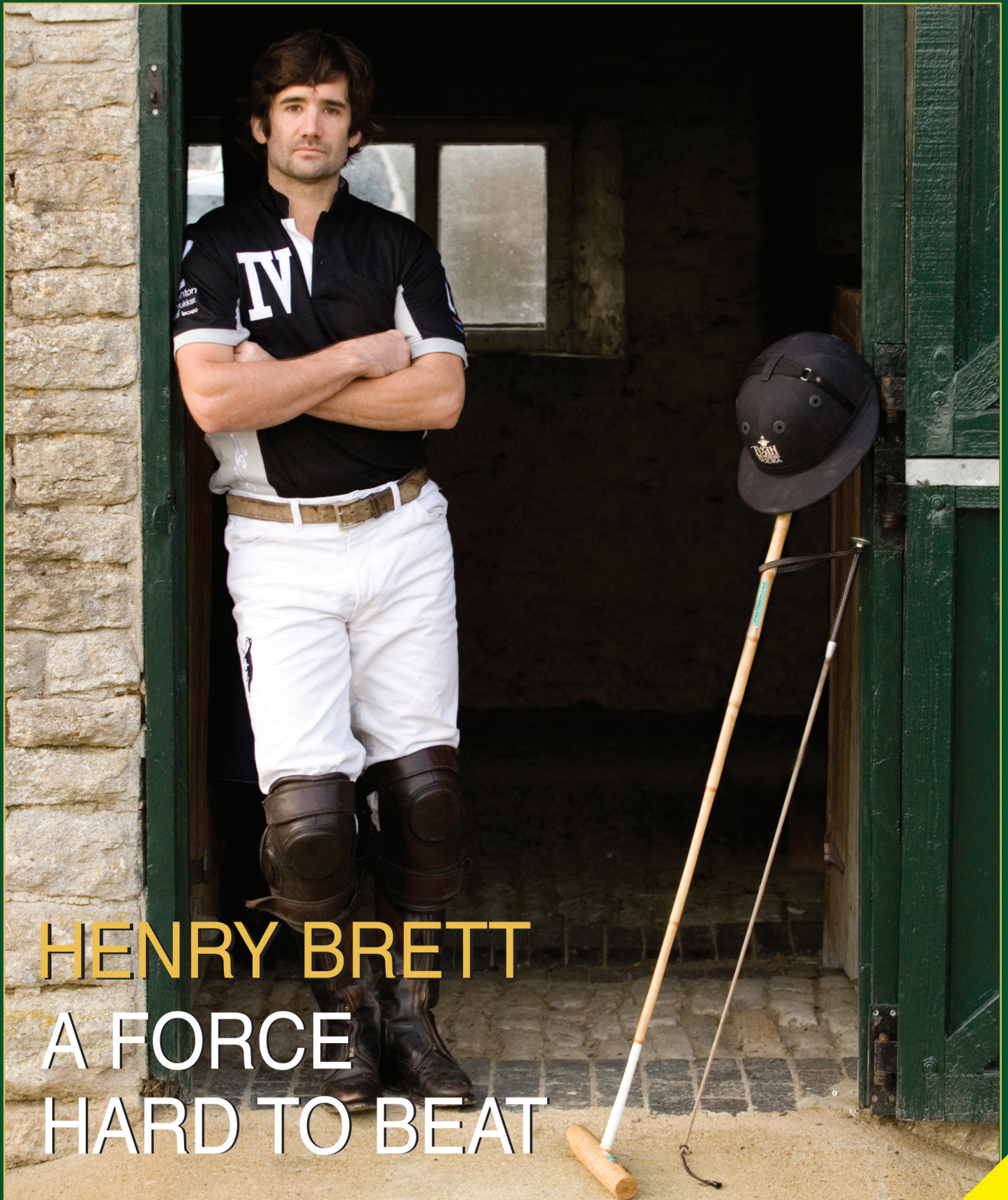


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# VIEW POINT

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Readers,

I am delighted to start off my letter by sharing with you that HORSE TIMES has been the only equestrian magazine in the Middle East to receive accreditation from the International Olympic Committee and FEI to cover the 2012 London Olympic equestrian events. We have special plans for those events and we are hoping to bring our readers the most enthralling and in-depth coverage.

Moving on, to end our 14th anniversary and 2011, we kick start with Henry Brett, one of England's leading polo riders and such a crafted talent with a horse and a mallet. Furthermore, fresh from Hollywood yet out of Canadian soil, we present to you the other side of movie and television star William Shatner, his

passionate interest for horses, and how far he drove towards that dream.

Continuing with rich features, we do so with culture in delicious Morocco and its annual Salon du Cheval in El Jadida city developing and flourishing further every year.

Some say "It is very difficult to be on top and stay there." That seems to be unlikely when it comes to Kevin Staut, the unofficial captain of the French team. Read more about his short term plans as well as those of Francois Mathy Jr., who followed the footsteps of his father and further; inside is a heart-to-heart talk with a man full with flair. Also read more with another son following a father; Olaf Petersen Jr. in our 60 Seconds fun article, as well as a feature making you sense determination, vision and talent, in the horse wonderland of Alice Debany Clero.

The Middle East may be in uproar leading to a whole new aspiring path, yet it shines with stars and more. Featured is a candid interview with Sheikh Ali Al Thani, being self-critical yet hopeful. Another one is with Saudi Arabia's Sami Al Duhami, on how a king's vision restructured the administrative details and development of their international show jumping team. Those, and more vision with Abu Dhabi hosting the final series of the 2011 Global Champions Tour for the first time and for four more

years to come.

Like many horses, the name Hickstead will be printed in our memories for a lifetime. To have seen him pass away, was similar to and as emotional as having witnessed a loved one also pass away. Worthy tears is what Hickstead got from the equestrian world, and the news of his sudden death was sad - not only for the sport, but simply to us as viewers, and certainly to his friends.

A continuation of "l'histoire d'amour" by Randa Barakat and her passion for dressage and her hopes for the sport, and memoirs of Sietske Meerloo, who is participating in the 2012 Indian Horse Riding Challenge 2012 to raise funds for Brooke Hospital for Animals. She needs your support to reach her target; please visit her page.

Finally, more features with training content to keep our readers in tune with the path and not just the glory of the sport, London spending its 2011 summer preparing for the Olympic equestrian events at Greenwich Park, Horses in Art with an Egyptian talent, and international exhibitions reviews.

We hope you read on and enjoy & a happy New Year.

Sincerely,  
**Khaled Assem**

---

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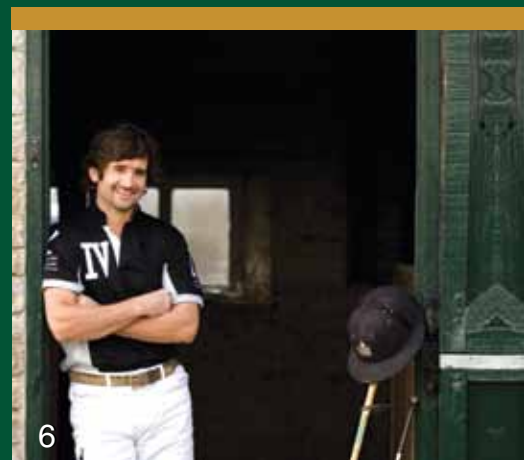
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HENRY BRETT

# A FORCE HARD TO BEAT

---

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

DATE OF BIRTH: OCTOBER 20 1974

STAR SIGN: LIBRA

PROFESSION: PROFESSIONAL POLO PLAYER

FOUNDER OF BRETT POLO ACADEMY

CO-FOUNDER OF THE POLO AGENCY

A PHENOMENAL POLO PLAYER, FORMER CAPTAIN OF THE ENGLAND POLO TEAM, AND ONE OF A SMALL HANDFUL OF ENGLISH PLAYERS TO ACHIEVE AN 8-GOAL HANDICAP, THROUGHOUT HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER HENRY BRETT HAS BEEN A FORCE HARD TO BEAT. HENRY FIRST PLAYED IN HIGH-GOAL TOURNAMENTS WHEN HE WAS ONLY 17, WINNING BOTH THE QUEEN'S CUP AND THE PRINCE OF WALES TROPHY. HE THEN WENT ON TO WIN THE VEUVE CLICQUOT GOLD CUP IN 1999. IN 2002, LED BY HENRY, ENGLAND WON A HISTORIC ARGENTINE CUP VICTORY OVER ARGENTINA AND IN 2006 HE RECEIVED THE ULTIMATE ACCOLADE - THE CARTIER PEGASUS TROPHY FOR THE MOST VALUABLE PLAYER FROM HM THE QUEEN. AND NOW, WHILE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL PLAY, HE TRAINS PONIES AND, RIDERS AND RUNS THE POLO EVENT COMPANY, 'THE POLO AGENCY'. AS HE TELLS US BELOW, POLO IS HIS PASSION, HIS PLAY, AND HIS WORK.



▲ 2006, Henry & HM the Queen at the Cartier International at Guards Polo Club in Windsor Great Park, England

**When did you start to ride?**

I started riding when I was eight and started polo when I was 13.

**As a champion polo rider, and as the former Captain of the England Polo Team, who has had the most influence on you?**

Probably Jim Gilmore, Kerry Packer's Manager, who taught me a lot about horses.

**Who have you trained with?**

I have played and trained with and against all the best players. Most of my training I do by myself nowadays although in the earlier years I used to spend a lot of time in Argentina in different estancias, although not with one particular person.

**And, who has shared in your total experience as a polo rider?**

My parents; they have lived through all my experiences playing polo...all the ups and the downs!

**Your plans for the next four years?**

I am developing a young horse programme which I have already started and has produced some pretty good horses. I want to keep playing at the highest level I can in England, and during the winter play in places that I enjoy.

**Besides playing polo, do you have a side job?**

I play professionally but I also have





▲ Henry competing with Mrs. Brown at the Cartier International

a polo school at the Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club where we teach beginners and host corporate days.

**Your best wins and how it feels to be one of only four English players to have reached an 8-goal handicap?**

Best win would have to be the Gold Cup against Ellerston in 1999; a long time ago! Getting to 8 goals was great, but unfortunately I had tennis elbow and have only just recovered. It's taken me six years, and that was tough to deal with and affected my play massively.

**Your horses?**

All my horses are English or Irish thoroughbreds that I have bought as young horses from the racetrack and retrained for polo. It's really finding the horses with the talent and potential that's the key, and then nurturing and developing them to a point where they can be their best.

**Routine training programme?**

During the UK season, I ride every day and try to get to the gym twice a week. Over the winter months, I go to

the gym more often as I am playing less.

**The biggest challenges you face as a renowned polo rider?**

Biggest challenge would be winning...if you can win everything is easy!

**Which of the polo tournaments do you most enjoy playing and what is it about them that you most like?**

The Gold Cup has to be the best tournament in Europe to play, and abroad I love the Barbados Open; sun, sea, polo and a lot of fun!

**Which tournaments do you have coming up?**

I will be playing in Klosters at the end of January on the snow.

**What do you think of 'non-traditional' matches, such as 'Polo in the Park' and snow polo cups?**

I think they are great at bringing polo to a wider audience.

**Do you think lady players match**

**up to male players? Who would you consider the best lady player?**

They can't because of the physical aspect but they can still play well. The highest rated woman player reached 5 goals. I would say Nina Clarkin is the best lady player at the moment, rated 4 goals.

**Do you practice any other horse sports beside polo?**

I went hunting the other week in Ireland which was fun but other than that not really.

**The Polo Agency?**

The Polo Agency was something I started with Alan O'Sullivan five years ago. It looks after sponsors and polo events mainly in the UK, but we are now involved with polo world series which is just starting up.

**Your family?**

My parents know nothing about horses. In fact, we lived in Oxford as my dad was a lawyer. They moved to a farm ten years ago and luckily for me, I can now keep my 30 horses there! 🐾



2011, with Ivan at the Brett farmhouse, Holbrook Stud

Photos courtesy of Craig Payne. Queen/action photo courtesy of Henry Brett



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WILLIAM SHATNER

# MY SILENT FRIENDS

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

PEOPLE KNOW HIM AS A STAR FLEET CAPTAIN, A VETERAN POLICE SARGEANT, AND A BARMY ATTORNEY ON TELEVISION, BUT NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW WILLIAM SHATNER AS A SERIOUS HORSEMAN WITH A HEART OF GOLD.

THE TWO TIME EMMY AWARD AND GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER, ACTOR, MUSICIAN, RECORDING ARTIST, AND AUTHOR, WILLIAM SHATNER HAS PUT HIS LOVE AND PASSION FOR HORSES TO SERVICE IN RAISING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR CHILDREN IN NEED. IT WAS BACK IN THE LATE 1980S THAT SHATNER FIRST WATCHED A RIDING EXHIBITION BY CHILDREN WHO WERE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED, YET THERE THEY WERE GOING THROUGH INTRICATE EXERCISES ON THE BACK OF A HORSE. THE PROGRAMME WAS SPONSORED BY 'AHEAD WITH HORSES', A THERAPEUTIC RIDING GROUP FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN. WHEN THE EXHIBITION WAS OVER, SHATNER SAT, DEEPLY AFFECTED BY WHAT HE HAD SEEN; "YOU CAN'T WATCH THESE KIDS WITHOUT KNOWING YOU HAVE TO HELP, SOMEHOW." AND SO, IN MARCH OF 1990 CAME THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST HOLLYWOOD CHARITY HORSE SHOW. SOON, OTHER CHARITIES IN NEED OF HELP WERE ADDED, SMALL, GRASS ROOT CHARITIES DOING BIG TIME JOBS.

## When was your first encounter with horses?

My first encounter with a horse was Pegasus. In some long lost comic book, the winged horse spoke his thoughts from a balloon around his head. And my childish imagination went from there.

## How do horses inspire you?

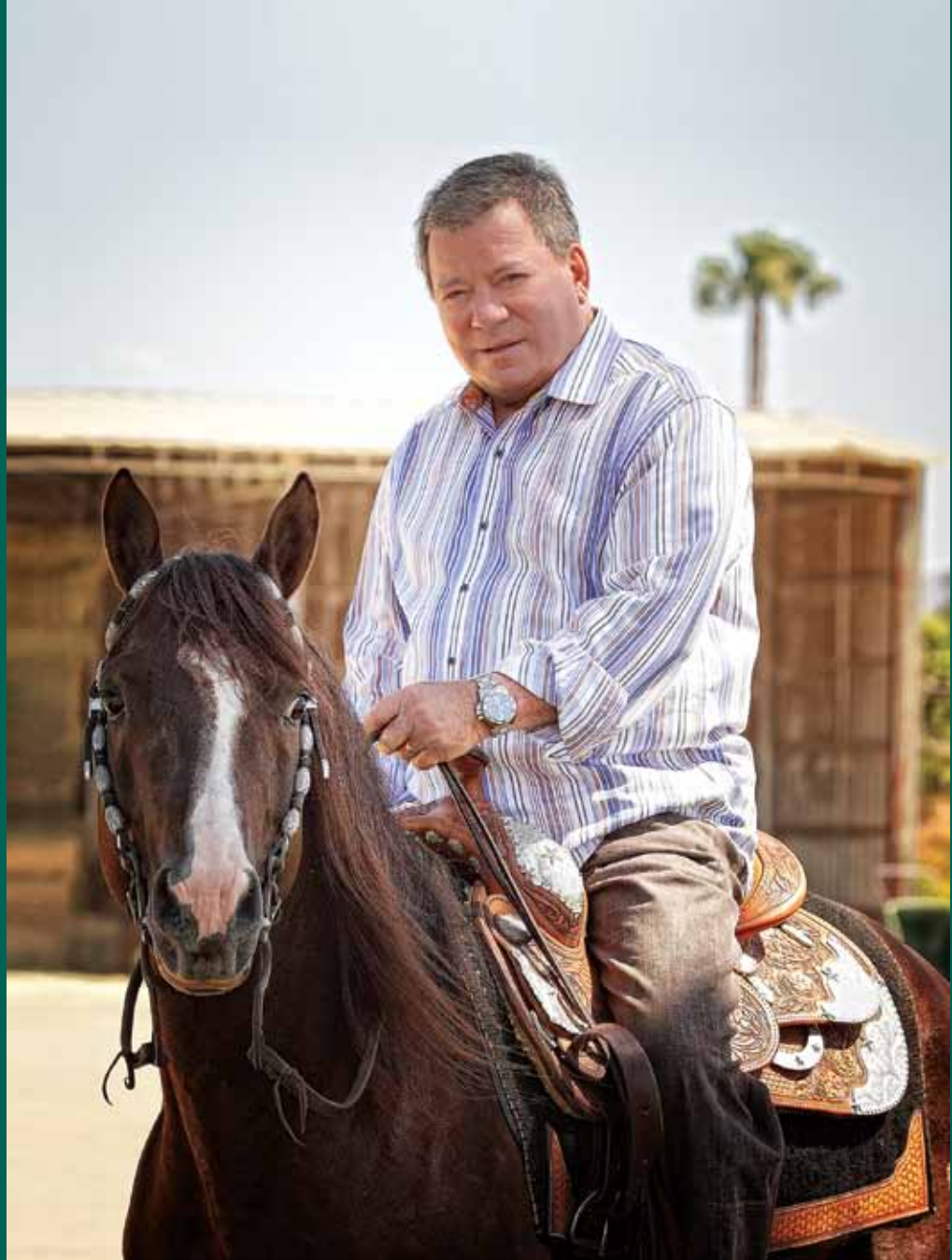
When I go to the stables to see my horses, I feel like I am visiting old friends, not garrulous, obnoxious, objectionable friends but pure friendship of silence. In the quiet of the stable, the scent of oats around, I am able to communicate with my talkative friends in non-verbal language. They respond to me as I to them. And the beginning of the unity of man and horse commences.

## We understand that you are very much involved in charity work/ organisations that are horse related; what would you like our readers to know about that?

For the last several decades, I have been putting on a quarter horse show that displays the discipline of reining. As a result of my being able to get publicity for companies, I have been able to assemble some sponsors who give us money for charity. We give a large party on the Saturday of our horse show, the last weekend in April, and between the party, the sponsors, the attendees coming to the show, we have raised over the many years several million dollars that go to a diverse number of charities but mainly those involved in hypo-therapy. The Hollywood Charity Horse Show has been able to secure the performances of many headliners in country music, and as a result, our parties are always successful.

We keep our fingers crossed every year that generous benefactors will donate money to [www.horseshow.org](http://www.horseshow.org). Every penny of that donation goes to help some child in need. Nothing is taken off for administration.

## Are there particular incidents involving horses that you find special or spectacular that you would like to share with our readers?



Perhaps the most special incident is the time I spend working with great detail on the perfection of the art of reining. It is through that communication that I have frequently achieved that closeness to the horse that makes it seem as though we are one.

## We understand you favour the American Saddlebred horse; why?

I favour all horses and see in them the great beauty and the function for which they were bred. I am especially drawn to the American Saddlebred for its beauty and gait, to the Standardbred for its endurance and grittiness, and to the American quarter horse for those fast twitch muscles for which they were bred.

## Please tell us about your stud

## farm?

I breed Saddlebreds, Standardbreds and Quarterhorses and start their training at two and either ride them or sell them after that. Belle Reve Farm is our name.

## Where do Arabian horses stand in reference to your liking to American Saddlebreds?

I am aware that all of our horses have come from the Arabian.

## Have you ever visited any countries in the Middle East?

No.

## If you are invited to attend a horse event in Egypt, would you accept?

As fast as a Warmblood would jump, I would accept. 🇪🇬



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MOROCCO

# SIMPLY MAGIC

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

FOR THE FOURTH YEAR RUNNING, SALON DU CHEVAL D'EL JADIDA TOOK PLACE FROM OCTOBER 19 TO 23 IN THE CITY OF EL JADIDA, MOROCCO, AT HRH PRINCESS LALLA MALIKA'S RACE ARENA. THE SALON, ORGANISED UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HM KING MOHAMMED VI IS ANNUALLY HELD IN THIS COASTAL AND AGRICULTURAL CITY ABOUT 96 KM FROM CASABLANCA.

## EL JADIDA:

Formerly known under the names 'Al Brija Al Mahdouma Mazagan' and then El Jadida, the city is located at the centre of Morocco and on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. The name El Jadida (the new), was awarded by Sultan Moulay Mohamed bin Abdellah and was built by the Portuguese between 1510 and 1520. Its port 'Jorf L'asfar' is the first ore port and the largest one in Africa. One of the most famous tribes of the country, the 'Doukkala', were highly feared warriors in Moroccan history known to have raised beautiful horse breeds

greatly renowned for their endurance and submissiveness. Besides its natural and historical artefacts, the city also hosts one of the most stunning and luxurious hotels in the world, Mazagan Beach Resort – the winner of the 2011 World Travel Awards and also famously known for being the filming location for the Hollywood movie, 'Sex and the City 2'.

## MOROCCO:

Morocco is a majestic, exotic and colourful country. For my third year visiting, there was never a dull moment when I was there as I took



▲ Crowds gather everyday during Salon du Cheval to watch Tbourida races

the chance to stay in Casablanca then take the train to Marrakech and stay in a traditional Moroccan house, known as a 'Riad'. The food, hospitality, genuine people's warmth and love of life swept me off my feet. With 12 centuries of the country's existence, one can only imagine how much culture Moroccans, truly Arabs, have accumulated over these long years. They present a richness that simply urges you to travel

from one city to another to learn more, over and over again.

**SALON DU CHEVAL:**

This year I had the chance to interview the Commissioner of the Salon, Dr. El Habib Marzak, who gave me his reflections on the fourth edition of the international event.

He explained that HM the King,

an avid rider himself, aims to reintroduce breeding of Barb horses in Morocco as well as to create a new stand platform for modern equestrian sport. "With his efforts and the administrative assistance we get from the Ministry of Agriculture, HM has succeeded in fulfilling these objectives. The Salon attracts thousands of visitors and unites the traditional with the modern. In the largest outdoor field, Tbourida



▲ The Arabian horse competitions attracted more crowds & international competitors, contrary to 2010





▲ *Tbourida horseman in action*



▲ *Abdslam Bennani Smires, one of Morocco's youngest show jumpers, Arabian horse breeders & owner of Haras Selman Arabians, handles his horses during competitions*

displays occur daily, and in the indoor arena, this year we held a World Cup qualifier 3\* show jumping competition with participants from Morocco, Switzerland, Germany, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, France, Belgium, and more. In addition, the setting for the international Arabian horse competitions this year proved to be more successful as we had participants from Qatar and Saudi Arabia's Alkhalediah. Moreover, national Barb and Arabian-Barb horse competitions presented the most agile and attractive horses from Morocco. Conferences on breeding and maintaining the gene pool of Barb and Arabian horses gave a glimpse of the efforts which are made to keep this breed pure. Also, the Royal Guard and the Mounted

Police had booths, like every year, at which they inform visitors about their horses and the work they do".

Dr. Marzak continued, "On the cultural side, saddle makers displayed their handicrafts, and there were also displays showing the making of stirrups in Damascene style (metalwork decorated with wavy patterns of inlay or etching). The Salon opens a big, wide door to Moroccan culture and conversely, it is an important location for worldwide equestrian companies to visit Morocco in order to market their products. The Salon also covers modern stabling and exercise systems, feed supplements for sport horses, a very big market for race horses, and pony rides are available

for small children. And finally, the international horse spectacle which is presented every evening of the Salon, presented performers from France's Republican Guard, presentations for freestyle dressage, stunt riding and traditional Moroccan displays".

The organisation of the 2011 Salon du Cheval d'El Jadida proved to be impeccable. The Tbourida displays, due to the sport's high perfectionism, were accident-free and the skies above the large parade area were radiated with gun powder smoke on a daily basis. Like every year, the best riders from all 18 jahawiya (region) came to participate in honour of Morocco's horse heritage. 🏆

## MOROCCO ROYAL TOUR CSI3\*W INDOOR GRAND PRIX RESULTS:

### Day 3 - 2 rounds - 145cm

RIDER	HORSE	COUNTRY	FAULTS/TIME ROUND 1	FAULTS/TIME ROUND 2	PRIZE
Francois Mathy JR.	Polinska des isles	Belgium	0.00/65.42	0.00/39.09	€ 10,330
Armin Himmelreich	Lopez	Germany	0.00/64.47	0.00/39.92	€ 8,270
Khalid Al Eid	Vanhoeve	KSA	0.00/65.72	0.00/40.53	€ 6,200
Fabienne Lange	Reinefee des hazalles	Belgium	0.00/67.07	0.00/40.98	€ 4,130
Kevin Gielen	Quintus	Belgium	4.00/65.91	4.00/40.56	€ 2,900



## INTERNATIONAL ARABIAN HORSE SHOW (B) RESULTS:

CLASS/TYPE	AGE	NAME	LINE	STUD	COUNTRY
1/Fillies	1	Salman Al Khalediah	F Shamaal/The Evening Star	Alkhalediah	KSA
2/ Fillies	2	Om El Jeania	Om Al Azeem/Om El Jimala	Haras Royal de Bouznika	Morocco
2/Fillies	2	Satwat Al Khalediah	F Shamaal/Psyches Kyss	Alkhalediah	KSA
4/Females	4-6	Hartmattan Reyhanna	Magnum Psyche/Hamy De Gargassan	Haras Selman Arabians	Morocco
5/Females	7-12	Lana Al Khalediah	Aja Sangali/The Evening Star	Prince Khaled Al Saud	KSA
6/Foals	1	Zahabi Al Khalediah	F Shamaal/Zahbat Al Khalediah	Prince Khaled Al Saud	KSA
7/Foals	2	Fakhr Al Khalediah	Marquis/Barah Al Khalediah	Alkhalediah	KSA
8/Foals	3	Nijm Jaafar	Hakim Jaafar/Starzddab	Haras Royal de Bouznika	Morocco
9/Males	4-6	Jareer Al Khalediah	Padrons Immage/ Barah Al Khalediah	Prince Khaled Al Saud	KSA
10/Males	7-12	TS Apolo	Ts Don Brave 1994/Fairness FHP 1992	Haras Royal de Bouznika	
11/Males	13-up	Sandhiran	Sanadik El Shaklan/China Moon	Haras Selman Arabians	Morocco
Jr. Champ. Females		Om El Jeania	Om Al Azeem/Om El Jimala	Haras Royal de Bouznika	Morocco
Jr. Champ. Males		Fakhr Al Khalediah	Marquis/Barah Al Khalediah	Alkhalediah	KSA
Sr. Champ. Females		Lana Al Khalediah	Aja Sangali/The Evening Star	Prince Khaled Al Saud	KSA
Sr. Champ. Males		TS Apolo	Ts Don Brave 1994/Fairness FHP 1992	Haras Royal de Bouznika	Morocco



▲ *The Barb horse of Morocco are well bred and well groomed stallions whose bodies are complete muscle*

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# ALICE DEBANY CLERO

# IN WONDERLAND

By Khaled Assem

ALICE DEBANY CLERO FIRST VISITED EGYPT IN 1995 WHERE SHE RODE AT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CHAMPIONSHIP IN ALEXANDRIA. A YEAR LATER SHE WAS INVITED TO THE MOVENPICK INTERNATIONAL EVENT TO RIDE A HORSE NAMED BILLY, OWNED BY MR. KHALED TAWFIK WHERE SHE WAS THE ONLY RIDER TO JUMP WITHOUT A SINGLE FAULT FOR THREE DAYS OF SHOWING. SHE CURRENTLY TRAINS THE DUBAI SHOW JUMPING TEAM, AND IN THIS FASCINATING INTERVIEW, WE'LL LEARN MORE ABOUT HER, HER FAMILY, HORSES, AND RIDING CAREER.

**When did you start riding professionally?**

I started to ride professionally at age 17. However, since the age of nine, I was a professional “pony jock”, where I fixed or developed ponies for many people. I was paid with free lessons or a piece of new equipment sometimes, and I gained a great deal of experience.

At the same age, I was offered a job with Barney Ward (McLain Ward’s father). He was the largest dealer in the USA at the time and McLain was still riding ponies.

I cleaned out 10 to 15 stalls and jumped 8 to 10 horses a day. I rarely even just flatted a horse at the Ward’s stable; he would have a groom do that. Barney had an extremely high horse turnover rate. He would test every horse very hard for three or four days to assess

its scope, carefulness, speed and honesty, then the horses would be usually sold within a week.

The education to me as a rider and a competitor was extraordinary. By jumping this many jumps a day, most often at 1m50 or 1m60, you become a riding machine. There is no substitute for this kind of training for the rider. Progress comes in leaps and bounds. Only, a “factory” dealer’s stable can offer this kind of mental and physical training for the rider. It is certainly not how I train horses for long term development; I would never jump a horse of mine that I spent four or five years developing like this. Those horses were for quick sale, not long term training.

Before working there, my mother, a former show jumping rider, invested in me as much as she could while raising her ten children by herself (my

father died at age 50). Though we had limited means, she still brought me to weekly lessons with Frank Madden and Bill Cooney, who were the assistant trainers for George Morris, whom I also worked with from time to time. Since I couldn't afford to have more than one lesson a week, I would drill myself at home between lessons so that I would get the most out of every lesson my mother worked so hard for.

I finished my junior career in 1986 as the leading junior jumper rider in the country. I was then approached by a man named Paul Greenwood. Paul shot to fame in the horse world by purchasing 'The Natural' for one million dollars in 1985. This was the first show jumper in history to have this landmark purchase price.

Paul hired me, at 18 years old, to run his livery business, train his young horses, and he insisted that I go to university, and offered to cover the cost of the tuition fees. I was admitted at New York University and went to school at night while running the business at Old Salem farm.

There was a troubled horse that The Natural's rider at the time didn't want, named Tarco. He was nervous and difficult, but I found a way with him and he became my first Grand Prix horse. He wasn't a winner, but he could jump any track in the world safely and I gained tremendous confidence with him. He prepared me for the chance of my life. The Natural's original rider quit her job after The Natural got injured. Paul said, "If he comes back, he's yours." He came back at 14 years old, and I had three great years with him.

I jumped several Nation's Cups with him, qualified for the World Cup final, and won the Queen Elizabeth II cup in Calgary, among other Grand Prix wins. What an honour and thrill it was to sit on one of the truly great horses of our time.

**When did you take up coaching and what does it take to be a good and efficient coach?**

The years preceding getting The



▲ Alice jumping Tin Tin in Fontainebleau Grand Prix

Natural, I was busy running the business for Paul, which included lots and lots of teaching. I quickly found that I really loved it. I spent eight years working for Old Salem Farm and I taught hundreds of lessons with anyone ranging from first time on a horse to Grand Prix riders. I always tried to make an impact on my student in every lesson. I would always put my heart and soul into my lessons, sometimes exhausting myself and losing my voice. I sometimes put so much into it that I had felt I left a piece of myself in the ring. I will often go to great lengths to explain something as ethereal as a feeling. For example, if I have to run around on my hands and feet to demonstrate how a horse

canters, I will, and I have.

Before Remi and I had children, I had the honour and privilege to work with HRH Princess Haya; we met at the 2000 Sunshine Tour in Spain. At the end of it, she asked if she could come to train with me in Paris. We were going to work closely with Katie Prudent. Katie, who I trained with for two years, was and is one of the best trainers in the world and I was thrilled to work with her for Her Highness. Katie lived in a different part of France, so HRH Princess Haya and I trained in Paris. We trained well together and she qualified for the Olympic Games in Sydney by jumping a clear round in the San Patrignano Grand Prix.





started to ride when he was 18, and won a 4\* event at the Arab League in 2008. Just two years before, he was riding C category (1m10) in local shows. I am very proud of all our team riders: Arif Ahmad, Omar Khoory, Mohammed Ketait, and our youngest, Ahmad Falaknaz. Our riders have proven to be winners in National and International shows and I believe they exemplify excellent horsemanship and sportsmanship.

Abdulla became the first rider in the UAE to ride in the World Cup final, and the first and only one to win a European 2\* Grand Prix (Auvers, France) as well as the first to win two other world ranking classes in Europe.

**What are the most important shows you have participated in?**

Before my work in Dubai began, I had the pleasure of riding in the best shows in the world: Aachen, Calgary, La Baule, Rome, San Patrignano, Cannes, Geneva, Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna, Gijon, Palm Beach, and Bremen. These were done generally with horses we bought young and brought along.

**What are you working on now?**

We have four young horses, and I have a partnership with one five year old. I own half with Abdulla Al Marri who will ride her most of the time, and I trust him to ride any of my horses. I also have three six year olds and one seven year old who I hope will start a Grand Prix in 2012.

I take a very long term view when I am bringing along horses. I don't run them when they are young, so I win fewer young horse classes than others may. I think too many riders are running six and seven year olds flat out day in and day out. Many of them are burned out by the time they reach the age of eight, just when their adult education is supposed to begin.

I am quite excited about the five horses we have coming along. One of my six year olds, Amarusa S (Baloubet de Rouet x Le Mexico) won the six year old Grand Prix in Dinard, exhibiting exceptional quality.

**Tell us about your family; do your children ride?**

My husband, Remi, is not a horseperson, but he loves horses and he has now learned to ride

A few years later, after her marriage, HRH Princess Haya asked me to work for Dubai Equestrian Club about two weeks a month with a team of local Dubai riders; what a life changing opportunity she gave me! As an American woman, I feel so lucky to have been able to know and explore the Middle East as I have and explode some of the myths and misconceptions that some Americans may have, while getting to work with five talented and dedicated riders.

With the great support from the Dubai Equestrian Club, we achieved very good results rather quickly, most notably with Abdulla Al Marri who had only



© Kym Ketcham

▲ Alice & the Dubai Team in Le Creno Beach, at the Debany farm

after 16 years of marriage. He has been the CEO/President of luxury and cosmetics companies over the past 14 years. I have girl/ boy twins the age of nine and a son who is twelve. They all ride and are getting more and more interested. I can't say I know they will be doing this professionally or not, for now they have expressed more interest in medicine and science than in horses. Either way, we will support whatever they decide to do.

Remi and I have invested in a beautiful farm in France located very near to La Baule. It is a very unique place with 37 hectares of grass with 1 km of Atlantic Ocean coastline. The beach it is connected with has a vast open area at low tide with perfect sand so we can jump during the low tide in an immense arena with the best footing!

We have just finished building the stables and we are very proud of them. The farm is far from being fully developed, but we have done quite a bit so far.

### **What are your long term plans?**

I really want my Dubai Team to jump in the Olympic Games and the WEG. They don't have the horses for London, but they have invested in very good young horses and I have great hopes for Rio in 2016. For myself as a rider, of course I would love to ride at the Global Champions Tour if I am ever in a position to be able to hold on to my most promising horses, and enjoy the sport at the highest level again. If not, I will be happy that my riders live that experience out there instead of me. 🇪🇺

*Uncredited photos courtesy of Remi Clero*

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▲ Alice & Remi's 3 bundles of joy: Nicolas, Gregory & Madison the twins



▲ Mr. & Mrs. Clero



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PERISCOPE ON

# KEVIN STAUT

By Lulu Kyriacou, *England*

KEVIN STAUT, THE UNOFFICIAL CAPTAIN OF THE FRENCH SHOW JUMPING TEAM, LED THEM TO A SILVER TEAM MEDAL AT THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN 2010. THIS WAS TO FINISH OFF A YEAR IN WHICH THE FRENCH HAD ALSO WON THE NATIONS CUP SUPER LEAGUE BY SOME CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW. KEVIN CONCLUDED HIS SEASON AS EUROPEAN CHAMPION AND WORLD NUMBER ONE AND FRENCH SHOW JUMPING WAS ONCE AGAIN A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH. SADLY 2011 HAS NOT GONE QUITE SO WELL AS KEVIN LOST THESE PERSONAL ACCOLADES (ALTHOUGH THE TEAM DID WIN ANOTHER SILVER AT THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS IN MADRID) BUT HE IS STILL RANKED IN THE TOP TEN OF THE WORLD, SO NOT TO BE DISCOUNTED FROM ANY SPECULATION AS TO WHO WILL SUCCEED ERIC LAMAZE AS OLYMPIC CHAMPION IN 2012. KEVIN IS A MAN SO MOTIVATED THAT IN 2009 HE RODE AT THE 5\* SHOW IN HAMBURG, GERMANY WITH A HAND SO BROKEN IN A FALL THAT HE COULD ONLY JUST BARELY HOLD THE REIN WITH TWO UNINJURED FINGERS. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN TOUGH ENOUGH IN A REGULAR SET OF CLASSES BUT KEVIN ALSO RODE IN THE FEARSOME HAMBURG DERBY, WITH ITS ENORMOUS DERBY BANK OBSTACLE!









▲ Kevin recently moved his base to a yard near Brussels, become the face of a Gucci advertising campaign, and joined the ranks of officialdom when he was appointed the first rider to sit on the FEI Executive Board as Athlete Representative

to have a really great sponsor (Xavier Marie's Haras du Hus) so I can manage the planning of my season as I want and therefore can keep my horses in good form because I have several capable of top level shows."

This is clearly a subject close to the Frenchman's heart as he continued. "Everything in show jumping depends on rankings. For myself, I would like to be in the top ten within the next year, because you know if you reach that level and remain there, that you are finding the best way for yourself and the horses, and you give the greatest reward to owners and sponsors. The show organisers also spend a lot of money and they want to see the best competing for it."

The French superstar, who is just 31, has recently moved his base to a yard near Brussels, become the face of a Gucci advertising campaign, and joined the ranks of officialdom when he was appointed the first rider to sit on the FEI Executive Board as Athlete Representative. He is also an ambassador for the charity Just World. It means that Mr. Motivation also has to be Mr. Organisation to fit everything into his day. He usually begins riding at home at 6.30 and is inevitably the first rider to be seen exercising horses at a show. "Working with the FEI is a lot of hard work but I think it will be of benefit to all the riders." remarked Kevin when discussing his work schedule.

Outside the arena, in his small amount of spare time Kevin does a lot of reading as well as watching movies and any top sporting contest that happens to be on television. He also cooks. "I am such a perfectionist in everything I do, I think it is easier to cook for myself, and then I will not complain about the food! And I enjoy doing it. In Switzerland when you rent an apartment they always have every type of equipment that you might need, so I did even more while I was living there. I think I just like the freedom of doing things myself in my life in general, not just at home. But then one thing I had to learn to succeed in any sort of business is that you need to allow other people to help you sometimes.

As a child, riding had to compete with tennis and judo for time in Kevin's life but he was encouraged by his parents to choose just one game to concentrate on if he wished to become a top class sportsman. "I loved sport, I am very motivated by competition and watching it in any sport at the highest levels. I admire people like Agassi and Zidane. But I had to decide and my performance in judo and tennis was perhaps not so famous" he laughed.

Competing at his first show within six months of starting to ride, by 1996 Kevin was French Junior Champion. He missed out on some of the other Junior and Young Rider tours when he decided, aged 17, to go and base himself with Michel Hecart. Although he did make an appearance representing France at the European Young Rider Championships in 2000, he said of that time; "I was young and had the usual rows with my family as young people do, and I left home, so I could ride some really good horses. Luckily everyone forgave me and we all are perfect

now, it is my grandfather that actually owns Kraque Boom".


That horse became the principle member of Kevin's team, which also includes two other Grand Prix horses, Le Prestige St Lois and Silvana, a 2009 addition from Jos Lansink. Other younger horses like Banda de Hus and Zeta de Hus are coming up the ranks behind them. But although now near the end of his career it was Kraque Boom who carried him to victory in the individual contest of the European Championships two years ago and remains a great favourite. "For me, winning is always good but to win a championship on this horse with my family watching was very special."

Having such a set of horses is very important in top class show jumping, now there are so many demands on the world's best. "The problem is we have to go to all these shows to get points and stay in the top 30 riders of the world. We have to manage our horses well during the season and not run them everywhere. I'm lucky





Maybe I am still not so easy to live with at home but at the stables, I am not so terrible now that I have learned this!!"

Looking forward to 2012, Kevin has great hopes for Zeta de Hus who potentially could be his mount for the London Olympics which will be the focus for all sportsmen and women in the coming months. However before that there is the matter of trying to regain his Number One ranking. Kevin wore the green armband for some considerable time but has now had to relinquish it to Eric Lamaze. "As I said, everything depends on rankings in this sport, and I am determined to be number one again but with horses nothing is ever that easy," commented Kevin in Verona where he was competing on Zena and two younger promising horses. Only a fool would bet against him achieving his aim! 

*Kevin jumping Silvana de Hus to second round clear in Hickstead Nations Cup*



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SHEIKH ALI AL THANI

# WHAT SEEMS TO BE MISSING

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By Khaled Assem

COUNTRY: QATAR  
DATE OF BIRTH: SEPTEMBER 1 1982  
STAR SIGN: VIRGO  
FULL PROFESSION: SHOW JUMPER  
HORSES: ADOLFO FRH, BRIGADE C.S., CASCANO,  
DUKHAN, LUCAS 149, RAVENNA 323, SANTOS &  
TAGFART 111 Z

ONE OF THE RIDERS THAT IS CERTAINLY A PILLAR  
IN THE QATAR SHOW JUMPING TEAM IS SHEIKH  
ALI BIN KHALED AL THANI. INTERNATIONALLY  
REPRESENTING THE NAME OF QATAR SINCE 2003  
IN MANY TOP LEVEL EVENTS SUCH AS THE ASIAN  
AND PAN ARAB GAMES, SHEIKH ALI IS GENERALLY  
A QUIET PERSON, SERENE WHEN SPOKEN TO, AND  
POSSESSES REGAL ATTRIBUTES THAT IN A NUT  
SHELL, SIMPLY MAKE HIM A TRUE PRINCE.

## **You are a professional show jumper; is riding easy?**

It seems easy, but it certainly isn't. All we do is train, jump, win, gain confidence, jump again, lose, lose confidence, and then start all over again.

## **What is there to tell about your horses?**

I have ridden eight different horses in my career. They were all agile horses that can jump flawlessly. My favourite horse, Santos, is currently injured. It happened in Kentucky and so now he is taking a six month rest.

## **When did you become a professional show jumper?**

I started to ride when I was six years old in a farm in Qatar. The first time I went to a summer training camp was when I was eight, in Ireland. My father has supported me and my love for the sport throughout my life and that support still remains unmatched. 2003 was when I became what they call a "professional", and started to ride on the international scene.

## **Tell us about your training?**

Jos Lansink was the Qatari team's trainer for some time. His training helped my team member Ali Al Rumahi to win the gold medal at the Asian Games. We currently all train with Jan Tops; he is also, undoubtedly, adding to our learning experience. Most Qatari horses are in Belgium where we get all our training. Jan has a schedule comprised for us and we follow it. Seven months a year, some of my team members and I ride with the Global Champions Tour worldwide.

## **What is it like riding with the top 30 world ranked riders at the Global Champions Tour?**

It's different and hard, but it helps us gain more experience. We have good horses, maybe better than theirs, we just lack in experience. Soon though, we will reach their levels.

## **You have ridden some of the best horses in the world and trained with prominent trainers, what**



▲ At the 2009 GCT, Doha



▲ At the 2010 GCT, Monte Carlo

## **is missing that could make you reach high world rankings?**


I think if I can increase my levels of concentration on how to apply my training when it matters, and solely concentrate on the sport and just that, I can become a better rider. When I gain confidence, I need to realise that, just because I won at a certain level, it doesn't mean I will always win at that level. Confidence should come in moderation as too much of anything is not good for you, hence I need to work on that. I have not reached that stage where I can completely evaluate

myself, maybe others who know me best can, however this is what I can point my finger at for the time being.

## **Your plans for 2012 are?**

To compete and gain points for the Olympics.

## **Would you like to add anything else?**

Thank you for your continuous support for Middle Eastern equestrian sport, for this interview, and for all the publicity you give to Arab show jumpers. 



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# SAUDI EQUESTRIAN OLYMPIC VISION & MORE

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem



▲ Sami Al Duhami with HM King Abdullah bin Saud

OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EQUESTRIAN SPORT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ONE OF THE MAJOR SHOW JUMPING TEAMS TO EMERGE IN THE REGION IS THE SAUDI TEAM. BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND AS A TEAM, THEY HAVE WON MAJOR INTERNATIONAL TITLES, MEDALS AND EVENTS THAT BROUGHT PLEASURE AND PRIDE TO ARABS AS A WHOLE.

IN 2009, 'SAUDI EQUESTRIAN', THE SAUDI NATIONAL EQUESTRIAN TEAM BRAND, WAS ESTABLISHED OWING TO THE VISION OF HM KING ABDULLAH AL SAUD WITH THE AIM OF COORDINATING THE TRAINING AND COMPETITION OF THE TEAM AND ITS HORSES. THE TEAM IS MADE-UP OF KHALID AL EID, RAMZY AL DUHAMI, ABDULLAH AL SHARBATLY, KAMAL BAHAMDAN, HRH PRINCE ABDULLAH BIN MITEB, AND HH PRINCE FAISAL AL SHALAN, AND TRAINED BY STANNY VAN PAESSCHEN. THEY ARE HARD WORKERS AND SOME OF THE MOST NOTABLE AND ARTICULATE ADVOCATES OF THE SPORT, AND AS A TEAM ALONG WITH HORSES THAT HAVE PROVEN THEMSELVES INTERNATIONALLY, THEY ARE CREATING A PRECISE WINNING FORMULA WHICH AIMS FOR PERFECTION. MR. SAMI AL DUHAMI - DEPUTY CHAIRMAN AND CHAIRMAN OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF FEI GROUP VII, TECHNICAL CONSULTANT OF THE SAUDI EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION, AND TEAM DIRECTOR OF 'SAUDI EQUESTRIAN', GIVES US AN UPDATE ON WHAT MAKES 'SAUDI EQUESTRIAN' WHAT IT IS TODAY.



### What makes the Saudi show jumping team different now than it was ten years ago?

The Saudi Equestrian Federation was established in 1999 and was headed by HH Prince Faisal bin Abdullah. His sole vision was for the Saudi team to reach the Olympics. Back then, that vision was rather farfetched as none of the riders had any experience. Nevertheless, he felt that with them just participating, they would simply gain experience, which was a privilege. The riders faced no pressure naturally, until of course the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 when Khalid Al Eid won the bronze medal. In addition, the budget that was spent then was too small to mention; I remember a French journalist quoting, "The Saudi Team is the smallest team yet the rapidly growing one." The beauty of Khalid's achievement in so short a time span was very fulfilling to us all.

Afterwards, the team fell slightly back and I think it was due to our one-dimensional goal and ambition, which was simply, to win another Olympic medal even though other high calibre regional competitions were initiated. Also, the fact that sports sponsorship companies were not available was a disadvantage. It is understandable that equestrian sport is not mainstream, however it is a major sport and should be perceived as such. It represents culture and in particular, Arab culture. Horses have been around the Arabian Peninsula for nearly 9,000 years and we wish to embrace this history. Thus, due to the important role and historic background of horses in Saudi, HM King Abdullah established Saudi Equestrian; it was a "king's vision". His aim was to depict horses and equestrian sport as a culture and as a major sport, as well as to separate politics from technicalities. I think that aim is what makes the team

different today.

### How well is Saudi Equestrian coming along?

During the 2010 World Equestrian Games, we presented the sport aspect of Saudi Equestrian as well as the cultural one; we had a big stand at the exhibition in Kentucky where we generated plenty of interest and visits. We were very happy with Abdulllah Al Sharbatly's silver medal win and the team's results during the Games; we were several steps ahead of some of the best riders and horses in the world only seven months after establishing Saudi Equestrian. Each individual rider from the team has had many achievements associated with his name; Saudi Equestrian's target is to bring out achievements as a team. I think our riders may complement and complete one another with each one following a specific and individual training



programme, whilst simultaneously, being mentally and technically prepared to eventually come together as a team. An individual win will bring us delight, as you would expect, but a team win will bring us more. This is what we seek to achieve in the near future, hopefully during the 2012 London Olympics.

**Please tell us about that training programme?**

The plan applies to all riders from Saudi Equestrian. We try to assign them to compete at different shows worldwide, and not have them all at one time in a specific event.

**How hopeful are you about**

**the team's performance if they should qualify for the 2012 Olympics?**

We are working on limiting "expectations". We have no expectations and we are simply going to train hard and to compete. If the team stands out, that will be a triumph, if not, we will keep on working harder and harder in order to present the team's best.

**The Saudi team has covered wide ground in this sport ahead of other Arab teams; how would you comment to that, and why do you think this is so?**

I don't think our team represents

only Saudi, I think it represents both the Arab and Muslim world as a whole, which is an honour that stands high on our shoulders. We as Arabs have many assets, resources, and pillars that can put us at the top of equestrian sport; our former Japanese trainer always said that Arabs were born on horse's backs, we need to believe that.

**Would you like to add anything else?**

I thank HORSE TIMES for all the efforts in promoting the sport in the region, and HM the King for his efforts to promote the sport and support the riders. 🇸🇦



▲ Abdullah Al Sharbatly



▲ Ramzy Al Duhami



▲ HRH Prince Abdullah bin Miteb



▲ Khalid Al Eid



▲ Kamal Bahamdan



▲ HH Prince Faisal Al Shalan





Amy and her Irish Sport Horse, Ruby, in a poppy field in Kent



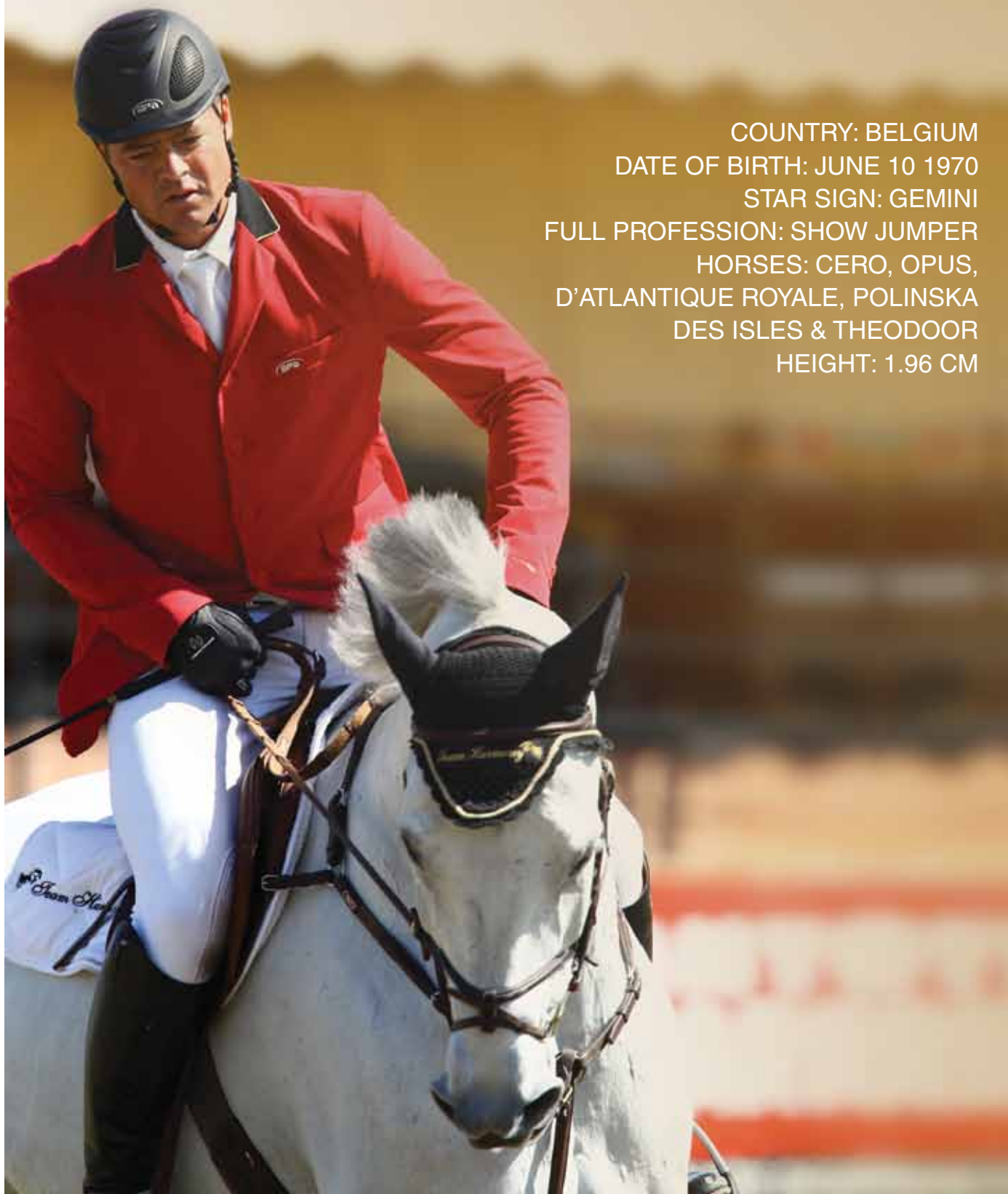
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Tiggy & her Arabian, Astra, looking over Sussex from the South Downs

# THE QUINTESSENTIAL FRANCOIS MATHY JR.

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem



COUNTRY: BELGIUM  
DATE OF BIRTH: JUNE 10 1970  
STAR SIGN: GEMINI  
FULL PROFESSION: SHOW JUMPER  
HORSES: CERO, OPUS,  
D'ATLANTIQUE ROYALE, POLINSKA  
DES ISLES & THEODOOR  
HEIGHT: 1.96 CM



A SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL SHOW JUMPER AND ALL-ROUND ATHLETE IN HIS OWN RIGHT, FRANCOIS MATHY JR. IS THAT STRIKINGLY TALL, CHARMING, AND QUINTESSENTIAL RIDER THAT APPRECIATES HIS STATUS AS A SHOW JUMPER, AND PRESENTS NOTHING BUT COURTEOUS, HUMBLE, AND GRACIOUS CONDUCT TO THOSE WHO MEET HIM. HE TALKS NOTHING BUT PASSION ABOUT HIS HORSES AND SHOW JUMPING, HAS NOTHING BUT A SMILE ON HIS FACE, AND NOTHING BUT A SENSE OF HUMOUR ABOUT HIS HEIGHT!



▲ During the 2011 Prize Ceremony of Salon du Cheval d'El Jadida

Son of Olympic medallist and renowned horse dealer Francois Mathy, the apple has not fallen far from the tree with a son securing a place on the show jumping scene ever since he was 14 years old when he became a Junior Champion for Belgium, and the 15 year old European Champion with a Team double clear. Growing up to become a skilled competitor, the Economics major and multilingual Francois Jr. put his name in the top 50 World Rankings, was a member of the National Team at the 1998 Rome World Championships, and has achieved many victories with many horses in international competitions as well as significant World Cups and CSIO Grand Prixes.

When Francois was born, he grew up to find horses, and only horses, around him. By the age of seven, he started to compete with ponies but he quickly grew in height and was simply too tall for those small creatures. He did not train with his father, but was a natural observer as he stated, "Learning about horses around my father was more similar to acquiring guidelines than being trained. But now when I contemplate the thought, it is a far-off notion that I did not "learn" from him. He was always providing guidance through the riders that were working with him

and encouraged me to travel and learn from different people."

Continuing to work on becoming a professional show jumper and shaping his future, Francois trained with the late Italian Guido Dominici whom he remembers, "Guido was such a good trainer for me. He was a hard worker and very strict with his methods. Most probably, he would be the one who had the most influence on me. But then again, I have been travelling around the world, riding in different countries and meeting all kinds of people. This has opened my mind to learning more about riding, horses, and people, and this is what I would say has shaped me."

Much taller than average show jumpers by far, how does Francois pick his horses and what do they have in common? "Ah, they have to be big! Then, I look for ones that have blood, heart, and would try to work with, and not against the rider. I have to balance my riding and achieve the best results simultaneously. Currently, and for the last 12 years, I ride horses that belong to a Belgian lady, Ingrid Norman, and to HRH Princess Haya. Two of these horses are sturdy and very promising eight year old horses that I think will be important for my show jumping aspirations as it has been a while

since I rode a quality horse after Kannan, who was also owned by Ingrid Norman. HRH Princess Haya bought D'atlantique Royale when he was five at which he won the five year old horse championship in Belgium and this year had a good season, being placed in 2\* and 3\* CSI Grand Prixes. He has so much power, is extremely careful and is all blood; all I need to do is control his energy. The other horse is a French mare, Polinska Des Isles, who has also shown good results this season; she was placed in five 2\* and 3\* Grand Prixes. Those two horses will really pull my strings I think. Cero, a stallion, is an older but important horse for jumping bigger classes, and also belongs to HRH Princess Haya. He was second in this year's Grand Prix of Arezzo, was placed in five Grand Prixes, and was all clear in the Nation Cup of Drammen for the Belgian Team. HRH has been busy so has kindly allowed me to ride him until she has time." Francois stormed to Grand Prix victory with Polinska Des Isles at the CSI3\* World Cup qualifier in El Jadida, Morocco, back in October and some of their results for the season include coming in third place at Rabat's CSI3\*, and fourth at CSI2\*Ebreichsdorf.

Keen to find out Francois's secret to success, we ask him what his magic



▲ Team Harmony: Jos Lansink, Francois, Abul Said & Ibrahim Bisharat

trick is. "I might just have been lucky, especially with my background with horses," Francois says with a big smile. "As I mentioned, I try to choose the best horses. I am also lucky to have good sponsors behind me. My horses and I work well together and we try to get the best out of every competition. I adjust to them and together we try to get the best out of every competition," he adds. And on the road to the 2012 London Olympics, Francois explains, "I am not yet prepared but planning to, starting with the early 2012 season at the show in Comporta, Portugal and following with other major European events. If my horses come out in good form afterwards, I'll keep my hopes high regarding being part of the Olympic team."

While Francois's height is a sight to see, what about his achievements? Thoughtfully, he replied, "I would say I had many good achievements in the past years, but certainly the best one would be my Grand Prix

win in San Patrignano's CSI which was a memorial for Guido Dominici; he won this Grand Prix in 2008 and passed away in 2009 at the same week of the event. The show holds a big place in my heart as it has a very special atmosphere due to the fact that it is the main event and window of the San Patrignano community. It is just the perfect show."

Coming from a horsey background and being the son of an Olympic medallist, are there any negative effects? "I never thought and still don't think it's a disadvantage. On the contrary, it was all beneficial to me. My father's reputation helped me when I was young. Everyone welcomed me as the son of Francois Mathy and showed nothing but friendliness. The only difference between my father and me is that he prefers the business behind the sport, and I prefer the sport itself and its competitions. Jumping is my main passion. Not just that, I actually play squash, tennis, golf, I run, and I ski.

In simple words, sports are just good for me."

Francois is the father of two young daughters, Alix who is nearly three years old and Elena who is nearly five. "It is so hard for me to be away from them, especially at this young and very crucial age. I try my best to be with them between shows and I try to be home most of the time when I am not competing."

Does Francois have any regrets and is there anything that he would like to change about himself? We ask anyway and he laughingly answers, "Maybe I would change my height as it's too big for the sport?! No. I am simply joking. Truthfully, I think I've been doing what I wanted to do. I am happy with my life and appreciate it. I only regret the fact that we had to sell Kannan. It was a perfect Olympic horse, unique and unmatched. If I have any regrets in my career, it would be not being able to keep that horse for longer. 🐾





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HICKSTEAD

# THE SMALL HORSE WITH THE HUGE HEART

By Lulu Kyriacou, *England*

HICKSTEAD, BEST SHOW JUMPING HORSE IN THE WORLD, COLLAPSED AND DIED IN THE RING AT CSI-W VERONA, ITALY IN NOVEMBER. LIKE MILLIONS OF OTHERS, I HAD WATCHED THE 2008 OLYMPICS AND THE JUMPING WAS SPECTACULARLY EXCITING FROM START TO FINISH WITH THE INDIVIDUAL GOLD MEDAL GOING TO THEN NOT SO WELL KNOWN CANADIAN PAIR OF ERIC LAMAZE AND HICKSTEAD. A BRILLIANT RIDE IN THE JUMP OFF CLAIMED THE MEDAL AND CATAPULTED THEM INTO INTERNATIONAL STARDOM AND HICKSTEAD DID NOT LET HIS STAR FADE AS OFTEN FOLLOWS OLYMPIC GLORY. HE WAS AN EXCITING, POWER PACKED DYNAMO OF A HORSE THAT I CAME TO ALWAYS EXPECT THE SPECTACULAR FROM.

But my first personal encounter with the horse who was to become a legend was rather more low key. CSIO Lummen is the first Nations Cup show in Europe that also features a famous Derby course, but I was much more interested in seeing the Olympic Champions (who were based in Belgium) in person for the first time. After a winter season in Florida they were using the show as their first European international outdoor outing of the year.

After watching on the television, I suppose I was expecting a huge fiery creature, but a rather small dark bay went almost unnoticed in the warm up. Eric and the horse jumped a couple of low key

rounds that were decent but not spectacular at all and I remember wondering what all the fuss was about! The rest of that year Hickstead was solid in Grand Prix classes all over the world but perhaps the Games had taken a little bit out of him because it was not until Rio in August that I finally got to see what all the fuss was about for myself! Then, only the Italian Master of FASTER, Gianni Govonni prevented a Global Champions Tour Grand Prix win for the Canadian Number One and the fighting qualities which the horse became so renowned for were obvious to me; I was sure Hickstead grew about a hand as he entered the arena! No wonder he looked bigger on television, he

seemed to relish the crowd and the atmosphere.

But if 2009 had not been particularly special, 2010 left no-one in any doubt of who was the shining star of international show jumping. Wins at Valencia and La Baule were followed by the Queen's Cup in Calgary and the Grand Prix in Aachen before Hickstead went to the World Championships in Lexington Kentucky. There, despite his rider finishing only third due to faults on another horse in the Final Four contest, Hickstead, with three new riders as well as his usual one, did not touch a single pole in the ring and was crowned Best Horse. There could have





*2008 Olympics, the then not so well known Canadian pair of Eric Lamaze & Hickstead jumped to win a gold medal & become stars of the sport*



▲ Hickstead & devoted groom Delphine

been no worthier recipient. He cleared every fence by miles. By this time I knew Delphine, Eric's groom and the horse quite well and knew they were capable of anything. The horse, rider and groom were a complete team and I was awestruck by the way he jumped in Kentucky and by how much he clearly adored Eric. The ears would always prick and the head would come up as Eric approached to mount.

2011 began with a second place in the World Cup Final and then a series of stunning successes. One Grand Prix win after another. La Baule, Rome, another Queen's Cup and the CN Grand Prix, the world's richest class, all fell to the small bay horse with the huge heart. Eric reclaimed the World Number One spot and everyone was convinced a defence of their Olympic crown in 2012 was more than likely despite the horse being 15. After all, Rolf

-Goran Bengsston had just won the European Championships on Ninja la Silla who was exactly the same age.

But first the 2011 indoor season needed to be started, and 'Stix' as Hickstead was known at home, was aimed at Verona for his first indoor show. For me, working in the press room at the show, having the Olympic Champions on site was always a bonus and generated automatic media coverage. Delphine and her beloved charge passed the vet check without incident, aside from the horse being so well he had to trot twice as there was too much cantering, bucking and general good humour the first time for the vets to see the required trot steps. Then the pair conducted a television interview with the show director and stood like a lamb while the cameras were on him. He could not have seemed happier and no one had the slightest inkling of what was to come.

When the jumping started, Hickstead was taken quite steadily, as Eric knew he usually needed one or two indoor rounds to get used to the more confined spaces again. But the Grand Prix was a World Cup class as well, and they entered the ring looking as competitive as anyone. Sadly, they just touched the middle part of the combination which was fence five and Eric looked rueful when he circled and pulled up after clearing the rest of the 13 fence course. The pair walked within two feet of me and then turned across the arena towards the gate.

The next 30 seconds or so are well documented. I could not credit what was happening although from years of racing and eventing experience, I knew exactly what the end result would be. All horse lovers should know



that even the “real footage on the internet has been slightly slowed down. As the horse walked past me I took a picture of him, the time reading 15.30, and when I dropped the camera in horror (I was clicking away as he walked out) it was still 15.30. I do believe as Eric does, that the great horse’s last conscious thought was to go down slowly so Eric could get clear but the end was very swift, in the arena where he would always be a legend. Like many others at the show, I could not stop the tears from falling, the horses are not just animals to us, they are friends and companions and I could not imagine how Delphine and Eric must be feeling. The rider looked unable to comprehend what was happening in front of his eyes, absolutely dazed and not able to register, and his grief was still apparent days later at a press conference where his voice shook and broke when he talked about his “invincible horse” who had made his name and taken him to greatness.

For us, the public, press, organisers, riders and grooms, it was a moment of enormous tragedy. Not one person was unaffected. The riders decided within minutes that they were too shaken and distraught to continue and the organisers completely supported the request to abandon the class. Tributes poured in to press rooms all over the world, there are few jumping horses whose death would make headline news in the New York Times for example, but Hickstead transcended boundaries throughout his whole career. There have been other great horses: Shutterfly, Milton, Big Ben, and Deister, but Hickstead’s name will live on in legend among those other superstars. A true horse of a lifetime, whose loss was felt by all. 🐾



▲ Hickstead feeling good at Verona vet check. He was born on Hickstead March 2, 1996 was owned by Torrey Pines and Ashland Stables Inc. A Dutch Warmblood, Hickstead was 16 hands high and bay in colour. He was born in the Netherlands (bred by Jan van Schijndel in Maren-Kessel) in 1996, by HAMLET. During his career, he won more than \$3 million Canadian dollars

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WALID EBEID

# HORSES OF LIGHT

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

THE FIRST TIME I SAW EGYPTIAN ARTIST WALID EBEID'S WORK WAS IN A ZAMALEK GALLERY PROBABLY A DECADE AGO. HIS VISION OF FIGURE, LIGHT, AND DARKNESS, AND ALLEGORY CAUGHT MY ATTENTION ACTUALLY BY SURPRISE. I WAS ENTRANCED BY THE MONET-ESQUE USE OF DARK OUTLINE AND WHITE AURIC LIGHT WHICH BROUGHT OUT THE ANGELIC ESSENCE OF WHATEVER SUBJECT MATTER (USUALLY FEMALE FORM AT THAT TIME) HE PAINTED. HE HAS TURNED HIS EYE TO HORSES AND HAS PRODUCED SOME STUNNING EQUINE REPRESENTATIONS IN THE TRADITION OF GEORGE STUBBS. ELONGATED NECK AND TORSO, BUT WITH THE LIFE-FORCE OF THE WILD ARABIAN, WALID CAPTURES THEM IN THEIR SPIRIT AND BEAUTY. 







*For commissions or further information, please visit the artist's Facebook page, 'Walid Ebeid'*

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DATE OF BIRTH: 23 JUNE 1966  
STAR SIGN: CANCER  
PROFESSION: DIRECTOR &  
PARTNER OF AN ENVELOPE  
PRODUCING GROUP  
LOCATED IN GERMANY,  
POLAND & FRANCE - OWNER  
OF WWW.OP-WORLDWIDE.  
COM, EQUESTRIAN  
EQUIPMENT - FEI LEVEL 3  
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APPOINTED TO LEVEL 4





**What is your best achievement?**

My two beautiful children, my daughter Milena who is five years old and son Luca still at three, are the best things that happened to me in life, along with the love and strength I receive from them every time I see them.

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

Rider: Marcus Ehning. Other: The Klitzschko brothers in Boxing

**Do you keep any pets?**

I have no time for pets as I travel too much.

**What is your favourite movie?**

“Closer”, starring Julia Roberts, Clive Owen and Jude Law.

**Who is your ideal celebrity (female or male)?**

Pamela Anderson and Natalie Portman.

**What is your favourite gadget?**

My Blackberry.

**What is your favourite music record?**

Right Now “Way Back Home” by The Bag Raiders

**What is your second favourite sport?**

To watch, football (Bayern Munich is my favourite team) and to play, handball and squash.

**Do you like to cook?**

Yes I do. I even think I’m quite creative!

**What is your strength and what is your weakness?**

It comes all in one. I am very diplomatic and successful in almost all business meetings, but I can almost never say the word “no”.



**What makes you happy and what makes you sad?**

Whenever I see my children smile I am happy. People also make me happy if I’m able to put a smile on anyone’s face. I love my big network of friends. On the other hand, a failure makes me sad...

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

Very accurate, disciplined when it comes to work, straight to the point and focussed, charming and reliable. I intend to reach my aims.

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

I would make only one currency in the world. I would like to see no borders and equal requirements

for people everywhere. I would also avoid disasters like tsunamis, earthquakes etc.

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

Nothing.

**Do you support any charitable organisations?**

I do support several children’s organisations all over the world as well as the AIDS organisation in Germany.

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

Yes! The question is: “Who would you like to be for a couple of days if you could?” The answer: Brad Pitt! 🏠

# ROGER-YVES BOST GIVES HIS NAME A BOOST

THE FINAL SERIES OF THE GLOBAL CHAMPIONS TOUR (GCT) WAS FOR THE FIRST TIME HELD IN ABU DHABI AT AL FORSAN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS RESORT. IT SAW TWO BATTLES UNFOLD FOR SUPREMACY WITH A 400,000 EURO REWARD THAT THE TOP WORLD RANKED RIDERS AIMED FOR. THE FINAL SIMULTANEOUSLY PROVIDED THE SHOWDOWN FOR THE 2011 GCT SERIES TITLE THAT SAW THE APPOINTMENT OF JUST TWO RIDERS: AUSTRALIAN EDWINA TOPS-ALEXANDER AND GERMAN LUDGER BEERBAUM.

The GCT finale in Abu Dhabi played out between eight riders who jumped double clear to go through to the jump-off to determine the ultimate winner. The competition provided all the excitement that spectators could wish for.

Cassio Rivetti riding Temple Road and competing for Ukraine was out to set the tone early on and looked quite quick over the first few fences; they knocked down some but kept maximising the time going through the beam in 44.15.



*Roger Yves-Bost*





Switzerland's Clarissa Crotta was the first to jump clear, setting the time standard of 49.92 with West Side V Meerputhoeve. Sweden's Rolf-Goran Bengtsson, in the best form at the moment with Casall La Silla, took all the shorter tracks and galloped the long ride down to the last to be clear and faster in 43.28. Dutch Maikel van der Vleuten on his young stallion VDL Groep Verdi, was forward and jumping very confidently; he does not often compete at the GCT tour but was placed third in Valencia. Maikel fell short with the time of 44.14 although the clear round was much appreciated by his sponsor Wim van der Leege who had come to Abu Dhabi to support his VDL riders.



▲ Clarissa Crotta riding West Side V

Quicker and quicker the competitors came, with Brazilian Alvaro de Miranda blitzing the time with the big grey gelding AD Ashleigh Drossel and galloping to the last to be home in 42.20. The horse has been resting with an injury since Monaco and recently, he came back into very good form. Master of speed, France's Roger Yves Bost turned shorter to nearly every fence and the round looked sharp; he made an inside turn after the second last before riding hand and heel to the last. They were home free and super quick in 41.14. The second of the VDL riders to the jump off was Leopold van Aston; he took a speedy turn around with his mare VDL Groep Quinara. The horse, normally utilised for speed classes, put in a fantastic round with one fence down and the time of 44.15.



▲ Rolf-Goran Bengtsson riding Casall La Sila

Saudi Arabia's Khalid Al Eid, riding Presley Boy and being the crowd's favourite, jumped with vision and range to have enough goods to win. He risked nearly everything and was clear with the second fastest time of 42.08.

It was a glorious win for Roger Yves-Bost and Ideal de la Loge, who had won the first big class of the GCT season in Doha and now the last class of the season, the Grand Prix of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. Jaeger-LeCoultre presented the Frenchman with a GCT engraved Reverso wristwatch. The Jaeger-LeCoultre Atmos clock, beautifully showcased in a GCT personalised casing came into Edwina Tops-Alexander's possession for winning the 2011 series.

This final marked the first year for the Global Champions Tour to hold any of its competitions in Abu Dhabi, and will be doing so for another four years. In 2012, the tour will capture new audiences at new destinations: Wiesbaden (GER), Lausanne (SUI), Vienna (AUT) and Shanghai (CHN). The tour also continues to create long term legacies with sporting partners in Doha (QAT), Valencia (ESP), Hamburg (GER), Cannes (FRA), Monte Carlo (MON), Chantilly (FRA), Valkenswaard (NED), and Abu Dhabi (UAE). 



*Khalid Al Eid riding Presley Boy*





▲ Sergio Alvarez Moya



▲ Yves-Bost receiving the Jaeger-LeCoultre engraved Reverso wristwatch



▲ Arabian horse display in Al Forsan International Sports Resort, Abu Dhabi



▲ 2011 GCT title winners with the President Jan Tops



Al Forsan International Sports Resort arena

All photos by Stefano Grasso



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# SOHA UNE GRANDE DAME

By Randa H. Barakat



JE NE SAIS PAS QUAND  
TOUT A COMMENCÉ...  
NOUS ÉTIIONS UN PETIT  
GROUPE DE CAVALIERS,  
TOUS DÉSIREUX  
D'APPRENDRE  
À MONTER  
CORRECTEMENT ET  
N'AYANT AUCUNE  
NOTION DE CE QUE LE  
TRAVAIL AU PLAT VEUT  
DIRE.

Dr. Mohamed Salah Roushdi, Dr. Aly Said, Lamia Abaza et moi-même. Et puis un jour, le club nous annonce qu'une certaine Soha El Ebiary va venir nous donner des leçons de dressage à raison de deux à trois fois par semaine.

Je me souviens d'un visage rond, confiant et souriant. Une personne affable, ayant des connaissances approfondies et particulièrement dévouée dans son travail. Très vite le courant s'est établi entre nous et nous étions tous très

enthousiastes lors de ses cours. Elle arrivait toujours avec des notes à distribuer, des schémas nous détaillant la conformation d'un cheval ou la séquence d'un mouvement, des figures géométriques pour visualiser un exercice ou dessiner un cercle....

Dans quelle mesure j'arrivais à appliquer ses instructions, je n'en sais rien. J'exécutais ce qu'elle me demandait de faire. Il faut dire aussi qu'à l'époque je montais une jument particulièrement désagréable.

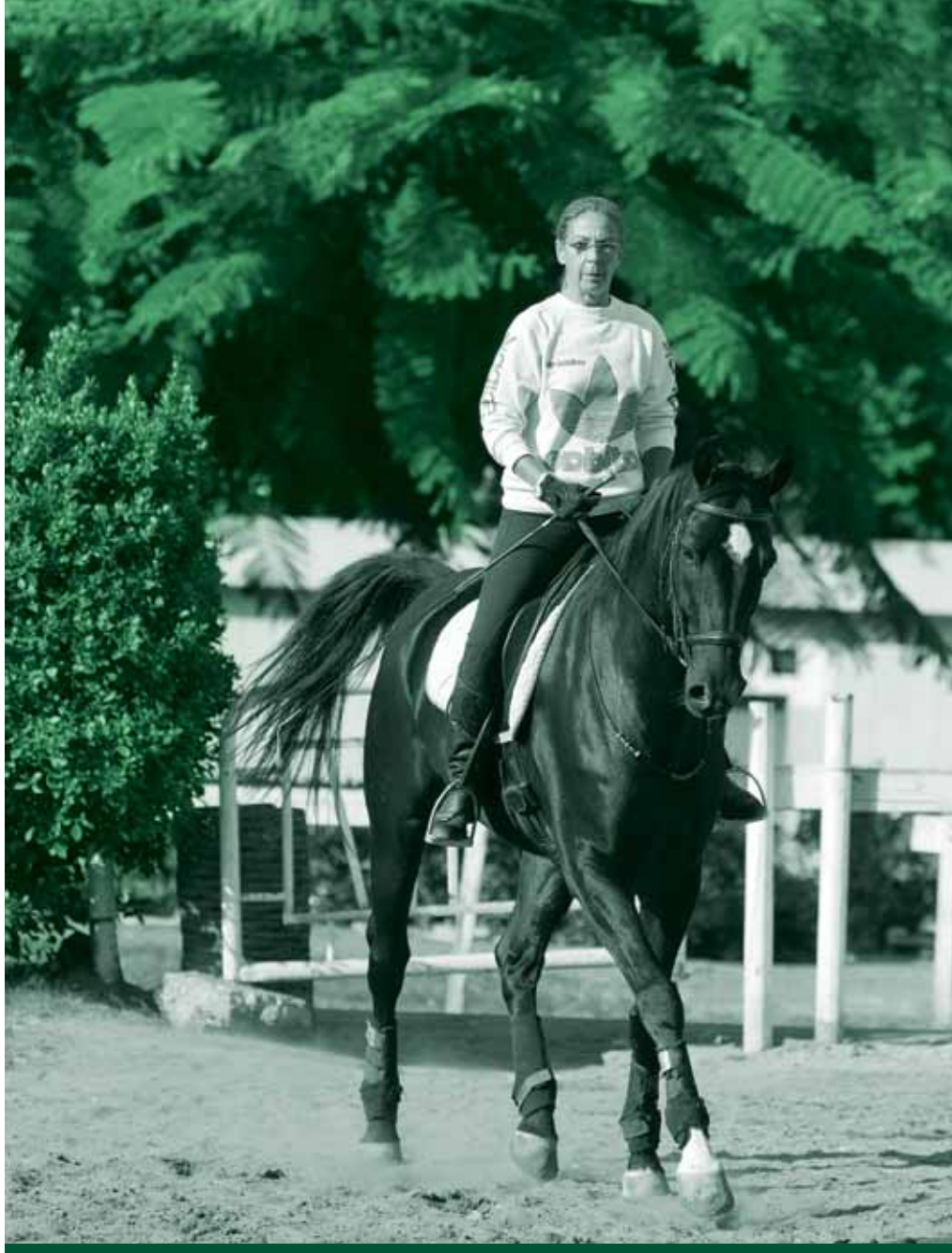


Soha était je crois la seule à l'apprécier. Consciencieusement, elle essayait de nous sensibiliser aux subtilités du dressage mais je pense que personne ne saisissait vraiment la finesse de cette discipline. Nous étions de simples exécutants et nous manquions tous de sentiments. Monter à cheval nécessite une communication intime avec son partenaire et implique une maturité qui vient avec le temps et l'expérience. Nous étions tous bien loin de cette conception. Mais Soha persistait à vouloir nous inculquer ce sentiment ; nous laissions faire sans trop nous soucier.

Pendant de longues années, nous avons tourné inlassablement dans un manège sans pour autant parvenir à établir ce courant, mais la bonne volonté y était et le sourire de Soha nous guidait.

Passent les jours et passent les nuits.... Passent les semaines et passent les mois... Les événements se succèdent et prennent une autre tournure, le groupe se démantèle, les chevaux changent, l'entraîneur aussi, l'embryon qui s'était formé se désintègre et chacun va de son côté. Je continue pourtant à retrouver cette dame sur les terrains de compétition suant et soufflant après ses élèves, corrigeant un mouvement, relevant une erreur ou conseillant un cavalier et à chaque fois, nous tombions dans les bras l'une de l'autre et reprenions nos conversations à bâtons rompus comme si nous nous étions quittées la veille.

Une brouille avec mon entraîneur me laisse seule et désemparée, avec un jeune cheval de cinq ans sur les bras, ne sachant pas trop comment m'en sortir. Des nuits d'angoisse et d'appréhension. Les erreurs se forment très vite et souvent sans trop s'en rendre compte et puis soudain le problème est là. J'aborde Soha un jour de compétition à Alexandrie et lui demande si cela l'intéresserait



de me reprendre en main. Je lui dis que la route sera longue, mais que le cheval est bon. Sa réponse fuse. C'est oui.

Débordantes d'enthousiasme, nous nous attablons toutes les deux devant un café et rêvons en couleur.... J'avais mis la barre très haut et lui expliquais que je ne reculerais devant aucun effort quel qu'en soit le coût et que je voulais percer à n'importe quel prix.... Nous nous promettons mutuellement de relever ce défi et nous nous lançons dans cette aventure folle...

La plus grande qualité d'un entraîneur mise à part son engagement, c'est de s'armer d'une grande patience et de ne jamais faire perdre à son élève sa confiance en soi. Ayant pratiqué l'équitation sur le tard et

n'ayant pas commencé sur des bases correctes et solides, il a été très difficile pour moi de corriger les mauvaises habitudes que j'avais acquises tout au long des années.... C'est avec beaucoup de doigté et de perception que Soha est parvenue à atténuer certains de ces défauts. Ils n'ont pas disparu mais ils sont moins apparents.

C'est chaque matin, qu'il pleuve ou qu'il vente, que je vois arriver cette dame, armée de son seul sourire, pour me faire travailler. Variant les exercices, d'une épaule en dedans à un appuyé, d'un trot rassemblé à un rallongement, d'un galop moyen à un galop de travail .... Poursuivant un but très clair dans sa tête, elle me fait travailler dans la joie et la confiance.... Passant d'un mouvement à un autre, à l'écoute des réactions de mon cheval encore


plus que des miennes, percevant le moindre faux pas chez lui ou une imperceptible raideur chez moi, insistant sur l'obéissance et la soumission, elle a pu briser toute résistance chez mon partenaire et plus que tout, elle a su développer la musculature du cheval, chose qui ne se fait que grâce à un travail systématique, consistant et élaboré. Don Bello travaille dans le calme et l'harmonie et conserve toujours un excellent mental; dès qu'elle le voit faire la tête, grincer des dents ou ramener ses oreilles vers l'arrière en signe d'ennui ou de mauvaise volonté, nous passons à autre chose ; des barres au sol, de petits sauts d'obstacle, cinq minutes de pas rênes libres... Dans l'équipe que nous formons il est certainement Roi et l'entretien de sa bonne humeur et de sa joie de vivre passe en premier. Don Bello est un cheval heureux.

Enseigner l'équitation ou, pour employer un terme plus approprié, « coacher » un cavalier requiert une connaissance profonde de la morphologie du cheval et de sa psychologie. Il faut penser « cheval » mais ceci ne se passe que si l'entraîneur a un œil très averti qui lui permet de percevoir le moindre des mouvements et conséquemment d'anticiper l'erreur à venir. Soha m'a permis de faire la différence entre l'équitation en tant que sport et l'équitation en tant qu'art.

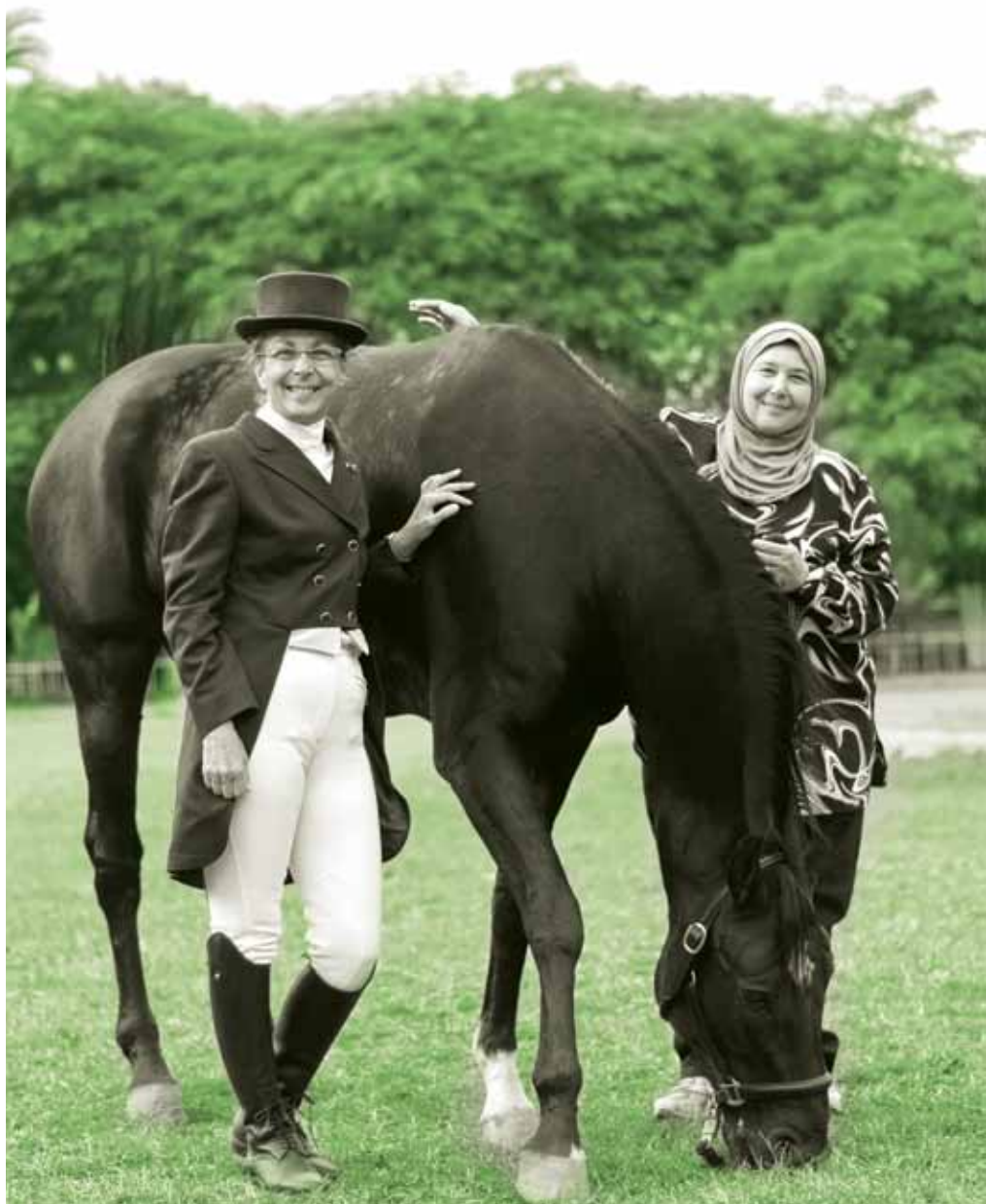
Que de fois me suis-je énervée contre moi-même face à un échec ou à une mauvaise prestation, que de fois ai-je raté mes épaules en dedans et mes appuyés.... Qu'il est difficile d'exécuter certains mouvements ! Et qu'il est facile de perdre sa concentration durant l'entraînement... Et inlassablement Soha de répéter encore et toujours les mêmes recommandations, « coudes au corps, épaules en arrière, regard vers le haut, arrête de bombarder ton cheval avec tes talons, assouplie ta main, ne va pas en rêne contraire, jambe intérieure/ rêne extérieure .... » Des conseils en or, simples en apparence mais pas évidents quand on est juché sur « un quatre pattes »....

C'est en tissant les ficelles de la confiance et de l'amitié que nous parvenons à nous entendre. Très souvent durant notre séance de travail, nous disons les mêmes choses presque au même moment. La façon très spéciale qu'elle a de percevoir le cheval augmente mon admiration et ma confiance dans son jugement. Soha m'a appris à écouter le langage secret de mes chevaux et à être en osmose avec eux. Et quand le contact est établi et que nous ne faisons plus qu'un, lui et moi, la sensation est unique et ne ce compare à rien d'autre.... Nous sommes encore bien loin du but que nous avons établi, la route est longue et nécessite un travail intense et une

discipline d'enfer mais il est très important dans la vie d'avoir un rêve et encore plus important de vivre son rêve....

Merci Soha pour ta patience et ta précieuse collaboration, merci de m'aider à garder un moral d'acier même quand ça va mal, merci aussi de partager mon rêve; même si jamais il ne devait se réaliser nous aurions eu au moins la grande joie de travailler ensemble et de voir se développer jour après jour les capacités physiques et mentales de Don Bello pour en faire un jour qui sait, peut être, un grand cheval de dressage. 

*Photos courtesy of Saleh Lotfy*





# TOP SPORT HORSES



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SIETSKE MEERLOO

# THE INDIAN HORSE RIDING CHALLENGE

“Horse, you are truly a creature without equal, for you fly without wings and conquer without sword.”  
*Arabian Proverb*

I MOVED FROM DUBAI TO JORDAN IN THE SUMMER OF 2010; FROM THE UAE'S SCORCHING SUMMER HEAT TO THE PLEASANT TEMPERATURES OF THE LEVANT. DUBAI HAD TREATED ME WELL WHILE I LIVED THERE; IT HAD BEEN GOOD FOR MY CAREER AND ENABLED ME TO LIVE A COMFORTABLE LIFE.

I am not sure whether it was the financial crisis that hit the Emirate or if it was just time to go, but one day I realised I wanted more in life than a well-paid job and a hectic social life. It was time for me to start to think of realising the dreams I had always had – but that hadn't come true. Because, what do we live for if we can't make our dreams come true, if we feel we are unable to step out of our comfort zone, if we cannot make a change in our own lives (let alone someone else's)?

There were always excuses not to leave the life I was leading, whether financial or social. Since I was a child, I dreamt of having my own equine friend but it took many, many years for this dream to come true. It wasn't until 2010, when I met a wonderful man who gave me strength, courage and love that it felt like it was my year for change. I found a way to realise my dream of having my own horse, who would be a partner, buddy and



friend.

Abha Ra'ad, a six year old grey Arabian trotted into my life in late 2010. While he hadn't been abused by his previous owners, he had hardly been handled. He had few manners and knew little about how to behave towards humans. So I

started to work with him, applying - what are popularly called natural horsemanship methods. We made good progress in the months that followed, building a partnership together based on trust and respect for each other that grows with every passing day.





to my heart, whether by playing and training with them, or riding them. They are well looked after because I have the means to do so.

There are many horse owners in the world, though, who do not have the means to do so. They have neither the finances, nor the tools nor the wealth of information that we have or can find on the Internet, through vets and experts. Nevertheless, these people need their horses to survive, to make a living, and to take care of their families. People and animals in the poorest countries of the world suffer tremendously. And I believe you and I can help.

I decided to combine my dream, my love for horses and my resources by participating in the 'Indian Horse Riding Challenge', a 10-day horse ride on Marwari horses through Rajasthan in India from 23 February to 4 March 2012 to raise funds for the Brooke Hospital for Animals. It is a wonderful combination of discovering a country on horseback while raising money for a good cause. Each participant, including me, seeks to raise funds through donations.

Brooke is an international animal welfare organisation committed to improving the lives of working horses, donkeys, mules and their owners in third world countries. The Brooke currently provides veterinary treatment and community programmes across Africa, Asia and Latin America.


Through free veterinary care Brooke helps half a million horses and donkeys in the world's poorest communities. These equine animals provide an income for these people and their families, but many of their

owners are so busy surviving and making sure there is food and water for their families, and that the horses and donkeys are the last ones to be thought of. Brooke's aim is to work in partnership with locals to ensure that working horses, donkeys, mules and their owners live a better life. Besides running clinics, Brooke also cooperates with local animal protection organisations, educates local vets and shares good practices and solutions with them.

The Brooke's goal is to increase the number of working animals it helps to two million a year by 2016. I know the horses and donkeys in the countries that Brooke operates in will never have the lives that my horses or others may have. But as horse lovers, the wellbeing of other equines is close to our hearts.

I am supporting Brooke through the "Indian Horse Riding Challenge" and would like to ask you to do the same by helping this cause with a financial donation. Please visit my webpage on: [www.justgiving.com/Siets](http://www.justgiving.com/Siets) where you can make a donation by credit card or PayPal, or visit [www.thebrooke.org](http://www.thebrooke.org).

In the words of Gail Sheehy, a well-known journalist and lecturer: "If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living."

Please help to support this very worthy cause. 

[www.justgiving.com/siets](http://www.justgiving.com/siets)

*Photos by Tariq Dajani*



In early 2011, Abha Ra'ad was joined by a bay mare called Abha Karachi who came from the same stables I originally purchased him from. They live a good life together in their new home. I try to give them all they need to be healthy and happy, mentally and physically. In return they bring a smile to my face and warmth



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# COUNTING STRIDES

By Khaled Assem



*Land in canter, keeping a soft rein contact*

*Count the first stride out loud*

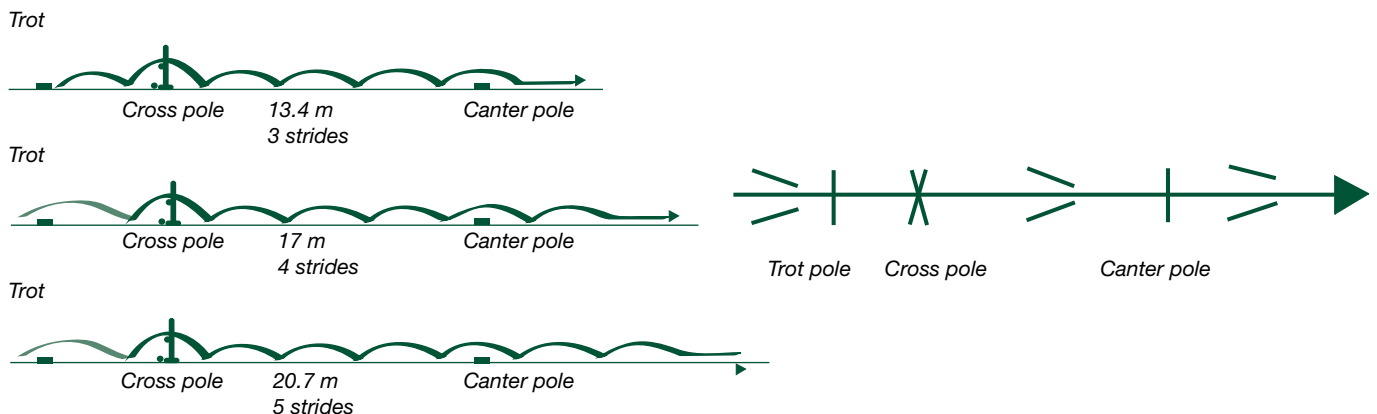
*Count the second stride*

## FEELING A STRIDE FOR NOVICE RIDERS:

TO BE EFFICIENT, A SHOW JUMPER MUST DEVELOP HIS KNOWLEDGE OF JUMPING EXERCISES AND THEIR USE ALONG WITH OTHER BASIC AIDS SUCH AS RHYTHM, BALANCE, STRAIGHTNESS AND RIDING A TURN CORRECTLY. THIS WILL ENHANCE AND REFINE THE RIDER'S ABILITY TO FEEL A STRIDE.

PROGRESSIVE EXERCISES WILL HELP THE RIDER UNDERSTAND THE WAY HIS HORSE MOVES AND RESPONDS, ALLOWING THE RIDER TO DEVELOP HIS ABILITY TO FEEL AND COUNT STRIDES OVER CORRECT DISTANCES. THEN, FINDING THE RIGHT TAKE-OFF POINT WILL COME INSTINCTIVELY.

NATURALLY, REFINEMENT OF THE RIDER'S FEELING AND ABILITY ENHANCES THE COMBINATION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HORSE AND RIDER ALLOWING THEM TO CONNECT TOGETHER, FURTHER.






With a ground pole at 2.8 meters away from a cross pole, approach in trot, land from the cross pole in canter and do one non-jumping stride before going over another ground pole 6.1 meters away.

Then, move the canter grand pole

progressively further away one canter stride at a time to give two, three, four or five non jumping strides.

Throughout each exercise, count each stride and keep the canter constant so that you consistently

meet the canter grand pole at the right take-off point.

Even though the rider is not jumping a second fence, cantering to a pole on the grand gives the same take-off and landing points as if were a real fence. 

### BASIC GRID DISTANCES

It takes experience to build a grid. Start with small fences and progress a step at a time. The height of the cross poles should be 50-70 cm (20-27 in) and they should have a ground line approximately 50 cm (20 in) away. The height of the other fences should be 0.7-1.2 m.

EXERCISE	DISTANCES
Walk poles	80 cm – 1 m
Trot poles	1.25 – 1.45 m
Trot poles to cross poles	2.5 – 2.9 m
Single trot placing pole to cross poles	2.5 – 2.9 m
Cross poles from trot to a vertical in one stride	5.8 – 6.4 m
Vertical to oxer in two strides	9.8 – 10.4 m
Vertical to oxer in one stride	6.1 – 6.7 m
Cross poles from trot to a bounce	3 – 3.3 m
Canter poles	3 – 4.25 m

### DISTANCES FOR TRAINING EXERCISES

The following distances can be used for training purposes. Always start an exercise with distances that your horse finds easy. When jumping a fence from trot, the first canter stride after the fence will be a little shorter than when the approach to the fence is in canter, hence the different distances. When using canter poles, place them the same distance apart as if they were two verticals.

NUMBER OF NON-JUMPING STRIDES	APPROACHING FIRST FENCE IN TROT			APPROACHING FIRST FENCE IN CANTER		
	Cross poles to canter pole	Cross poles to single oxer	Cross poles to oxer in gymnastic grid	Oxer to oxer in gymnastic grid	Canter pole to canter pole	Vertical to vertical
1 stride	6.1 m	5.5 m	5.45 m	5.5 m	7.3 m	7.3 m
2 strides	9.75 m	9.15 m	8.8 m	9 m	11 m	11 m
3 strides	13.4 m	12.8 m	12.2 m	12.5 m	14.6 m	14.6 m

*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.*

## HOW TO BE A TRAINER (PART 17)

# DRESSAGE FOR JUMPING (PART 7)

By Dr. Mohamed Elsherbini

SOME RIDERS WHO ARE NOT INTERESTED IN DRESSAGE DON'T KNOW THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SCHOOL A HORSE UP TO A HIGHER DEGREE OF EQUITATION UNLESS HE IS TAUGHT TO RESPOND AND DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE FORWARD AND LATERAL DRIVING LEG AIDS.



### LATERAL LEG AIDS:

Teaching the horse the lateral driving leg aid should follow the **forward** one. The forward driving aid is applied straight behind the girths with equal pressure from both legs, while the **lateral** driving aid should be applied slightly further behind the girths. The aim is to request the horse to move his quarters **sideways**. At the lateral stage of training, it is used to **bend** the horse's body around the inner leg of the rider. Lateral leg aid should be done by both legs simultaneously; one leg is **active** and the other is **passive** (supporting).

As a response to the lateral leg aid the horse will engage his hind leg and bring it in front of the other

hind leg. After doing so, the horse should be ridden forward, making use of the propulsive power of **engagement**. Start teaching the horse the lateral driving leg aids by simply cutting the corner as shown in the Figure (1).

In a few weeks one can apply this aid to perform some valuable movements for show jumpers. Some of these movements are turn around the forehand, leg yielding and turn around the haunches.

Before explaining each movement we have to know about the expression "**inner leg and outer leg**" of both rider and horse. When the horse is moving straight on the track of the school,

the legs of rider and horse near the kicking boards are called the "**outer**" legs. If the horse's body is bent laterally, the legs of both riders and horse on this side are called "**inner**" legs. Legs on the other side are called "**outer**" legs.

### TURN AROUND THE FOREHAND:

This turn is performed **around** and **not on** the forehand which means coming to a halt should not be done at first. This is to encourage the forward movement of a show jumping horse and his obedience to the rider's leg aids without loss of impulsion. The inner forehand should work as a pivot describing a small circle (Fig. 2) and shouldn't turn on the



spot.

If practicing this turn in an indoor school, one must stay at least two meters free from the kicking boards. The aids for a turn around the forehand (to the right for example) will include seat, leg and rein aids. Put more pressure onto the right seat bone and apply leg aids as shown in the figure depending on the degree of schooling of the horse (his readiness to bend). The active (stronger) leg is the right leg while the passive is the left one. The active leg could be supported by a dressage whip (applied just behind it). Equal tension should be applied on both reins, with the right one moved slightly sideways towards the kicking boards.

The immediate effect of engaging the inner hind leg and the freedom of the outside shoulder are great advantages that could be used to make the horse strike off in canter with very good balance and impulsion (in case of turning to the right, the canter will be left canter!) **Think how?** The answer is that, if the horse will start to canter to the left he will stand for a split second on the right hind leg (the engaged one) as the starting spring of the action. The horse also needs in such a case a free left shoulder which is achieved during this turn on the forehand to the right.

### LEG YIELDING:

Leg yielding is a lateral movement on two tracks as the shoulder out but with too little lateral bending. It could be done from the centre line to the long side of the arena or after cutting the corner before the long side. It should always be performed in a forward movement with the shoulders leading the action, not the hindquarters (as some riders make this mistake).

The horse should move with good impulsion and shouldn't come too much on the bit (Fig.3). This movement is a good preparation for shoulder in.

If riding on the left rein, you can cut off the corner and start directing your horse to a right leg yielding towards the long side. The horse should look slightly to the left. The rider puts more

weight on the left seat bone. For a young horse the active leg (left) of the rider should be brought more backward (could be helped by a whip) and the rider's right leg is supporting the pressure and giving impulsion. The rider should move his left hand slightly side-ways out from the horse's neck (Fig. 3) while the right rein is supporting the horse not to fall out with his right shoulder. Both

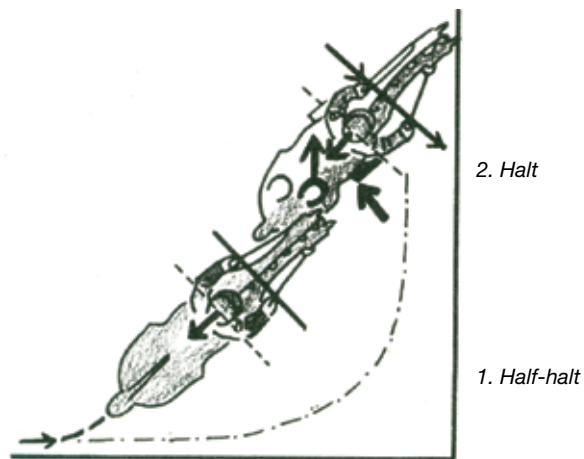


Fig. 1: Start teaching lateral leg aids by simply cutting the corner

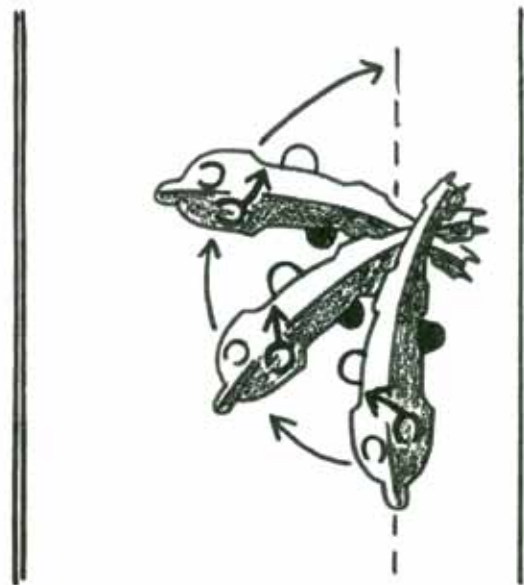


Fig. 2: Turn around the forehand with lateral bend

reins should be kept **equal** in tension.

After reaching the track, straighten on the horse and ride him forward. Never do the mistake of meeting the track with the hindquarters before the forehand (this indicates lack of impulsion).

### TURN ON THE HAUNCHES:

The main purpose of this movement is to reach a good degree of **collection** and **flexibility**. It also improves the **shoulder freedom** of the horse. The forehand performs a quarter or a half circle around the hindquarters without coming to a stop first (Fig. 4). Never forget the value of this movement in a jump off, **saving time**, when used correctly.


Prepare the horse with a half-halt (Fig. 4) and count the sequence of the forelegs on the ground; left, right... etc. This is important because the key for a good start is when the horse's **near** forefoot touches the ground. At this moment the outside one is free to cross in the correct direction. The action should be forward and never **backwards**, with more weight from the rider on his inside seat bone and with some tilting of the pelvis. For a left turn, pressure from the left leg of the rider prevents the horse from moving backwards. The rider's right leg then urges the horse to make the turn.

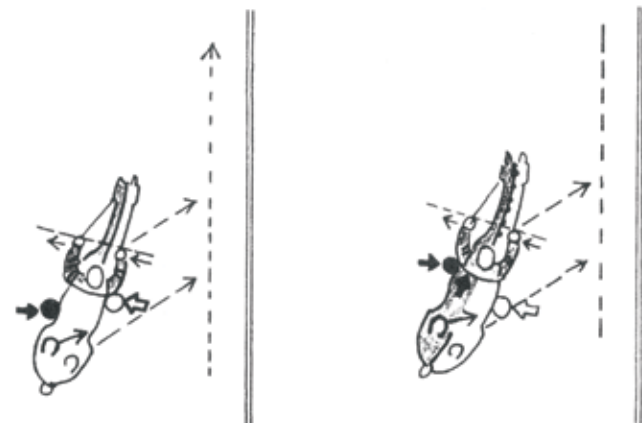
**Equal** tension with both reins is applied while the rider's left hand moves slightly sideways away from the neck. The right rein is supporting the action by pushing against the neck.

The advantage of engaging the inner hind leg of the horse

and giving freedom to the right shoulder (in case of turn to the left) will have a great effect on the correct canter to the right after turn on the haunches to the left. **Try it** and feel how good it is on the horse's balance and impulsion.

The three simple actions

explained in this article are mandatory for you (coach or rider) if you want to improve your horse's performance on the flat. Although being simple, these dressage movements add a lot of **suppleness, engagement, impulsion** and **collection** to show jumping horses. 



Preparatory leg aids for a young horse

Normal leg aids for a schooled horse

Fig. 3: Leg yielding

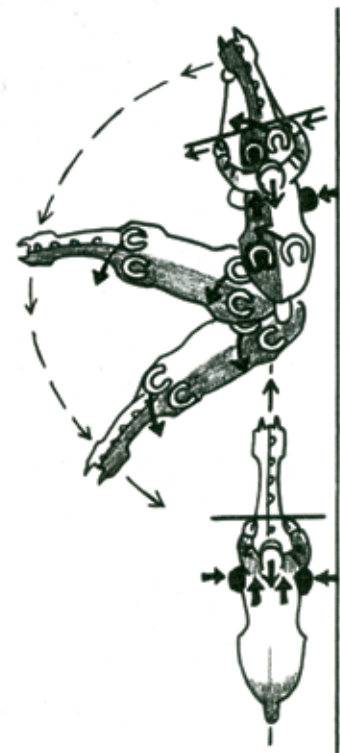



Fig. 4: Turn in on the haunches





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# TURKEY HOSTS THE EQUESTRIAN WORLD

TURKEY WILL HOST THE EQUESTRIAN WORLD WITH THE ATTENDANCE OF MANY INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AT EQUIST, WHICH WILL BE HELD FROM APRIL 13<sup>TH</sup> TILL THE 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2012, AT THE ISTANBUL EXPO CENTRE (IFM) IN YESILKÖY. IT IS THE VERY FIRST AND THE ONLY EQUESTRIAN TRADE FAIR IN TURKEY, AND HAS ATTRACTED HUGE ATTENTION.

The rapidly growing interest in equestrian culture and horse riding in Turkey has created a huge demand for such an event. For that reason, EQUIST is to become a key asset to equestrian business market access.

The market covers an important part of Caucasus, the Balkans, Middle Eastern and Central Asian regions, where equestrian sport is developing and as a consequence requires international input. Exhibitors of EQUIST will offer great opportunities to all equestrian businesses and enthusiasts such as equestrian clothing, horse breeding information, nutrition, care, treatment, transportation, sport and racing training, and boxes, while open and closed menage will be exhibited. In addition to amateur and professional equestrian industrialists from Turkey, the number of visitors from the Middle East and Central Asian Turkish Republics is expected to be high.



▲ *Osman Bayazit Genç*

## SUPPORT FOR EQUIST INCREASES:

Osman Bayazit Genç, the Director of the fair says, "Along with the Turkish Equestrian Federation (TBF), we also get the support of a lot of national federations and authorities. Quite a lot of equestrian authorities from remarkable countries support our fair internationally. We are also highly motivated with the support of

other efficient national organisations. One of these organisations, whose support we highly appreciate, is the Development Committee of Anatolian Horsemanship. By supporting EQUIST, the Turkish Jockey Club, the Turkish Traditional Sports Federation and associations like the Turkish Thoroughbred Breeders, and breeders and owners of Arabian horses, will increase the level of our efforts." 





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# LONDON CALLING

By Lulu Kyriacou, *England*

THE 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES ARE LESS THAN A YEAR AWAY AND LONDON HAS SPENT THE SUMMER PREPARING WITH A SERIES OF TEST EVENTS. ONE OF THOSE WAS FOR THE EQUESTRIAN SECTION WHICH IS TO BE HELD AT GREENWICH PARK, THE SITE ALSO OF THE ROYAL GREENWICH OBSERVATORY AND A WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE. THE LOCATION IS MOST FAMOUS FOR BEING THE SITE OF THE PRIME MERIDIAN FROM WHICH ALL GLOBAL TIME IS MEASURED.

Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) is the starting point for the international clock and all other time zones are measured in advance or in arrears of this standard. It is the oldest park in London and has remained largely unchanged for 500 years since Henry VIII used it to hunt. Consequently, placing an Olympic venue within such a prestigious and treasured area has provoked some controversy and the test event was anticipated with some interest.

These Games, as far as equestrian events go, will be different to most of its recent predecessors in many ways. Not since Barcelona in 1992 has the horse sport been accommodated inside the host city and even then the cross country course was some distance away. Greenwich Park has less than 150 acres of usable space





which will mean that fitting in a 10 minute cross country course is going to be tight and require much climbing of hills and tight turns which is not ideal for that sport but the lack of space and central location has also created other problems very specific to these Games. In Hong Kong virtually all the horses were flown in because of the distance and Sha Tin could accommodate 200 horses at a time easily. That meant there was no need for a 'shuttle' station a few miles away as the flights automatically provide a level of security measures. But in London most of the horses will arrive by their own horse trucks and there was no way the London police were going to let dozens of unsupervised trucks drive into a World Heritage site in the centre of the city! So a staging post has been created where the trucks will unload, all papers will be checked and then the journey will continue by the Games' own transport service. As there is also not enough room for the horses of all three disciplines to enter at the same time, there will be another compound outside the park for temporary housing.



When the test started, the arena was 10 metres smaller than it will be for the Olympics and most of the seating was not in place. A special system of legs had to be put in place to make the arena level because of the gradient in the park and because the rules demand that the arena cannot be dug up. This provided a surprisingly good solution with no evidence at all, when the horses were on it, that there was any effect of riding on a stage.



A three day event is used to test facilities as required under IOC stipulation because in that way all three disciplines are tested. The organisers invited some dressage riders and some show jumpers to attend as well as the eventers so their specific feedback could be gained. The dressage riders were more than happy but the show jumpers, who included recent European dual medallist Nick Skelton, were less than impressed. "The surface was heavy and it moved, frankly they will need to do a lot better by next year" he said. Unfortunately the emphasis on eventing meant that because the jumpers have to jump 1.60m four days out of five the arena surface is more of a concern for jumpers than it is for eventers who usually jump on grass and are mostly

only doing 1.25m maximum, once, out of a hack canter with no jump off. "It is a test event, so we are testing many systems, lots of things will be different and better by next year" said equestrian manager Tim Hadaway.

All of the other facilities seemed adequate even though on a much smaller scale than next year and approximately 35 competitors from over a dozen nations sent representatives to compete. They included riders from Thailand, Jamaica, and Japan as well as the more established eventing nations. Amongst them were Britain's own current World Champion team and the newly crowned individual title holder, Germany's Michael Jung. Michael is becoming almost unbeatable these

days and so it took a performance of real class to beat him on the day. Piggy French, a silver medallist at the last European Championships vied with Michael throughout; the pair led the contest from start to finish despite a determined challenge from Pippa Funnell, also British, and Australia's Clayton Fredericks who ended up third and fourth respectively. Piggy commented about her winning horse DHI Topper W; "Topper has matured so well over the last few months - he could be a contender for next year. That's still a long way away and horses are great levellers so who knows what can happen between now and then, but I reckon he's got what it takes. I just hope we haven't peaked too early!"

# FIERACAVALLI 2011



ON THE EVE OF THE 113TH EDITION OF FIERACAVALLI, THE HISTORIC EUROPEAN EQUESTRIAN SPORT AND TRADE EVENT HELD IN VERONA, EXPECTATIONS WERE VERY HIGH WITH 30% MORE ADVANCE SALES COMPARED TO 2010. AT THE END OF THE FOUR-DAY EVENT HELD THIS NOVEMBER, WITH ATTENDANCE OF 155,640 VISITORS FROM AS MANY AS 70 COUNTRIES, 3,000 HORSES, MORE THAN 35 BREEDER ASSOCIATIONS, 650 INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITORS, 19 INTERNATIONAL DELEGATIONS, AND MORE THAN 160 SPORTING EVENTS, COMPETITIONS AND CONVENTIONS,

FIERACAVALLI UNDOUBTEDLY LEFT ITS MARK AS ONE OF THE TOP EQUESTRIAN EXHIBITIONS IN THE WORLD.


“These figures are encouraging for the entire European equestrian field for which Fieracavalli is the historical reference exhibition,” said Ettore Riello, President of the Verona Exhibition Authority. It covers a sector that in Italy alone generates a turnover of 6.5 billion Euros and involves more than 10 million enthusiasts, of which 2.5 million are avid riders. Possibilities for further growth are very positive, as clearly shown by the Fieracavalli Observatory statistics: 77% of Italian parents would like their children to ride horses and 49% of young people dream about a horse riding holiday.

Fieracavalli for its part provided an enthusiastic, informed and curious public with an excellent venue for

sales, as witnessed by more than 20 exhibitors (published on the site [www.fieracavalli.it](http://www.fieracavalli.it)).

“We were truly surprised - given the current economic situation; we did not expect such success,” said SM Trade & Technology. “Saturday was a crowded day, with visitors making purchases despite the recession,” said representatives of Neil’s Boots. Encouraging comments were also made by Kep Italia, “This is the right exhibition for promoting my product. The 2011 edition went far beyond my best expectations”. Rinco S.p.A. commented, “We always exhibit at Fieracavalli, even at times when Verona seemed to suffer from market difficulties. My choice proved correct.” CEO & Director General, Giovanni Mantovani added, “This year’s figures are a sign that the event was well focused and responded to the effective needs of operators.”

Fieracavalli also received strong positive indications from institutions such as ASSI and MIPAAF, the Ministry of Economy and AIA Itallialleva, Fitetrec–Ante, regarding renewed attention to the breeding and sporting world. In this regard, Fieracavalli emphasised its strategic role with an agreement signed between the President of Veronafiore and the President of FISE, Andrea Paulgross, with the objective of expanding the calendar of sporting events, in particular during the exhibition under the coordination of the Federation.

There was also a fine turn-out for the Gold Gala Celebration, dedicated to the 150 years of the unity of Italy, with the involvement of the IV Mounted Carabinieri Regiment - to which Veronafiore made a gift of an Anglo-Arabian-Sardinian horse, presented by President Riello to Colonel Francesco Azzaro in thanks for the work of the Carabinieri on behalf of the country since its foundation and its attendance at the 2011 edition of Fieracavalli. 



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# HORFA CHINA A PROMISING FUTURE



THE THREE DAY INTERNATIONAL HORSE FAIR OF CHINA 2011 CAME TO A SUCCESSFUL END AT SHANGHAI EAST ASIA EXHIBITION HALL ON OCTOBER 30TH, 2011. A TOTAL OF 82 EXHIBITORS FROM 18 COUNTRIES AND DISTRICTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE USA, AUSTRALIA, ITALY, GERMANY, SPAIN, RUSSIA, BELGIUM, INDIA, DUBAI, SWEDEN AND MEXICO, JOINED IN. JAPAN, FRANCE AND HOLLAND, THE THREE COUNTRIES KNOWN FOR THEIR ADVANCED HORSE INDUSTRY, EXHIBITED IN NATIONAL PAVILIONS.

At the forums held concurrently, industry professionals, business visitors and high-end visitors were plenty in number. Intriguing programmes ranging from pony and horse shows, and the riding sessions attracted many visitors to watch or participate. The HORFA Global Outstanding Horse Owners' Night, which gathered 400 horse industry professionals, was the most popular event. Through this opening, HORFA is established as the most influential international horse trade show in China as well as Asia. Its combination of an exhibition for trading and an industry meeting targeted at horse farm owners, equestrian club owners,

and present and future horse owners, proved to be a success.

"The best thing about this trade show is that it bridges developed horse markets; we are trying to provide an easy path into China itself for companies from all links of the industry chain. The active participation from overseas exhibitors at HORFA at its second opening shows that the world market has high hopes for this market. It is safe to expect the Chinese horse industry to grow from good to great." says Mr. Yue Gaofeng, the Vice Secretary General of China Horse Industry Association.

The exhibitors all expressed their satisfaction with HORFA 2011. KWPN from Holland was participating for the second time. Its Director of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Irene Wolfs told organisers about her satisfaction with the booth installations, visitor quality and on-site programmes. Mr. Naoaki Koike, the Vice President of Japan Association for International Horse Racing, said that as next year will mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of a diplomatic relationship between China and Japan; they will organise a "Japanese Day" at HORFA 2012 to introduce the Japanese horse industry. 





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