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BREEDING NEWS

for Sport Horses

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HORSE BREED-
ING WORLD**

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SHF new challenge

The Société Hippique Française (SHF) is 150 years old. Well...! So what? Who in our sport horse breeding world is familiar with the SHF? Is it a studbook? It does not sound like one! What is the SHF if not a studbook recognized by the WBFSSH, although this same World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses welcomes this French organization as an 'Associate' member!

Founded in 1865, the SHF is the organization in charge of the whole process of selection, evaluation, marketing and commercialization of young sport horses or ponies (any disciplines encompassed by the FEI, from jumping to endurance or driving) in France. Its primary activity, however, is to govern and offer proper circuits so that each breed, and breeders operating in France, will be better able to perform and select. In fact, it is a service company.

Some figures? Around 20,000 young horses and ponies on its circuits (70% in jumping), for a total of 140,000 entries to 1,200 shows, organizing 10,200 classes. Truly unique! France has always presented special organizational

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Young horse programmes and competitions

INTERNATIONAL (by Judy Wardrope) Considerable time has been spent doing research following my attendance a little over a year ago at the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Young Horse Championships Symposium in Kentucky. On the agenda were presentations in the promotion of an initial USEF Young Horse Championship and Festival. For the most part, the presentations covered the scoring and judging of the proposed US classes.

I read the literature and listened to the presentations, but, as with most issues, I tend not to automatically accept things on the surface; I look deeper and almost always have questions. As a result, I wondered how accurate young horse competitions were, in general, at identifying young horses that could go on to compete at the upper levels. And I wondered if soundness and longevity were factors in the



Damon Hill (Dommerhall - Romance x Rubinstein I) and Helena Langehanenberg (GER)

judging/scoring. I was most curious to see how close such programs came to meeting their mandates.

Defining success

The final presentation in Kentucky, given by Joachim Geilfus, was entitled 'Young

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Conter: Knokke show and breeder

BELGIUM (by Jo de Roo) In 2015, Stephan Conter and Paul Gheysens organized for the first time the remarkable five-star international showjumping competition, Knokke Hippique. Hosted in the exclusive seaside resort, this new equestrian show took place at the end of June. Previously Conter organized the Brussels StepHex Masters successful showjumping tournament. In Knokke, almost 30,000 visitors appreciated spectacular facilities.

After the final day Conter said: "Now we are going to take a break. Afterwards we will think about the 2016 edition and will try to surprise you." About



Stephan Conter

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Conter: Knokke show and breeding

Conter declared.

Co-organizer Paul Gheyens, CEO of construction company Ghelamco, is also a happy man: "I'm a creator. Creating is something I like to do. On May 8, 2015 Stephan Conter and I decided to organize Knokke Hippique. We made an agreement: I was in charge of the infrastructure and he was responsible for the organization. The result has been unbelievable".

Count Leopold Lippens, the mayor of Knokke-Heist, is also delighted: "As mayor, I am delighted to welcome the first Knokke Hippique. This five-star competition, a 'Champions League' of equestrian sport will bring the best in the world to our east coast and give our seaside resort an unmistakable international image."

During the last day of this event we had the opportunity to talk for a while with a very busy Stephan Conter.

◆ Stephan, do you think horses are traded during this international tournament in Knokke?

Yes. In almost each showjumping tournament horse traders are doing business. This is also the case here, although I have to say that in Knokke business is done more discreetly.

◆ What kind of horses are in demand nowadays?

My company, Stephex Stables, is selling top-class showjumpers worldwide. Our core business is trading showjumpers that can play or are playing a leading role in the international showjumping scene. Sometimes it happens that spectators can watch in one Grand Prix the performances of five, six of even

twelve horses, traded by Stephex Stables. We have an impressive list of references, such as Ulyse (Nonstop - Qarpado x Jus de Pomme) with Philippe Le Jeune and Pius Schwizer; Hickstead (Hamlet-Jomara x Ekstein) and Eric Lamaze; Cornet d'Amour (Cornet Obolensky - Daquiri x Damiani) and Daniel Deusser; Coriana van Klapscheut (Darco - Uriana van Klapscheut x Heartbreaker), Eric Lamaze and Pilar Lucrecia Cordon;



Eric Lamaze's 2008 Beijing Olympic gold medalist Hickstead (Hamlet - Jomara x Ekstein) passed through Stephan Conter's hands

Photo: P. Llevellyn

For Joy van't Zorgvliet (For Pleasure - Contesse van't Zorgvliet x Heartbreaker), Kevin Staut; Electra van't Roosakker (Carthago - Atoucha van't Roosakker x Darco), Janike Sprunger and Jos Lansink; Narcotique de Muze II (Darco - Qerly Chin x Chin Chin), Eric Lamaze; Derly Chin de Muze (For Pleasure - Werly Chin de Muze x Nabab de Reve); Goya van de Begijnakker/aka Goja 27 (Wandor van de Mispelaere - Arienne van de Durmstede x Palestro van de Begijnakker), Janne Friederike Meyer; and Gloe van't Kapelhof Z/aka Chloe (Chippendale Z - Becky van't Kapelhof x Quicksilver), Jan van Alken, Penélope Leprevost and Janne Friederike Meyer.

I am the co-owner of stud-farm Haras de la Pomme in France. The other co-owners are Geert Baertsoen and his wife Geerttrui. Our

breeding activities are managed by Geert, together with Carlos Pinto. Carlos Pinto and Farid Ladjouan are also responsible for some trading activities in Stephex Stables. In the beginning, I owned almost 19 breeding dams and I bred yearly 10 to 15 foals. Nowadays we breed each year between 50 and 60 foals. I own several top breeding dams that jumped at the highest international level before they were introduced into our breeding program. I am talking about top dams, such as Narcotique de Muze II, Usha van't Roosakker (Chin Chin - Rosanne van de Withoeve x Major de la Cour), Laurin Z, Amaryllis, and so on. The dams

don't necessarily need to have an international career, but they must belong to strong dam lines, full of performance blood. I am very interested in the dam lines out of which the breeding dams are born. The best horses are born out of the best breeding families. I started breeding activities because several renowned breeders advised me to do so.

◆ You started your breeding activities quite recently. Despite this late debut you have bred already two approved stallions: George Z (Kannan - Usha van't Roosakker x Chin Chin) and Good Boy (Vigo d'Arsoailles - Usha van't Roosakker x Chin Chin). Do you have the ambition to become a stallion

keeper?

I have a contract with Zangersheide for the exploitation of George Z. This week Judy-Ann Melchior told me that George Z had already covered 150 dams. The answer to your question is 'yes'. I want to have several marvellous stallions.

◆ What's your breeding aim?

I want to breed the best of the best for top sports. This gives me a kick.

◆ And what do you mean by 'the best of the best'?

Well, first of all the horses need to be intelligent. In my opinion the intelligence of a horse is the most important quality. Secondly, the horses must be careful and, of course, they also need to have sufficient scope. These three qualities make a horse complete. I try to breed horses that have those three qualities.

Stephan Conter not only has a great reputation as a trader, breeder and businessman (producing horseboxes and motorhomes), but also as an organizer of several showjumping tournaments. In the beach town of Knokke he started with a wasteland, we have to say.

◆ Why are you organizing such events?

I want to give a boost to the Belgian horse industry. I want to do more and more for this industry. Every person involved in the horse industry may make money. And believe me: in this world there is a lot of money for many people.

◆ Will there be a second edition of Knokke Hippique in 2016?

Yes, of course. If it depends on me there may be 50 more editions! ■