pressure will deaden its reaction. Spurs are only used when they are really necessary. The whip and clicking of the tongue also aid the leg.

RESTRAINING AIDS:

These are mainly given with the reins, though these must be combined with pressure of the leg on the horse and a deep seat – that is to say, **restraining aids** must be supported by **forward aids**, and indeed **preceded** by them. There should be several give and take movements, **never a steady pull**. When the horse obeys the pressure of the hand the latter should be relaxed, the horse being thus rewarded.

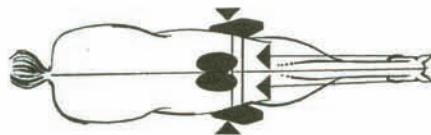


Fig. 3: Restraining aids

TIPS FOR USING REINS:

The rider can reward his horse, especially after restraining, through the release of pressure of the reins. He can either ease the reins by turning this hand so that the little fingers point towards the horse's mouth or to a greater degree by moving the hands forward.

It does not pay to jerk the horse's mouth if it does not react to the aids; the horse will only resist and get a hard mouth. It is best to try to get a response by giving and taking of the rein with a light hand.

The reins are kept in contact with the horse's neck on either side and then used to guide it. The head should be nearly vertical, with the ears parallel. The upper part of the neck is only bent if needed so far that the rider can see the nostril and eye brow.

The rein is usually only taken away from the neck when riding **unschooled** horses. For example it is used when the rider wants to make a turn of the haunches on the left rein. When riding a schooled horse the rein remains against the neck. When taking the rein away from the neck of the horse, it goes towards the hip of the rider and not the waist. When the reins remain against the neck, the weight is shifted slightly to the left, and right leg is behind the girth (harmony of aids).



Fig. 4: Harmony between aids

SEAT AIDS:

The rider uses his weight to shift the

center of gravity from one seat-bone to the other. The seat should be firm in the saddle, and the inside hip pushed forward and the knee lowered. The rider must not drop his inside shoulder and bend himself sideways as that would move the weight to the outside. The weight reinforces the leg and rein aids, especially when making turns on the forehand and haunches, leg-yielding and transitions to the canter.

THE RIDING OUT OF CORNERS:

The rider turns his horse to the inside, approximately three meters before a corner. When riding an unschooled horse, the right rein could be taken away from the neck for easier guidance. The horse moves steadily forward between the rider's legs. The inside leg of the rider is placed on the girth, and motivates the inner-leg of the horse (fig 5)

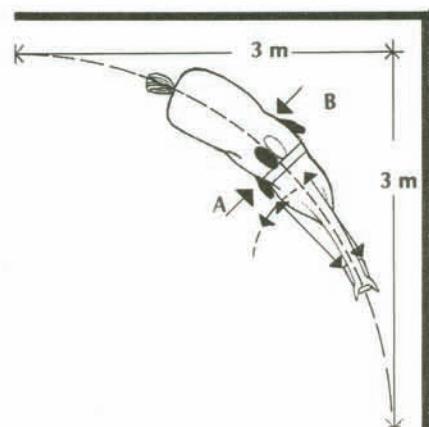


Fig. 5: Riding corners

The rider puts more weight on the inside seat-bone, pushes the inside hip forward and lowers the knee. The horse must not be allowed to let its hind-quarters swing out (B), this is controlled by the rider's outside leg which is placed behind the girth. The outside rein steadies the horse's neck so that it does not get too much of an inside bend. The horse and riders should be straight again shortly after the corner (about three meters). Remember that riding a good corner means a good performance after it whether dressage or jumping.

**Reference: This Is Riding by
Gunner Henlund**



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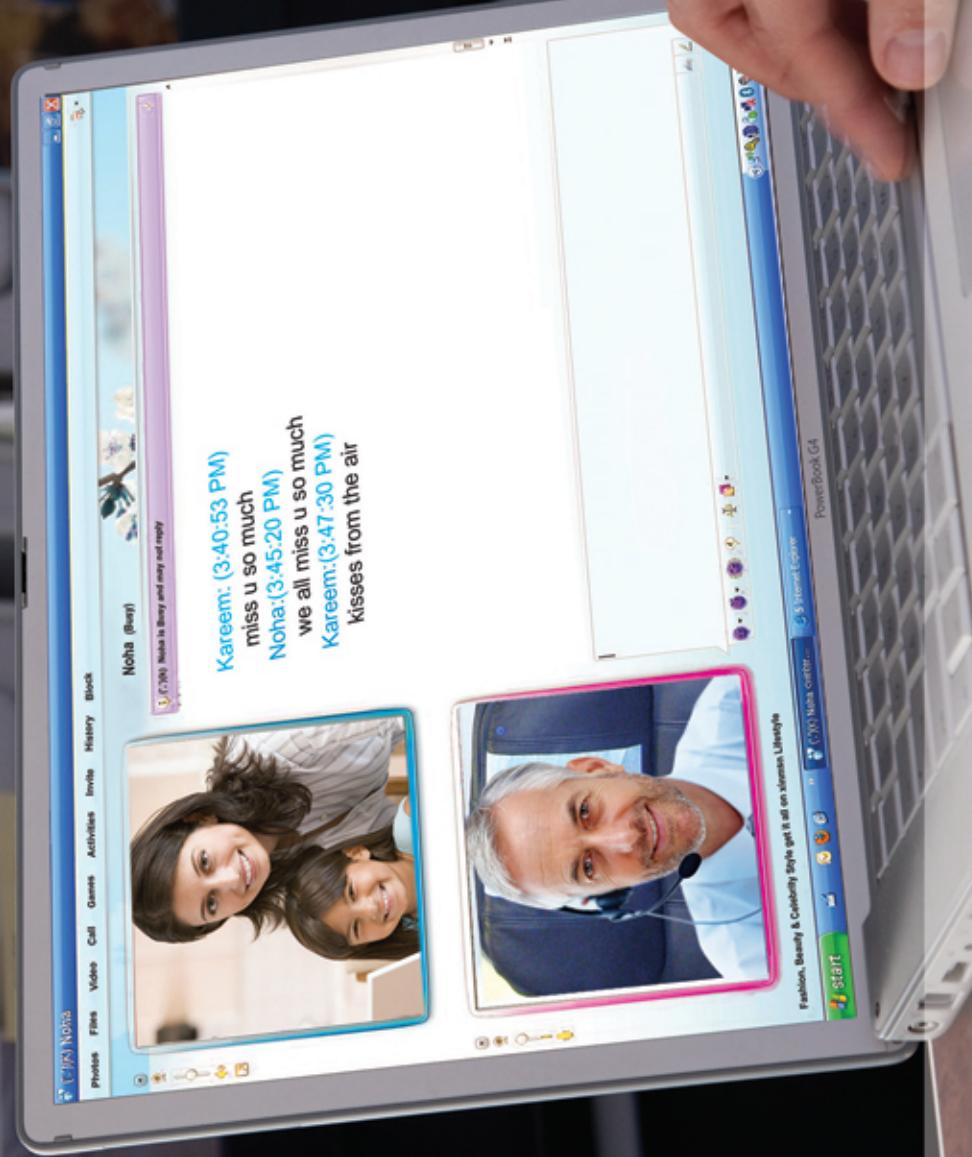
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