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Dressage at Devon: From Horse Ballet and Horse Whisperer to Food, Foals, Fancy Hats and More

Devon, PA (August 3, 2011) – Each year as fall approaches, preparation intensifies for the annual International Dressage at Devon Horse Show (www.dressageatdevon.org). The show combines world-class dressage competition and the largest dressage/sport horse breed show outside of Europe with international Fall Festival shops, an array of food and the Ladies' Day Hat Contest. Dressage at Devon will take place from September 27-October 2, 2011 at the Devon Horse Show Grounds, located on US Route 30, in Devon, PA.

The Performance Division, which rounds out the week from September 29 to October 2, offers spectators the opportunity to see top riders from North and South America and Europe. The horses and riders are judged on their mastery of dressage training and the classes help qualify riders for events like the Olympics, Pan American Games and the World Championships. One of the crowd pleasers is the Musical Freestyle which is an excellent demonstration of why dressage is often called "horse ballet." Riders direct their horses with precise, almost imperceptible aids, including body weight, legs and hands, to move gracefully in time to the music.

Locals will have the opportunity to cheer on breeders from Philadelphia and surrounding areas. For example, Shilhouette, a filly bred by Maurine (Mo) Swanson from Rolling Stone Farm in Slatington, PA, will compete in the breed show which runs from September 27-29. Her sire, home-bred Shakespeare RSF, is winner of the 70-day Stallion test in 2009. Shakespeare RSF is approved for breeding with the American Hanoverian Society and the Oldenburg Horse Breeders Society. Her mother, Fhloria, is a Hanoverian mare in the studbook of the American Hanoverian Society and the Oldenburg Horse Breeders Society. Translation: Shilhouette is well bred. She's now getting ready to face the international competition at Dressage at Devon by gracing the grounds of a couple of smaller local shows.

An exciting enhancement is being offered by Dressage at Devon and FLR Sports Radio. A credit-card sized personal receiver will allow you to follow all the commentary of some of the foremost experts in the world of dressage including Natalie Lamping, Monica Sinks, Suzanne King, Kathy Connelly, Ann Moss, Kem Barbosa, Sara Schmitt, Alison Head, and Johanna Gwinn. Listen as they comment and give personal opinion and insight into the horse and rider during their performances. For only \$35 you get a behind the scenes perspective exclusive only to those with a radio. More info or pre-purchase can be found at Dressageatdevon.org.

This year an exhibition from the Australian horse whisperer Guy McLean promises to draw a large audience. The self-taught Australian has entertained, inspired and educated thousands worldwide in his horsemanship abilities. He is on tour for the first time in the USA with his team of four horses: Hope, Sequel, Pride and Spinnaby. "He's amazing," says Lori Kaminski, President/CEO of the Board of Directors of Dressage at Devon, "his horses trust him so much he can ride them through fire. He also orchestrates a team of four horses to move in synch using no bridles, no saddles and no whips or spurs. "

But Dressage at Devon isn't all about horses. With the recent interest in hats sparked by the royal wedding in England, the annual Ladies' Day Hat Contest promises to be bigger and better than ever. Creative entries in the past have included hats adorned with everything from martini glasses to the occasional decorative squirrel. Fascinators are also expected this year, but baseball caps don't qualify. The Ladies' Day Hat Contest will take place on Friday, September 30. All ladies in fancy hats will be admitted to the show at no charge.

Of course, there are also refreshments. "Mimosas on the Midway," an all-you-can-eat brunch, on Sunday, October 2 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Centerline Café, is often the focus of a relaxing day out. Spectators interested in something a little more casual can sample ice cream, funnel cakes, soups, sandwiches, hot dogs, burgers, fries, micro-brews and wine and cheese.

Dressage at Devon tickets are \$10 for general admission. Children under 12 are admitted free. Reserved seating is \$25 on Friday, \$35 on Saturday and \$10 on Sunday and is available online at www.dressageatdevon.org. General admission is available at the door.

About Dressage at Devon

Dressage at Devon (www.dressageatdevon.org) has been the premier North American Equestrian event since its founding by the Delaware Valley Combined Training Association in 1975, and became a separate organization in 2006. It combines world class dressage competition and the world's largest open breed show with the international Fall Festival show and special activities for the entire family. The six-day event attracts more than 700 horses and 35,000 spectators each year. Dressage at Devon, a 501(c) (3) PA non-profit organization, benefits Thorncroft Therapeutic Horseback Riding Inc., the oldest and largest therapeutic riding program in the nation. Since 1991, Dressage at Devon has raised in excess of \$1,000,000 for Thorncroft.