

Les Etoiles des Grands Pins - four days of international equestrian sports at the highest level

Enthusiastic spectators and exciting top level sports at the CDI*** and CSI*** in Vidauban, 18 to 21 June 2009

For the second time since the construction of the "Domaine Equestre des Grands Pins", the center of equestrian sports in Vidauban, managed by both jumping and dressage rider Bernadette Brune, hosted the international elite.

Four days of dressage and show jumping at the highest level located within pine trees and vineyards – just like the previous year – this particular tournament attracted many international star riders such as Athina Onassis de Miranda, Edwina Alexander, Philippe Rozier as well as the French dressage champion and Olympic athlete Marc Boblet, into the heart of the Provence.

150 riders from 23 nations were competing between Thursday, June 18 and Sunday, June 21, as part of the announced 18 show jumping and 8 dressage tests, while an experienced team behind the scenes assured smooth proceedings.

The dressage tests reached their first highlight with the Grand Prix on Thursday: Winner of this competition was Stefan van Ingelgem from Belgium on *Whitney van't Genthorf* with a result of 67,957%, followed by the US-American rider Catherine Haddad (*Cadillac* / 67,617%) and the French Champion Marc Boblet (*Whitney Star* / 67,277%).

After her strong performance on the previous day the American rider Catherine Haddad went on to win the Grand Prix Special (70,625%) on Friday, followed by Marc Boblet on *Whitney Star* (67,042%), followed by the Dutch rider Kebie van der Heijden on *Toy Story* (65,333%) in third place.

Saturday evening featured the Grand Prix Freestyle competition, the stunning climax for all dressage riders and spectators. In this breathtaking final under the moonlit skies of the Provence, the best of the best once again faced the verdict of the international judges: the creative performances at highest technical level resembled an elegant dance of the horses with their riders.

Winner of the Freestyle with an excellent performance was the French rider Hubert Perring, reaching 71.5% with *Diabolo Saint Maurice*, just ahead of Wayne Channon (*Lorenzo CH* / 71.20%) from GB and Portuguese rider Daniel Pinto (*Galopin de la Font* / 70.55%), representing the stud of Sylvain Massa from Les Arcs-sur-Argens.

The first show jumping test took place on Friday, the first highlight was the three-star Grand Prix qualifying. France secured the first three after an exciting jump-off: The first place went to Aldrick Cheronnet (*Barbarossa of Paemel* /0/0/44,78), followed by Patrice Planchat (*Mowgli des Plains* /0/0/44,79) in second place, only by a whisker. Jean-Paul Casile (*Andy* /0/0/46,82) came third.

On Saturday, June 20, Les Etoiles des Grands Pins presented not only more dressage test but also more show jumping competitions, including another three-star Grand Prix. The Dutch rider Peter Geerink succeeded in breaking the French superiority of the previous day, he won this competition with *Scotch*, with Patrice Planchard on *Mowgli the Plains* again second, and Vincent Feuillerac with *Loveday Des Fontaines* in third place.

The overall event concluded on Sunday afternoon, after the jumping tests for 6- and 7-year-old horses, with the Big Tour of the Grand Prix jumping competition: This exciting top-level contest was not only about coming first, but also about collecting valuable world cup points. After a thrilling jump-off the winner was German born Daniel Deussen on *AD Ornella* (42.76 s), who kept the audience at the edge of their seats until the last moment. Starting last, Daniel won with a perfect ride ahead of Patrice Delaveau on *Katchina Mail* (43.87 s), third place for Ireland with Darragh Kerin on *Night Train* (43.98 s).

On the Domaine de Grands Pins all riders, grooms and horses were met with excellent facilities, built with expertise and focus to details. All tests were held under optimal conditions. "I am very pleased with the course of the tournament, the great facilities and it's really fun to ride here," said Marc Boblet. Also the grooms were happy: "A well organized riding center such as this one is hard to find, everything available at short hand and friendly staff, this is how it should always be."

With the creation of the Domaine Equestre des Grands Pins in 2006 in this unique location, one of the most innovative and best equipped riding centers across Europe has been established. More amateur and pro competitions will also be held in the coming months.

But that's not all – a massive extension of the facilities is planned for 2010: A riding stadium as well as 500 guest boxes, 6 tournament riding areas, accommodation for riders and grooms and an additional indoor riding arena for all disciplines will be complementing the existing installations. Last but not least, also an ultra modern clinic with a horse swimming pool and rehab center is to be built.

For more information and photo material please check the press area on our website: www.domaine-equestre.com/press.html

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