



Haute École

So, it's just a horse, right?

For the fortunate who own them, this question will usually arise from horsey and non-horsey friends alike. To those who've not been lucky enough to meet and discover the breed, a Lipizzan is just a breed of horse, usually white, with an odd name and something to do with dressage. And only to those who have had the pleasure and honor of befriending a Lipizzan is this question so strongly answered, "No, not at all." But what specifically makes them so unique, so special? To some, it's their incredible intelligence; once you win their trust they learn so quickly and easily that you wonder if they somehow "read the lesson" before you did. Several new owners have marveled at their ability to understand and their willingness to accomplish whatever is presented to them. In fact the more that's presented to them, the more their versatility is revealed. With an adventurous owner, it can become more and more obvious that they are far more than just a dressage horse – able to compete at any discipline or just be the "Happy Hacker" for the family. They are aloof - there is no mistaking their Hapsburg heritage - but once they are allowed the time to measure you out and decide you're worthy of their trust, their bond of friendship to you is rock hard and forever. Their unique history and creation are well documented and we are honored and fortunate to have some of that history recounted in this and our previous issue by Herr Andreas Hausberger, Chief Rider at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. The SRS heritage has preserved this rich cultural history. All this would be reason enough to cherish and preserve the Lipizzan, but there is more. The combination of their intelligence, courage, and trust in an owner they love makes them a horse for all reasons – a true horse of versatility and performance! In this issue we will show just a glimpse of this – from their history, work in classical dressage, performance on the long rein, to trail riding and even working in Search and Rescue – all accomplished by our amazing Lipizzans! And we hope this will encourage you to discover the full potential of your own horse, and perhaps help non-Lipizzan owners to realize what a truly amazing breed they have available to them.

Samantha Martel, Editor



Dear Fellow LANA Member:

This issue of LANA's *Haute École* marks the beginning of a new fiscal year and a new membership year.

We had a successful membership drive and have added dozens of new members. Our sincere thanks to all of you who renewed your memberships. And welcome to all of our new members. Our members now come from many countries. *Welcome! Willkommen! Bienvenue! Welkom! Dobrodošli! Bienvenidos! Üdvözlet!*

We are all grateful to have had these magnificent horses touch our lives, and we are reminded of our responsibility to insure the perpetuation of this historic breed. We are also reminded of the joy in sharing with fellow

enthusiasts. This issue of *Haute École* features several articles about the delight of achieving communication, trust and balanced movement with our Lipizzans. There are also articles on the history and traditions of the Lipizzan and of the Spanish Riding School.

LANA wants to continue to meet the evolving needs of our members. Any member who would like to volunteer to help in LANA's activities, please just speak up. Your involvement is welcomed and appreciated. Let us know what you would like to do. You are also welcome to tell us of any concerns you might have.

Please contact me or any other Board Members.

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An Early History of Lipica - the Stud, the Horses, Breeding: Part II

by **Andreas Hausberger**,
Chief Rider, Spanish Riding School



Joseph II travelled to Carnolia in the spring of 1784. While there, he paid a visit to the Pestranegg stud farm (March 19, 1784). In the following years, the dissolution of the royal stud at Karst was seriously considered. During council sessions the establishment of a stud near Halicy in Galicia was discussed, Emperor Joseph II instructed members of the state government of Graz to furnish another report. This report was presented on March 8, 1786, and decided in favor of Lipizza. This was the first time that the breed term "Lipizzaner" was used in an official document. Consideration for the highly esteemed head riders, and thoughts regarding scientific knowledge and art, may have played a role in the decision to allow the continued existence of the stud. A celebratory document for the 300th anniversary of the Lipizza stud in 1880 described Joseph II's decision as follows: *"So then the continued support for this establishment, that was equally important for the royal household as for the province, was assured, and today it is clear to all*

equine specialists who know the Lipizzaner breed that it would have been an unforgivable mistake to tear the stud farm from the ground on which its founders set it, and into which it had grown strong roots."

Emperor Leopold II felt so very strongly about the continued development of the stud farm that he went to survey in September of 1790. An imperial decree (June 30, 1792) enabled the use of the alpine Potschka, Ulatschnu, and Raunegg lands by the stud at no cost. In 1793 a planned expansion of the stud failed despite lengthy negotiations.

By the end of the 18th century the future of the stud seemed secure. The most important positions were held by experts. The head stable masters were Dominik Andreas, Duke of Kaunitz-Rietberg-Questenberg, from 1807-1812, Johann Joseph Robert, Duke of Trauttmansdorff-Weinsbert, from 1812-1834, and Eugene, Earl Wrba from Freudenthal, from 1834-1848.

The outbreak of the Napoleonic wars against revolutionary France brought grave changes for Lipizza. The stud was heavily threatened by the advance of French troops, which necessitated an evacuation. On March 22, 1797, 300 horses were relocated to Stuhlwiessenburg, where they arrived on April 30th, 1797. All of the horses arrived unharmed; many mares even foaled while en route. A survey of Lipizza by the stud inspector showed desolate conditions;



Emperor Joseph II, Minkindorf Austria



Lipizzans in Dakovo today

of 110 mares miscarried. The relocation of the stud from Lipizza further to the east was considered again, but the plan was dropped after a brief period. They were not to return home until 1815.

During the French occupation, Lipizza was part of the Napoleonic province Illyria. Two French eagles carved from stone, sitting atop the pillars at the walled entrance of Cornale bear witness to those times.

The woodlands were heavily damaged due to deforestation. The horse population of the monarchy suffered heavy losses during the occupation. Revitalization of the herds was approached with a great deal of energy. The Lipizza stud was mandated by imperial order to: *“first and foremost carry responsibility for the preservation of a pure breed.”*

the farmers from the surrounding area had looted the abandoned stud. They scattered and destroyed the archives and took furniture with them.

The war ended with the peace agreement of Campo Formio (October 17, 1797), this along with mild weather in the fall of 1797, made a march possible, so some of the horses were brought back on the 20th and 22nd of December. Mares with foals and the three and four year old horses were brought together in Mór and spent the winter there. The return of these horses was complete on September 11th, 1789.

A hefty earthquake on January 4th, 1802 undid the necessary renovations that had been carried out after the return of the horses.

The War of 1805 forced yet another evacuation of the stud, this time to the Slovenian Stud Dakovo (in Hungarian: Diakovar). They departed on November 15, 1805; the horses marched over Fiume (modern day Rijeka, Croatia) under the leadership of the stud master, Mayerhofer, and reached their destination in the beginning of January 1806. The hard winter and the lack of funds, which had been allocated by Vienna but never reached Mayerhofer, exhausted all involved.

In October of 1806 the decision was made to relocate the entire stud to the royal governed city of Karad (also known as Kameerallherrschaft) in Hungary. The young horses arrived on the 4th of November, the breeding stallions, the mares in foal and nursing mares arrived on the 7th of November 1806 after a two week march. They had barely arrived when a fire broke out in the town that spread to the barn where the mares in foal were kept. It took great effort to save them. On April 1st, 1807, Mayerhofer received the order to return to Lipizza; by the end of May the horses were back in their old home. One foal had died on the way.

On May 13th, 1809 they had to evacuate for the third time. This time the destination was Pecska by the Maros river (in the Arad county, not far from *Mezőhegyes*). 289 horses arrived in *Pecska* on June 27th. Three mares and one foal died during the march, and two mares had to stop due to illness. The climate difference was so cataclysmic that in 1810, 27 out

The “Lipizzan breed, which had proved its excellence over time and was especially valued by equine experts,” was relocated to the military stud at Radautz (founded in 1792 in the Bucovina province) and to Piber, due to intervention by Major General Earl of Hardeg, who was responsible for the restocking and inspection of the stud farms. After returning from the third exile in 1815, the stud books were newly established and maintained at two different locations: in Lipizza and at the head stable master’s ministry in Vienna. Due to the transfer of Lipizzans out of the “Nucleus herd” from Lipica to the various exile locations, large Lipizzan herds formed in places like Hungary. Countless small private stud farms belonging to various noble houses also bred these noble horses.

Under Emperor Ferdinand I, the question of an appropriate location for the royal stud became relevant again. The regional presidents in Trieste and Laibach were instructed to do a thorough evaluation of the facilities in Lipizza and Prestranegg. The resulting report suggested that for financial reasons the stud should be moved to the Koptschan stud, and that stud received an elevated status through the declaration of April 29th, 1826.



Partnership — Theresa Falzone and Zeema

by Samantha Martel



We all know Lipizzans are special, but this one is amazing. Meet Zeema, a 12 year old gelding, owned by new LANA member Theresa Falzone who lives near Albuquerque, New Mexico. Zeema was bred by LANA member Jennifer Thurston of Weaselskin Farms in Durango, Colorado; he was sired by 506 Pluto III Fabia III, out of an imported Hungarian warmblood mare with Shagya Arab blood.

Zeema came to our attention a few weeks ago when we were contacted by Debbie Land of the American Competitive Trail Horse Association (www.actha.us) regarding a new show that will start on September 13th on cable/satellite HRTV (and available online at www.hrtv.com) with thirteen one-hour episodes entitled, "America's Favorite Trail Horse." Theresa & Zeema will appear in the second episode, to be aired on September 20th at 7 p.m. The producers of the program contacted LANA to let us know that a Lipizzan had been selected as one of the final 100 horse-rider teams for the program, in which viewers will vote to select the winning team. We were thrilled when we found out that Zeema competes in ACTHA events and thought a mention of this was worthwhile – after all, they are not just dressage horses, are they? Little did we realize how truly versatile this particular Lipizzan was!



With a little investigation we discovered that Zeema not only competes in competitive trail riding, but he and Theresa are also members of the New Mexico Mounted Search and Rescue (www.nmmsar.org). Zeema and Theresa train together on both a local and state-wide level in Search and Rescue (SAR) in order to stay up to date and prepared for any call they might get. They have participated in searches throughout New Mexico in all kinds of weather and on all types of terrain. They must be prepared to search for as long as it takes, into the night and sometimes right through the night.

It takes a unique character and strength of both mind and body. Theresa and Zeema have developed the deepest trust and a bond of the strongest level. Theresa says, "I have had and worked with many breeds in my 30 years with horses and he is much more than I ever imagined I could have in my life." This deep love and trust gives Zeema the mindset and willingness he needs to go wherever he must in his role with SAR – and he is considered one of the stronger members of the SAR Unit. Zeema trusts Theresa to lead him and knows she will never put him in undue jeopardy. Their confidence in each other is what makes them such a great team. Theresa says, "What has helped, I believe, in that confidence and trust we have in each other is two things... our training in dressage and the fact that during our training and showing in dressage, we continued to follow our passion in the world of trail riding. All the while we were showing we would make plenty of time for trail riding and camping in the mountains, to the dismay of some of my fellow dressage riders!" Zeema was the 2007 New Mexico Dressage Association's Schooling Show End of Year Training Level Champion.

Theresa has felt blessed to have Zeema enter her life and has jumped at any opportunity that has come her way to give back. And as if their work with NMMSAR isn't enough, they also volunteer at El Rancho de las Golondrinas (<http://golondrinas.org>), a living history museum celebrating and teaching about the early Spanish colonists of New Mexico and their way of life. Zeema and Theresa, in period cos-



Under Saddle at last - Pluto Fantasia

by *Susanne Desai*

Just over a year ago I welcomed my first Lipizzaner, Pluto Fantasia, out of a shipping truck and into my backyard farm. I chose him from the comfort of my computer chair, dreaming of what it would be like to own a legendary stallion from such a special heritage. At the first glimpse I was amazed at his musculature and swan like neck. At 4 years old he had a youthful grey coat but the eyes of an old soul that carried years of experiences from past generations. Without speaking, he was in command. He was self-assured and did not show any fear. It was obvious he would be dominant in the field of horses. In fact, he greeted a younger gelding in the pasture by biting him and kicking him repeatedly until we could get them separated. When a horse from a nearby farm came by on the trail, he would leap into the air, doing levade and pesade. This was a horse unlike any we had seen in person before. This was a horse that needed to build a relationship first. He needed to have a desire to please or else no work could be done with him.



When I dream of what I want to do with horses, I do not imagine myself at shows. I don't enjoy performing as I did when I was an innocent child competing at dressage shows. I only go now to watch and support my competing friends. To me, riding is an art unto itself and my inspiration for riding is my pure enjoyment of the art form. When you watch the best horse and rider pairs in any setting, you can feel their unity. To me the ultimate goal is enjoyment of the horse and rider in their work. What does it take to have this kind of connection with a horse? I want to share this process with my fellow LANA members.

For the last year, Pluto "Beast," as we called him, has worked many long days and weeks on simple things, such as walking on and off a platform, on bright blue tarps, under an umbrella and next to jump standards. What have these tasks taught this dominant horse? They have taught him to trust the demands of his partner and to understand that what she asks of him will not hurt him.



He learned to act as a respectful partner and trust that he will be safe. This took time and patience. Through these simple tasks he learned to trust the one handling him and he began to want to please his partner. So from a challenging dominant horse, he was becoming a willing but noble partner.

If there is a rule book for how to train Lipizzans, I wasn't unaware of it. I know there are books on the history of the Spanish Riding School and some books written by those who were part of the famous school, such as Colonel Podhajsky. These books were

where I learned about dressage. Classical dressage is the foundation for all else to come for any horse. Years ago, it did not seem that there were today's pressures to compete an eight year old horse at upper levels; they seemed to understand that the horse was too young. Reading that Lipizzaners should only be started at age four, at first spending many months on the lunge, suggested to me that all horses and all breeds should be handled this way, not just the Lipizzan. After all, dressage is a gymnastic sport and the horse needs to build muscles correctly; that takes time and practice.

After months of these simple ground exercises, Pluto Beast moved on to lunging. Although he was meant to be lunged as his ancestors had, I have to say it was not without a battle that he was persuaded to move independently on a circle, especially in the clockwise direction. A simple canter request, while understood entirely by him, would at times be answered by a huge explosion of activity that surely required more effort than the canter would have. Lunging is the kind of partnership from the ground that requires respect, and also a willingness to please. For this we found that using the clicker and reward system changed Pluto Beast's negative attitude to a positive attitude.

Finally, we began to have Pluto accept the weight of his partner without youthful rebellion. He has understood from the first time what it means to turn from the weight of the rider's seat and to do simple changes in the shoulders. To move off the leg has been met with a fair bit of laziness. Under saddle, Pluto is a naturally regal and confident mount. Being ridden was a natural progression in our relationship. In our early training, he learned to trust us in various settings and situations. Even the formal dressage arena might have unusual distractions, such as flapping raincoats, large hats, or potential hidden mountain lions that only the horse can smell. He had to be able to trust me there too. With this developing partnership, I hope this horse will understand that he and his rider are in a mutually trusting relationship.

I consider myself to be only an educated amateur with some experience. I wish I lived closer to other Lipizzan owners so I could learn from them. One of the great rewards of having your own small farm is that you can pick and choose who to ride with; you do not have to be in a training program in order to board your horse.

Recently we welcomed Will Faerber to come give us a lesson on Pluto. Will was fortunate to have worked with Nuno Oliveira in Portugal and Arthur Kottas

at the SRS. I had watched Will in awe for months, seeing him use his classical dressage methods to train different breeds, including Arabians, Haflingers, Quarter Horses, and both valuable and rescue warmbloods. It is his philosophy that all horses can be ridden correctly through classical dressage, no matter the breed. In our lesson, we worked on lunging, which is a fundamental part of Will's training. The lunge whip should be respected as a forward moving aid, just as your leg is, so if you hold the lunge whip, the horse should move away from it. From the ground you can help teach the horse to use its back correctly so that it swings and the legs follow freely on the ground. Not only does this roundness of the back enable the horse to make a true connection through the bit, but it protects the horse's legs and spine from injury during riding. It may be easier for the horse to learn to do this from ground work without a rider, but it is a necessary step toward performing dressage correctly.

Pluto, at 14.2+, has a typical baroque Lipizzaner conformation that is very strongly balanced. He is also very gymnastic in his ability to use his neck to

balance himself and hold himself in a levade but he will have to be able to lower his hind end and swing his back in order to step under himself and learn to perform passage, which is a goal I have for him. Pluto took orders fairly well from his guest trainer and, after learning a bit more lunging, he progressed to the next stage. Under saddle and with a bridle on for the first time, he walked and trotted comfortably with a 6'2" man on him, stretching into contact with the bit and starting to round his back. We have new ideas for his training and look forward to the opportunity to learn more from Will in the future. It is interesting to note that Pluto Fantasia has always been especially friendly to men; I think he remembers his previous owner, John Gliege, who loved him and all Lipizzaners so very much. With more time and patience and the help of my friend and fellow amateur trainer Kelly Moussouris-Synold, we hope to have Pluto Fantasia on his way to being an even more amazing representative of the Lipizzaner family and proof that they can be great horses for experts and amateurs alike.



Will Faerber on Pluto. More info on Will Faerber and his training stable in Rancho Santa Fe, CA at www.Ar12Ride.com

News from the LANA Board of Directors

LANA announces the retirement of long-time board member, Sandra Heaberlin of Ohio.

Almost everyone, at one time or another, interacted with Sandy during her almost twenty years with LANA. Her dedication and service to LANA were invaluable. We wish her joy with all of her newly-found free time.

LANA's new Registrar will be John Nicholas Iannuzzi of New York City. Mr. Iannuzzi founded the oldest American Lipizzan registry and served multiple terms as President of the Lipizzan International Federation (LIF). We are honored that he will share his considerable expertise as the new Registrar.

Long Reining in The Netherlands

by Regine Riegman

After many years of admiring the Lipizzaner horses on my holidays in Austria, I climbed on the back of a Lipizzaner myself for the first time in 1997 in my home country of the Netherlands. It was on the brown Lipizzaner mare Sava XIII and it was clear to me that this was the ultimate horse for me. The Lipizzaner became truly my passion and I knew that the first horse who would be my own could be nothing other than a Lipizzaner. In November 2001, I acquired Capriola M, a Lipizzaner mare born May 14, 1994 out of the Hungarian black mare Capriola M and by the Piber stallion Conversano Nima.

Unfortunately, there are very few Lipizzaner horses in the Netherlands, probably about 100 to 150, but that makes me so proud to have one. Capriola was willing to do anything for me after I gained her trust and we are true friends. I love to work with her, she always gives me 100%. But she is also a sweet and affectionate horse who loves to cuddle!



Most of the Lipizzaner horses in the Netherlands are used for dressage or carriage driving. The Dutch world champion four-in-hand driver, IJsbrand Charidon, had recently switched to the Lipizzaner horses, but for many years now, the

Dutch champion tandem driver, Han Gankema, and pair driver, Saskia van Heesch, have participated with their Lipizzaners in international driving competitions. With Lipizzaners, you truly can do everything - drive, ride, jump, working equitation, long rein, really everything.

My Capriola is just such a versatile Lipizzaner. She can be used in carriage driving, I ride her under saddle and we also participate in long reining. We continue to practise our dressage exercises, we take long rides in the forest and we also can handle the obstacles of a Working Equitation track. We have excelled and became famous in the Netherlands from our work on the long rein. With long reining you can do the exercises you do when you are riding your horse, and I mean all the exercises - in walk, trot and canter, while walking beside your horse, even half-pass, traverse and pirouette. And it is not necessary for you to run next to your horse for the horse will learn to collect.

Working on the long rein can complete a good workout or become an alternative and



support for the normal training of your horse. In traditional dressage, as in the Spanish Riding School, the difficult higher-level exercises are learned first without the rider's weight. After the horse masters the exercise, then when the rider tries the exercise, it is already familiar for the horse. Long reining can be used to teach your horse physically demanding exercises also. The horse is not disturbed by a rider on their back and can more easily learn to collect. All exercises that are usually under a rider, can also be done while long reining.

Long reining is in some respects more difficult than riding your horse because you don't have your seat or your legs as aids. In other ways, long reining is easier because you will not impede the horse with your unbalanced weight or incorrect seat. It takes real cooperation of rider and horse. Most horses will experience long reining as a fine alternative and even become more diligent in their work. You may find your horse will improve and become even more flexible in the dressage exercises, and of course, this will be of benefit to you when you are riding your horse again.

We have been in several events in the Netherlands to show the exercises you can do by long reining. We love to promote this activity. The principle of the long reining is the same as driving, when your horse does an exercise well, you release the pressure on the reins, and in this way your horse learns to support itself on its own legs. To promote long reining to the general public, I organized a Long Reining Day to let people experience how well a horse can do with long reining. The First Long Reining day took place in 2008. From all areas of the country enthusiastic people came to take part. The day was a big success and was everything I hoped for, a day in which we could learn from each other but especially we could enjoy our horses. In 2009 we repeated the Long Reining Day and again it was marvellous! After a pause in 2010, this year a new Long Reining Day is coming on September 24, 2011. This third Long Reining Day will take place in Overasselt, the Netherlands.



I welcome my fellow LANA members to come and participate in a clinic or come and have a look at long reining, you are more than welcome. Information about this day can be found on my website: www.gezienbijgjen.com. You

can also find us at the big equestrian events in Holland. Together with two friends and their Lipizzaner horses, I give clinics and shows in long reining. It is wonderful to show the public what you can accomplish and also to show what a beautiful horse the Lipizzaner is!

Everyone can learn and practise long reining, and I would love to get you started, so I would like to explain how you can start long reining.

For long reining, you need a bridle with a snaffle, long reins and a short whip. The long reins must be about 6 meters (about 20 feet) for a horse of a Lipizzan's size. First you have to teach the horse that he has to walk in front of you. Take a position at his inner shoulder, the inner rein straight in your hand, and the outer rein over the withers, with your hands next to each other in the position of a rider, and ask your horse to walk. Your horse may try to turn and look where you are. Be friendly, and give your horse a gentle touch with the whip on the shoulder and ask again to walk on. When the horse does, praise lavishly! It is important to praise your horse when he does what you ask because the horse will try to do their very best to find out what it is you want from them. Now you can walk in the arena and try some circles. When your horse can walk both sides of the arena with you at his shoulder, you can try to distance yourself towards his inner hind leg. Your horse must be safe from kicking by his hind legs but it is important to stay next to the hip rather than behind your horse and also to stay close. When you are close to your horse, he cannot kick



you as hard as when you stand or walk further away. However, I must stress that you can only long rein with a horse who is safe!

When your position is at the inner leg you have the reins on each side of the horse

in a straight line. The outer rein bends a little around the outer buttock of your horse. Now you always walk at the inner hind leg so you have to switch by a change of hand. When your horse can walk with you at the position of the inner hind leg you can ask your horse to trot. Your horse should respond to the command 'trot' and if not, you gently touch the horse with your whip. When your horse does what you ask, he may go much too fast and you will find yourself running! This is not what we want, so you have to make clear to your horse that you will have him trot but that he has to go slow enough that you can walk and not have to run. When your horse trots too fast you ask him to slow down. He will probably go back to walk again. But, this is not what you want him to do and you will ask for the trot again. If he goes too fast you say, "sloooooowly boy!" Just repeat this as much as it takes so that your horse will understand that he can trot, but he cannot go faster. And when he slowly trots praise him a great deal and reward him! Don't expect him to trot that slow for a whole track, just a few steps is a good beginning. You can ask for more each time you exercise but do not overdo it. Do not forget to pat your horse when he is doing a good job. The contact of the reins has to be gentle, and the horse will learn to have a nice collection.

You can ask your horse also for shoulder-in, shoulder-out and even a half-pass when you are more experienced. I will also explain the shoulder-out because I think it is a great exercise to straighten the horse. As I explained, the start position is always at the inner hind leg of the horse.

When asking for shoulder-out we move to the outer hind leg. When your horse is walking around the track of the arena there is a moment in the corner that the rail and your horse make the top of a triangle. When your horse is at that place in the corner you will step in the triangle and take position at his outer hind leg. When you move, you also take the rein of your inner hand above his back to the outside and make the rein lay above the back. Now you can push a little with your hand close to the horse and ask for flexion of the neck with your other hand.





For example, you walk clockwise, and this means you are at the right hind leg and when your horse is in the corner, well in position, you step in the triangle and take the rein in your right hand with you when you move to the left hind leg of your horse. You have to make the rein in your left hand a little bit shorter, but not so short that your horse will turn. You have to touch him with the whip if he does and make a half-halt with your right rein to prevent him. You ask a light flexion of the neck with the left rein while you ask, and then

you praise your horse, and you are done for this time. This exercise has to build up over time. I love to start with the shoulder out because the fence will keep your horse from walking straight and your position asks your horse to side pass a little bit.

Well I hope that you will try out long reining some day and I hope that you will experience the fun when you and your horse succeed at a new exercise.

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School of Légèreté with Philippe Karl

by Sherri Leväaho

Dozens of equestrians converged upon the Adderson Family's equestrian center, "For the Horse," in the small town of Chase, British Columbia to meet and learn from Philippe Karl during the first session of the École de Légèreté (School of Lightness) in North America. The evening before the session began there was a "Meet the Master" evening, at which Monsieur Karl presented a lecture, answered questions from the audience and then signed books.

The first instruction day, participants' lessons were a full hour, during which Monsieur Karl observed the students and their mounts, rode/worked in hand each horse, and diagnosed the pairs' strengths and weaknesses, setting the stage for the rest of the work during this session.

On the second and third days, 45-minute lessons were building upon the work of the first day, and included lunging techniques, work in hand and riding. The lessons on both days were followed by a two-hour lecture, during which Monsieur Karl showed his extensive knowledge of theory, anatomy, bio-mechanics, ethology, and riding culture. (He also has some talent as an artist, and drew many illustrations and diagrams.)

The fourth day had been scheduled as jumping lessons in two groups, but Monsieur Karl abandoned this plan, explaining that the horses and riders were insufficiently prepared. Instead, the students rode in three group les-



sons of three horse-rider pairs each, grouped according to the specific issues and exercises the riders were working on. These lessons were followed by another lecture, part of which was devoted to discussion of questions posed by the audience.



It was extremely interesting to see Monsieur Karl's method producing positive results on horses of many different types, with riders, nearly all professional, of different backgrounds. Monsieur Karl proved himself to be an engaging, articulate speaker and never stopped teaching the rider or the audience. He was frank and direct in his correction and criticism, but he also liberally used humour, without humiliating anyone.

As for me and Caspar (Favory Fantasia III-1), Monsieur Karl had us working on our basics. Although Caspar travelled in the trailer well enough, he is an inexperienced traveller, and the trip to a strange place, surrounded by strange horses, and being ridden in an indoor arena (with mirrors) proved to be very disturbing for him. Although he did nothing really bad, we were unable to show any of the work we have been doing at home. Monsieur Karl pointed out that when a horse is in a stressful situation, one can see the true level of training achieved (the truth hurts!). He diagnosed Caspar's major difficulties as a high set-on neck combined with a

somewhat long back, and a lack of obedience. He speculated that Caspar might show talent for pesade.

So, our training plan consisted of leadership exercises on the lunge and in hand (he described Caspar as being a dominant-type stallion); and flexions from the ground and while mounted to promote lateral and longitudinal flexibility, while keeping Caspar's attention. But the cornerstone exercise was the rein effect designed to provoke neck extension and lowering with an open poll, and to teach the horse to maintain a steady contact (Monsieur Karl's definition of "on the bit": the horse constantly seeks to keep the reins stretched in a steady but light and lively contact, no matter the position of the rider's hands). Caspar has a tendency to curl up behind the bit. We performed this exercise at halt, walk, trot, and canter. This was very challenging to achieve, as it demanded constant attention, balance and suppleness from me, but it was dramatically effective. Not only was it effective physically, in that it opposed all hollowing of the back, but mentally as well, as it provoked Caspar into assuming an attitude conducive to attention and obedience.

I was extremely gratified to leave this session with this technique, because I feel as though it is the piece of my training puzzle I had been seeking. It will be the key that will open all sorts of training doors for me. So, I have homework to practice before the July session: the leadership exercises on the lunge and in hand; the flexions in-hand and under saddle; the neck-extension exercise at all three gaits, particularly during transitions; and shoulder-in at walk and trot in neck extension. I should keep the shoulder-in at a shallower angle and at rising trot to encourage him to stay round.

(Interestingly, Monsieur Karl was able to explain in logical detail the reasons for selecting a certain diagonal pair of legs on which to rise at the trot, and the effect it has on the horse's balance- yet another simple but powerful tool for training.)

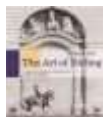
Monsieur Karl's method is characterised by a demand that the rider/trainer be respectful of the horse's essential nature and use non-violent training methods, eschewing all auxiliary reins and training gadgets. This requires a thinking trainer, who is able to educate his mind and hands, and influence his horse's balance in order to teach it how to dance.

This is part two of a multi-part series by LANA member Sherri Leväaho.

NOTE: LANA's online Lipizzan Store carries two of Philippe Karl's books:



[Twisted Truths of Modern Dressage: A Search for a Classical Alternative](#)



[The Art of Riding: Classical Dressage to High School: Odin at Saumur](#)

go to www.lipizzan.org/store.html



A Visit to the Spanish Riding School

by Kelli Wilkinson

My Austrian adventure was a blending of my infant love of horses, my later studies and practice in horsemanship, and my training as a museum professional. The intensity of my emotions the first time I entered the Spanish Riding School can barely be described: my lower lip quivered, my eyes watered and I trembled.

My equestrian career began as a small child, with any loose stick serving as my "mount," always an imaginary but noble, athletic and beautiful mount. I progressed to my first pony at the age of six, a Shetland stallion who was bought by my well-meaning but uninitiated father. "Thunder" taught me many things on the use of improvised tack and riding style – and to be a tough and fearless rider! Thankfully my riding skills progressed as I grew up and I was admitted to the now closed school at the Morven Park International Equestrian Institute in Leesburg, Virginia, under Col. Mark Darley. My introduction to dressage was made there.

In September of 2010, I persuaded my husband and his uncle to join me on a trip to Vienna. At the time I was teaching a World History and Culture course at the Northern Virginia Community College and was also researching the history of my husband's ancestors who had come from Austria. I wanted to see the sights and hear the stories that his uncle could tell about the family. This was my primary purpose, but I was also determined to visit the Spanish Riding School and see the site of my childhood dreams. We arrived at our hotel, found our rooms and our maps, and dashed out. When we found the SRS, even though I knew some of what to expect, I was taken by surprise! I was delighted to find that videos were screened on the street for passers-by to enjoy. I could barely believe that I saw the regal heads of the stallions casting a glance toward the street where I stood. They casually took in the crowds, and I was overcome! It is not uncommon for visitors such as I to weep, made emotional by stepping on the floors designed by Fischer von Erlach to showcase the horses whose history I so revere. I headed directly toward the Josephplatz, waiting to be allowed to view the Morning Exercise. I spent a great deal of time wandering about the two galleries of the Winter Riding School that are available to the public. Of course, no longer is the SRS the exclusive domain of gentlemen. Frau Elisabeth Guertler (a member of LANA's Board of Directors) is the impressive lady who is now the Managing Director of the SRS, and two women were admitted to the school in 2008. I was fascinated, given my interest in women's role in history.

As I watched the horses learning and practicing, a young grey stallion caught my eye and I saw him more than once. His way of moving was exceptional: a light, effortless, flowing trot. I saw a perfect levade. I saw the piaffe turn to a frozen white statue and, until that moment, I had failed to fully appreciate its perfection! There is no mistaking that it is "all about the horse." Grooms tack up the horses and lead them to the entrance of the school. Once there, the riders emerge and mount just out of view. After about a half-hour of exercise, the horses are lined up by their riders. The grooms are so tender and solicitous of their charges. As the riders dismounted and the grooms prepared the horses to return to the stable, I often saw three heads together in conference: two human, one equine. I was never able to hear what was said of course, but it was clear that the horses had all done a very good job and that if there was anything the rider

noticed he surely consulted with the groom and the groom with the rider. I purchased the best seats available for the Sunday morning performance, at ground level beneath the portrait of Charles VI. I had not waited all these years and come

all this way to be economical; this was the time and place when only the best would do. When we were escorted to our places on Sunday, I found my trembling was uncontrollable; I kept the tears from my eyes though, so I would not miss a single second. The stallions seemed a bit surprised by the applause they received and displayed some of the natural talent that makes them stars. When a senior rider gave a demonstration of riding a Lipizzaner on the curb, the lightness of touch and the trust between horse and rider were clearly evident. And then the audience took special notice as the *Airs above the Ground* were announced! As always, the dramatic jumping and bounding excited all. This particular portion of the performance was reminiscent to me of the famous 1890 painting by Julius von Blass, "Morning Exercise in the Hofreitschule." There is no more spectacular example of the trust of horse and rider, of the qualities of the Lipizzaner, and the dedication of the riders to the horse. The applause for the spectacular leaps, this flying without wings, is richly deserved. The September trip was over entirely too soon, but even before I left, plans were underway to return.

Upon returning home, I wrote a letter to Mrs. Guertler. Her response granted me interviews with the staff and came to me shortly before Christmas, and was one of the best Christmas presents I've ever received. Determined to take immediate action, I gathered my airline miles and set out alone to Vienna. With the assistance of Georgina Wittleberger, I was made welcome to interview Chief Rider Andreas Hausberger, Managing Director Elizabeth Guertler, and Stable Master Johannes Hamminger. I arrived at the Vienna airport on New Year's Eve, and I have rarely seen such fun as the festivities in the streets that night! Vienna has quickly become one of my favorite cities!

My first interview on this visit was with Chief Rider Andreas Hausberger. We sat at ground level, beneath the portrait of Charles VI, and it was an auspicious beginning. As I watched the morning workout with Herr Hausberger, I found some of the questions I intended to ask were driven from my head, entranced as I was with the horses before me. It seemed a relatively short time was spent in the warming up of the horses. Herr Hausberger explained that the horses were kept so perfectly fit and ridden correctly, and so they did not require much in the way of a warm up. I asked how students were recruited and what their days were like. I learned that part of the government legislation regarding the Lipizzaner insisted that in breeding and training, horse and rider must maintain the highest possible standards. Riders must have a long leg to fit the strong torso of the horses. The very best of applicants are selected and given examination rides. Applicants must also understand that they are forbidden to ride outside of the school. Their day is seven hours of hard work, grooming,



cleaning tack and stables, and only two of those hours are spent on horseback – one hour on the lunge, one hour with lessons. There is a great deal of pressure placed on the students and the dropout rate is high. And it is stressed that riders must first listen and learn what the horse has to say, before they even consider telling the horse anything. Another thing Herr Hausberger told me is that at the SRS, the bond between horse and rider and between horse and horse is rarely disturbed. These horses are not only strong in body and spirit, but form strong friendships as well. They do what is asked of them because they are asked nicely. They perform well because their confidence is as strong as their bodies and souls. Herr Hausberger summed up his attitude toward his job by saying that when he came to work his stress was lifted and he felt his “batteries recharged.”

I was next escorted to the rooms of Managing Director Elizabeth Guertler. Frau Guertler exudes a radiant glow of bright energy and spoke with enthusiasm about her calling to direct this impressive institution. She commented that only about 2% of the audience truly realizes what is actually taking place before their eyes. She wishes for every member of the audience to leave feeling as though they have just awakened from a beautiful dream. Frau Guertler’s riding career began in the 1960s. She progressed to international levels, and when the school needed someone who knew horses, knew their training, and knew about obtaining financing and fundraising, Frau Guertler was the perfect choice. Her energy is necessary since, in addition to caring for the school, she runs three famous hotels. The nature of the job has been challenging since the privatization of the school. She knows the city, the horses and how to keep the school running efficiently. Frau Guertler helped me to understand that the school is in the hands of horse people, not politicians. The SRS is mandated by law to preserve the horses and the mission of the school. Each of the horses is owned by the Austrian Republic. Frau Guertler shared some of her ideas to take the school forward. One of these was the introduction of women as riders. Lighting will be used to highlight and spotlight individu-

als, and will help to transport the audience into a lovely “magical dream.” She plans to make each performance even more special, but of course the basic foundation and mission of the school has never and will never change.

Thanking Frau Guertler for her precious time, I was escorted to the stables and introduced to Stable Manager Johannes Hamminger. We toured the stables. The flooring in the school was replaced in August 2010, but the staff is still refining its elements. The goal is not only to provide a safe and comfortable surface, but to limit the quantity of dust in the air. This isn’t just for the benefit of the horses, but also that of the white marble carvings and the painting of Charles VI which provides the only intentional spot of color in the design of the riding hall. Herr Hamminger is constantly alert for anything that needs attention. He monitors every aspect of care. He watches the horses as they are led out to work and as they are taken to cool down. A few times during our visit together he excused himself to correct some minor errors he observed. There are cameras set up so that the grooms and attendants can keep a constant eye on these treasured, unique cultural assets. Every bite of grain and mouthful of hay is examined, and every aspect from daily rations to special treats is taken quite seriously by Herr Hamminger. As ever, it is all about the horses. His eyes shine as brightly as those of his peerless charges as he pointed out his particular favorites. Herr Hamminger opened the door to the stall of one of the revered brown stallions, and I was thrilled to be petting him.

Mournfully, I realized it was time for me to leave. I paused for a moment to process my wonderful morning. I was struck by the aura of peace and calm that permeates the Stallburg. For just a moment I felt the energy of the horses and their quiet power. Even now, almost a year later, I can recall that feeling. This is the gift of art, the gift of interspecies relationships, and the gift from the Lipizzaner to me and to us all.





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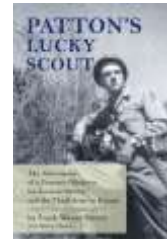
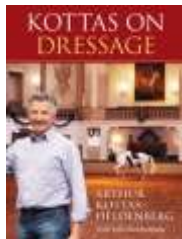


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