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For more information, contact
Ginny Simon, Project Marketing, Inc.,
610-889-2036 or
gsimon@projectmarketinginc.com

Dressage at Devon 2014 Day 3: The Best of the Breeds and the Performance Tests Begin

September 25, 2014 (Devon, PA) – Breeds from Andalusian and Arabian to the ever-popular Hanovarian and the North American Sportpony graced the Dixon Oval on Thursday. Every breeder is happy to talk about the wonderful characteristics of their own favorite. Andalusian breeders are not exception.

From War Horses to Dressage

“It’s their mind — Andalusians are smart, and they want to please you,” says Jacqueline (Jackie) Seila. Her horse, Isidora SFI (Dichoso Uno x Cassopia), won a blue ribbon in the Andalusian Horse class.

Andalusians, squarely built, robust horses with arched necks, were once known for carrying kings to war in style and their bravery in bull fights. Now they are rapidly gaining popularity in a variety of disciplines

including dressage, eventing, jumping, reining and pleasure. Jackie notes that once she had ridden an Andalusian, there was no going back. She breeds Andalusians and sells them to adult amateurs who enjoy riding horses that look to their riders for direction. "They seem to read your mind," she says.

Hugo SFI (Dichoso Uno x Cassopia) won fifth place in the Andalusian Horse class. Besides dressage, this multitalented horse enjoys jumping and bowing to the onlookers after performing his circus tricks.

Sarah Gately-Wilson, owner of the proud sire, Dichoso Uno, became interested in Andalusians because her parents always spoke highly of them even though they never had the opportunity to own one. That's because you could not export Andalusians from Spain until the late 70s due to a disease that had culled the herd. The Spanish wanted to rebuild the breed. Because Andalusians were in short supply, they were pricey. However, as the number of Andalusians in the U.S. rose when exporting became legal, prices declined. Thus, in 2000 Sarah was able to buy Dichoso Uno, who she uses for breeding and riding. He even commutes to New York for occasional Ralph Lauren fashion shoots where he enjoys being primped for the camera.

The Breed Division Welcomes its First Twin Foals

There was a crowd-pleasing first this year in the Hanoverian 2 & Under class this year. Twins!

Given the odds against healthy twin foal births, Dressage at Devon was thrilled to welcome the first twins ever to the breed show. "It was a surprise," says David Searle, Equine Manager at Iron Springs Farm, when asked about whether they were expecting their mare, Torieta, to have twins. "When we did ultrasounds, Jack was hiding." After Torieta had delivered Jubilee Jill on Easter weekend, she got up, and spectators thought the show was over. Then, to their amazement, another set of legs emerged as Jolly Jack made his presence known.

David explains that twin foals are rare because mares are designed to nurture only one foal. Thus, going to term with two foals can be dangerous to the mare's health. Also, it's unlikely that two healthy foals

will result. Had David known Torieta was expecting twins, he would have been worried prior to the birth.

All's well that ends well. Jack and Jill trotted off with scores of 77 and 74.5 respectively in the KWPN-NA 2 and Under in Dressage at Devon's Breed Division. David was happy to see them show well given that they are less developed for their age than foals that bask in the undivided attention of their mothers.

The Performance Division Begins

The Performance Division began today featuring the USEF Fourth Level Test of Choice, the FEI Dressage Test for 5 year old and The FEI Test for 6 Year Olds. The scores from the FEI Test for 6 Year Olds, the FEI Test for 5 Year Olds and the USEF Test for 4 Year Olds from Thursday and Friday will be combined. The horse with the highest score will be Champion and the second highest score will be Reserve Champion.

Even people get recognized at Dressage at Devon. This year, the Best Handler award went to Klaus Schengber. Originally from Osnabrück, Germany, Klaus is now Head Trainer at High Point Hanoverians (Chestertown, MD). The recipient of this award is chosen by the judges. Phil Silva was the recipient of The John JP Perry Memorial Perpetual Trophy, awarded to a person who demonstrates sportsmanship and is a true ambassador for equestrian sports. The winner is chosen by the Dressage at Devon Committee with input from others. Klaus and Phil are truly deserving winners.

Looking Forward to Friday!

Friday, the Performance Division takes over the grounds. Be sure to stay for the evening classes which include the FEI Grand Prix (a qualifier for the Grand Prix Freestyle) and the FEI Prix St Georges Open CD13. Prix St. Georges is the beginning of the international levels of dressage and is governed by the FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale). At this level, it is expected that the horse and rider will have successfully exhibited all the required movements at the lower levels. Prix St. Georges continues with the more challenging pirouette and flying change work.

Guy McLean will be back at Dressage at Devon on Friday, with his equine partners during the lunch and dinner breaks. And the DVCTA (Delaware Valley Combined Training Association) Quadrille will return with a brand new show.

And don't forget to wear your hat (no baseball hats please) for free admission and a chance to win the Ladies Hat Contest.

About Dressage at Devon

Dressage at Devon, the highest-rated international dressage competition held outside of Europe, combines world-class international dressage competition and one of the world's few complete sport horse breed shows with the family fun of an International Fall Festival, featuring food and shopping for all tastes.

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Isidora SFI - Winner of the Andalusian Horse Class



Twins in hand



Klaus Schengber (L), winner of the Best Handler Award and Phil Silva (R), recipient of the John JP Perry Memorial Perpetual Trophy. Mutual admiration!

Editor's note: Additional pictures available upon request.