

California Dressage is in Championship Form

by Nan Meek

California's annual end-of-season dressage championship show is often referred to by a short-and-sweet barn name: The CDS Annual Show. But it is actually two shows, held concurrently at the same venue and populated by mostly the same horses and riders.

Officially, one show is the Great American Insurance Group/United States Dressage Federation Region 7 Championships – barn name: USDF Championships. Officially, the other is the 39th Annual California Dressage Society Championship Show – barn name: CDS Annual Show.

Each has different qualification requirements, but many of the same competitors qualify for both shows. Following are some of the highlights – among so many great horse-and-rider combinations, this is but a small sample. Visit the CDS and USDF web sites, www.california-dressage.org and www.usdf.org, for complete results.

Grand Prix Champions

Competitive dressage at its highest level, Grand Prix is where the combinations of piaffe and passage and 15 one-tempi changes across the diagonal, among the collections, extensions, and lateral movements, stand out as examples of "extreme dressage."

Jennifer Hoffman and Georgia Griffith's 11-year-old Dutch gelding, Petit Danseur, won the CDS Grand Prix Championship with 69.896 percent and the CDS Grand Prix Freestyle Reserve Championship with 68.625 percent. Their combined scores earned them the Keen Memorial Perpetual Trophy, the actual gold medal won by Keen and Hilda Gurney at the Pan Am Games.

"He has so much brilliance," Jennifer Hoffman said prophetically in 2003 about Petit Danseur after their first year of FEI-level competition. Fast-forward to 2006, when following the championship show, the next item on their to-do list is a trip to Europe: first a visit to Krefeld, Germany, where Jennifer and husband Jurgen had a barn for 10 years, then FEI competitions in Maastricht, Frankfurt, and Belgium.

Other stellar performances included Mette Rosencrantz and her 15-year-old Dutch gelding, Basquewille, who took home the Great American/USDF Grand Prix Championship with 66.667 percent and the CDS Grand Prix Reserve Championship with 68.333 percent. The Great American/USDF Grand Prix Reserve Championship went to Nicole Perry on Violet Jen's 10-year-old Hanoverian stallion, Rubino Bellissimo, with 65.729 percent. Donna Richardson and her 15-year-old Dutch gelding, Jazzman, won the Great American/USDF Grand Prix Freestyle Championship with 71.125 percent and the vocal, visible support of their many fans in the stands.

Chelsey Sibley and Deborah Harrison's Dutch stallion, Ijssemeer, won the CDS Grand Prix Freestyle Championship with 71.375 percent, wowing the Saturday night

crowd gathered for the special showcase performance. They also took home the Great American/USDF Grand Prix Freestyle Reserve Championship with 65.104 percent, and fourth-place ribbons in both the CDS and Great American/USDF Grands Prix.

Intermediaire, On the Way to Grand Prix

Rachel Satory Saavedra and her 13-year-old Swedish gelding, Robello, showed what's in store for the near future. Not only did they win both CDS and Great American/USDF Championships at Intermediaire II, the level just below Grand Prix, they also took home third place in the Great American/USDF Grand Prix and fifth in the CDS Grand Prix. Their spectacular passage in the "I2" honor rounds incited the usually sedate spectators to a standing, hollering ovation; look for them in Grand Prix honor rounds in the near future. Rachel is a member of USDF's Instructor Certification Faculty, which tests and certifies dressage instructors throughout the country.

Marie Meyers and her 11-year-old Oldenburg gelding, Fandango, won the CDS Intermediaire I Open Championship. She originally bought him as a resale horse, but she said, "We just clicked, and I'm glad I kept him. He's an exceptional horse!" So exceptional that he placed fourth in the nation at Gladstone earlier this year. Marie credits Guenter Seidel's help this year, as well as her assistant, Marisa Festerling, for originally convincing her to keep Fandango for herself.

Young Champions, Equine and Human

Marisa Festerling and her 5 year old Belgian gelding, Big Tyme, won both the CDS and Great American/USDF Open First Level Championships. But that's only one highlight of their winning year. This August, they placed eleventh in the 2006 FEI/WBFSH World Championships for Young Dressage Horses, held in Verden, Germany. "He's very sweet, very smart, and once he trusts you, he will do anything," Marisa said of the 5 year old Belgian gelding she's had for three years.

Fifteen year old Jessica Banaszak and her 12 year old Dutch gelding, Mango, won the Great American/USDF Fourth Level Junior/Young Rider Championship, the Great American/USDF Fourth Level Freestyle Championship, and took third in the CDS Fourth Level Freestyle. At Pebble Beach in July, Jessica and Mango were on the Gold-Medal-winning Team Freedom in the USEF National Junior Dressage Team Championship. Jess currently trains with Michael Etherly at Starr Vaughn Equestrian, where together they are bringing out the best in horse and rider.

Sixteen year old Ari Lopez and her 5 year old Rheinlander gelding, Corlander II, preceded their CDS and Great American/USDF Freestyle Championship wins with a win in the Novice Division at the Murieta Horse Trials a month prior; their trainer, Heidi Riddle, said.

CDS Futurity Champions

The California Dressage Society Futurity is where the future of dressage meets the public for the first time. Open to 4- and 5-year-olds, and if ridden by an amateur open also to 6-year-olds, Futurity horses compete in two First Level tests, each judged by two judges, with the total number of points determining the placings.

In the Open Division, Tanya Vik and her 4 year old Rheinlander gelding, Frederik, won the Futurity Championship with 71.532 percent. "He's the nicest horse to work with," Tanya said. "He's smart and willing, which makes him very trainable. He loves to go to work!"

The Open Division Reserve Championship went to Christian Hartung riding Christiane Noelting's 4 year old Hanoverian gelding, Romano, with 71.129 percent. Christian is working as Christiane's assistant before returning to Germany for college. Romano, who has a "very level-headed attitude despite his young age," according to Christine, sold after the show to a teenage girl who will continue showing him.

In the Adult Amateur Division, Katy Barglow and her 5 year old Dutch gelding, Unek, earned their championship sash with 65.887 percent, with reserve going to Lisa Teske on her 6-year-old Hanoverian gelding, Remedy, with 65.806 percent. The Cal-Bred Futurity Championship went to Kathleen Raine on Sheryl Kunkle's 5 year old, Mantika, with 69.677 percent, and the Cal-Bred Futurity Reserve Champion went to Carolyn Adams on her 5-year-old Hanoverian gelding, Winterdance, with 68.145 percent.

In the equine version of *Six Degrees of Separation*, a look back at past Futurity winners shows their connection to future winners. This year's Cal-Bred Futurity Champion, Mantika, was ridden by Kathleen Raine, who rode last year's Open Futurity Champion, Solvang's Rivaldo; this year, Kathleen and Solvang's Rivaldo, Jane Hayes's now 6 year old Danish gelding, won the CDS Second Level Open Championship. This year's Cal-Bred Futurity Reserve Champion, Winterdance, is by the Adams' stallion Winterprinz, who won the Open Futurity in 1999. Last year's Adult Amateur Futurity Champion, Nancy Szakacs and her then 5 year old Trakehner gelding, Ruschkoi, won this year's CDS and Great American/USDF First Level Adult Amateur Championships.

In actual fact, there is often less than six degrees of separation between winners, whether you play the game as a rider, trainer, or owner. In a sport that, at its heart, is all about the incredibly precise communication between horse and rider, you can't get away from the importance of relationships ... and the best ones show up in the honor rounds. Congratulations to all the winners!

For complete results, visit the web sites of the California Dressage Society (www.california-dressage.org) and the United States Dressage Federation (www.usdf.org).



Tanya Vic & Frederik



Marisa Festerling & Big Tyme



Hall of Champions

Rachel Satory Saavedra & Robello



Jessica Banaszak & Mango



photos by Sheri Scott



Jennifer Hoffman & Petit Danseur

Marie Meyers & Fandango

Dressage Champions 2006

39th Annual California Dressage Society Championship Show

American Insurance Group/United States Dressage Federation Region 7 Championships

CDS Futurity: Tanya Vik and Frederik are Open Champions; Katy Barglow and Unek are Ad/Am Champions; Kathleen Raine and Mantika are Cal-Bred Champions.

Training Level: Cindy Ramirez and Dimer Fan Lutke Peinjum are CDS Open Champions; Lauren LaCase and Trooper are CDS Ad/Am Champions. Kathleen Whetsell and Winslett are Great American/USDF Open Champions; Kimberly Dobin and Athena are Great American/USDF Ad/Am Champions; Diana

Costella and Lunaria are Great American/USDF Jr/YR Champions (there is no Freestyle at Training Level).

First Level: Marisa Festerling and Big Tyme are CDS and Great American/USDF Open Champions; Nancy Szakacs and Ruschkoi are CDS and Great American/USDF Ad/Am Champions. Emily Tears and Lopaca are Great American/USDF Jr/YR Champions. Ari Lopez and Corlander II are CDS and Great American/USDF Freestyle Champions.

Second Level: Kathleen Raine and Solvang's Rivaldo are CDS Open Champions; Pamela Kato and Willy Wonkenstein are CDS Ad/Am Champions. Michael Etherly and Waranja are Great American/USDF Open Champions; Kelly Krambs and Rampart are Great American/USDF Ad/Am Champions; Emily Tears and Lopaca are Great American/USDF Jr/YR Champions. Alison Knickerbocker and Windsor are CDS Freestyle Champions; Brian Hafner and Lombardo are Great American/USDF Freestyle Champions.

Third Level: Jan Ebeling and Sandrina are CDS Open Champions; Mary Hydar Burke and Prince are CDS and Great American/USDF Ad/Am Champions. Jan Ebeling and Louis Ferdinand are Great American/USDF Open Champions; Susan Walker and Farinelli are Great American/USDF Jr/YR Champions. Alexandra Howard and Rondo are CDS and Great American/USDF Freestyle Champions.

Fourth Level: Sandy Savage and Wocelli are CDS and Great American/USDF Open Champions; Kathy Pavlich and Bocelli are CDS and Great American/USDF Ad/Am Champions. Jessica Banaszak and Mango are Great American/USDF Jr/YR Champions. Kelly Casey and Scenario are CDS Freestyle Champions; Jessica Banaszak are Great American/USDF Freestyle Champions.

Prix St. Georges: Leslie Webb and Harmony's Sandro are CDS and Great American/USDF Open Champions; Dani Judy and Antaeus are CDS and Great American/USDF Ad/Am Champions. Amanda Harlan and Liberte are Great American/USDF Jr/YR Champions (there is no PSG Freestyle).

Intermediaire I: Marie Meyers and Fandango are CDS Open Champions; Alycia Mondavi and Heslegards Disney are CDS Ad/Am Champions. Nicole Perry and Calypso Star 2 are Great American/USDF Open Champions; Victoria Nodiff Netanel and Dream Boy C are Great American/USDF Ad/Am Champions; Danielle Casalett and Knock on Wood are Great American/USDF Jr/YR Champions.

Intermediaire II: Rachel Satory Saavedra and Robello are CDS and Great American/USDF Champions.

Intermediaire Freestyle: Peggy Klump and Lemon Ice are CDS Champions; Chelsey Sibley and Lauwersmeer are Great American/USDF Champions.

Grand Prix: Jennifer Hoffman and Petit Danseur are CDS Champions; Mette Rosencrantz and Basqueville are Great



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Congratulates...

Jennifer Hoffman

"Petit Danseur"



CDS Grand Prix Champion 2006

Good luck showing in Europe this winter!!

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