

Arena – February

Editors: Sheba Zager, Alex Parry, Rebecca Haynes

Dressage Forum

We are kicking off 2010 with our first Dressage Forum that will be held in the clubhouse at KEP on Wednesday 17 February.

This forum is the ideal opportunity for you, our fellow Dressage riders, to let us know what you would like to see improved, changed etc. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Rebecca Haynes shares a little of her life with us

I have been riding since the age of four, starting on a very typical Shetland pony, with serious attitude, called Blackie, while living in England. Despite Blackie, my passion has never waned!

I have had two horses that really have been my soul mates. Blue Moon was an instant love and while a completely mad Thoroughbred, did everything – show jumping, eventing and dressage – right up until his retirement at the age of 18. I had him for 21 years and still miss him. My second soul mate is Jolly Jackpot, another insane Thoroughbred whom I love dearly and still have after around 11 years. Such a profound horse, who can do wonderful advanced dressage work at home, but with zero dressage temperament at shows.

I got into judging about seven or eight years ago, mainly because I was fed-up with hearing people complaining about their marks and instead of standing back and becoming one of these people, I wanted to find out what and how the judges see a test and apply this knowledge as a judge and rider in turn. It was a natural extension of my love of dressage.

I look for sparkle in a test! A horse and rider combination that don't play it "safe", but push their own boundaries and try and demonstrate their horse and riding capability to the utmost.

I am seeing primarily changes for the good. The level of judging has improved so much as people involved with dressage share their knowledge and run really good seminars and presentations. Also, the quality of horses has improved over the years and that makes it so much easier to judge the different breeds with equal impartiality and not just get blown away by the odd Warmblood with presence. The only sad thing is that we are not replenishing the pool of judges and our top judges are so few now.

My primary advice to the dressage rider really pertains to the riding of their tests and that is to ride each movement and if a particular movement does not go well, get over it (quickly!) and focus on giving the best into the next movement. Also, competing is not everything – I love being able to work my horse at home, even though I have given up taking him to dressage shows. We should all be riding for the love of the horse and the sport and as a judge, it is such a pleasure to have a competitor enjoying riding their test!

If I had R1-million to spend on any horse globally, I would buy a clone of Cellehof Thaddeus. For me, he was one of the first truly superb stallions imported into South Africa and his legend lives on in his amazing progeny, one of which is my youngster, Twice the Treasure.

Probably my funniest anecdote was the day I was three-day eventing on Blue Moon. We were on really good form and having a phenomenal round until we got to the water. Blue saw the giant African bullfrog at the very last step. I didn't until I surfaced and its eyes were a foot in front of me! Literally new meaning to walking on water as I thought it was a crocodile! My friends who were watching this said they would have come to help me but they were laughing too hard!

I really don't have any regrets in terms of my riding career, be it riding, judging or dressage. I am only extremely grateful that I have been in a position most of my life, to have and enjoy horses. So many people don't get this privilege.

I guess my greatest achievement is healing the leg Jolly Jackpot broke jumping at Inanda Country Base and coming back after a year to win Victor Ludorum at his first jumping show and getting my colours.

International expertise on our shores

Mariette Witthages, who is known as one of the worlds most experienced and sought after judges and trainers, will be visiting South Africa during April.

Mariette will be conducting a two-day seminar at KEP on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 April. This is an opportunity not to be missed by *a//*judges, riders, trainers, scribes and any other interested parties.

Invitations have also gone out to all our 'neighbours' – Kenya, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Botswana, Malawi and Mauritius so book your place now (take leave, call a sickie just don't miss it!)

Monday 19 April

08h00	Technical – Judges only
12h30	Lunch for all participants
14h00	Start Horse/Rider demonstrations
	Novice
	Elementary
	Elementary-Medium
17h00	Finish

Tuesday 20 April

08h00	Start Horse/Rider demonstrations
	Medium
	Advanced
	Prix-St-George
	Intermediare 1
12h30	Finish and Lunch for all participants

The cost is R550 per person (for both days and includes Tea/Coffee/Biscuits and Light Lunch) or R350 per day (including Tea/Coffee/Biscuits and Light Lunch)

Bookings are essential so please email Sheba Zager: shebazager@imagnet.co.za before Wednesday, 31 March to secure a seat.

Payments to be made to GHS account: Nedbank – Epsom Downs

Branch Code – 152205 – Account number: 1522 037 454

Please reference your payment clearly: **MW Clinic + your surname**

Young Horse Dressage Series

Highborn Farms will be launching the Young Horse Series (Dressage) this year. The first series will be held on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 April. This sponsored series will be open to 4, 5 and 6 year olds – offering horses and riders alike a great opportunity to get out and about!

Grow Dressage

The Grow Dressage initiative is spreading its wings, as Riverleigh International Equestrian Centre will be hosting the first Grow Dressage day with a judge! This will be hosted on Wednesday 24 March (an excellent warm up to their first show of 2010 on 27/28 March).

Cost:
R100 per horse for 20 minutes in the Arena with your instructor/self (Endless time in the warm up Arena).
R130 per horse for 15 minutes in the Arena with Clare Bailes judging whatever test you choose (Endless time in the warm up Arena).

Bookings are absolutely essential so please call Andrea Lotis - 082 459 4245. Remember there are no more Ostriches next door to Riverleigh!

Sponsorships

Our discipline really seems to be growing right before our eyes. We have an ever-increasing number of events, more and more riders traveling (locally and internationally) to compete, international trainers and judges from whom we can gain vital experience and the list goes on.

But none of this can be done without the generous support and sponsorship of many companies and individuals. We can offer you fantastic marketing and branding opportunities to suit all budgets and would welcome the opportunity to present these to you. If you are interested please contact Sheba Zager on 082 374 9575.

More kudos to SA

For the first time South Africa has been included in the FEI Global Education Programme for eventing officials and the selection panel have accepted three candidates onto the programme; James Arathoon, Lesley Mawhinney and Colin Fletcher.

Lesley is an FEI candidate judge for eventing dressage and as such has been invited to judge at the CCI 1* at Blaire Castle in Scotland in 2010. This assignment is part of the exchange of eventing officials programme. Lesley has also been offered a place in the FEI mentoring scheme that will run over the next year or two.

Hard work bears excellent results

A number of people have been working very hard again. All of us on the committee would like to say congratulations to:

Lauren Burrages who passed her first written judges exam
Susan Bass who went from National B Panel to National A
Judy Vertue who went from National Candidate to National B Panel
Eino Vuorinen from Provincial A to National Candidate, and
Erica de Groot from Provincial A to National Candidate

Onwards and upwards

On the note of congratulations we have a number of riders who need a big thumbs up as they, and their horses, have gone from strength to strength:

Rambleholm Rococo and Nasia Lupini JEM to JM
Funderdell and Dominey Alexander AN to AE
Kondos Papaflessas and Teeghan Jade Gander JN to JE
Zenele's Diesel and Dust and Yolande Pieterse AE to AEM
Vegas and Alexa Bisschops AN to AE
Brandbach Lilja and Stephanie Ford AE to AEM

Speedy recovery

We send our sincere condolences to Trish Macintosh. Recently both Trish and her horse fell into a sinkhole, which resulted in Trish breaking both her wrists – how awful. Trish – we hope you're back in the saddle in now time.