

# DRESSAGE AT THE COLORADO HORSE PARK

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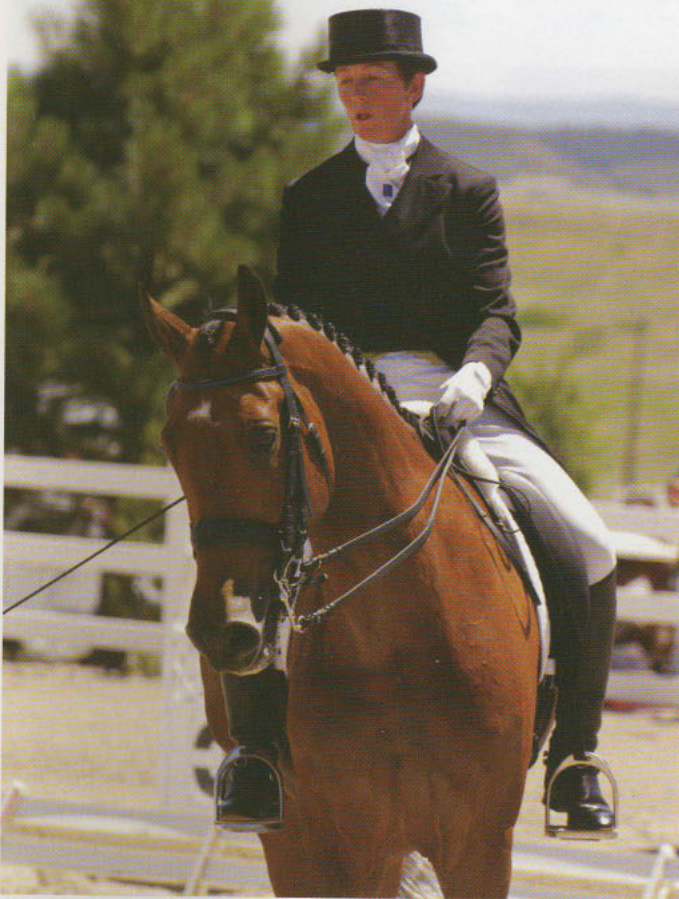
Grant Schneidman and Wyn De Pluum

Two months before Dressage in the Rockies, Jesse Hunter's 2005 show season was looking grim. After making the decision to sell her junior dressage horse, Morganstern, Hunter temporarily lost her third level horse to lameness. Fortunately, the Jamestown, Colorado resident soon had a new mount, her mother's seven year old Hanoverian, Nijinski. The only problem was the horse had been recovering from breaking his hip—twice!

However, the pair soon formed a real bond. "He's a very stubborn horse," Hunter says. "And I love that kind of horse." The duo trains with Jenny Baldwin at Autumn Hill in Longmont and Dressage in the Rockies was only their second show together. They earned Overall Junior/Young Rider High Point on the first day, as well as the High Point Lower Level Junior/Young Rider, with a score of 67.941 in First Level Test Two. They also won their First Level Test Four class. The pair duplicated their effort with the High Point Lower Level Junior/Young Rider during Show II.



Jesse Hunter and Nijinski



Sarah Martin and Nick

Hunter is a senior in high school this year and hopes to show Nijinski at Third Level next season. "It's just so much fun," she says of her unexpected success this season. "This has really lifted my spirits."

Dressage in the Rockies, August 5-7, and High Prairie Dressage, June 3-5, both

held at The Colorado Horse Park, offered \$12,500 in prize money and awards. The shows are unique because each day is a separate show, allowing horses and riders to earn qualifying scores three times during one weekend. To make the cost of showing at three shows more affordable, the office fee each day is half



Sue Halasz and Paradiso B

the price of many shows, making the extra \$12 USEF drug fee negligible for most entrants.

The competitions drew more than 350 entrants from several states. "We are working really hard to make these the premier shows in this region by increasing the prize money," said Glenda McElroy, show manager for both shows. "We are making a lot of improvements for next year based on the feedback that we get from our entrants."



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Enjoying her fair share of that prize money from both shows was Sue Halasz of Parker, Colorado. Among her numerous winners was Paradiso B, an eight year Dutch gelding by Kennedy. The duo took home Overall Open High Point during Dressage in the Rockies I, as well as the High Point Open Upper Level award, with a 73.023% in Fourth Level Test Two.

"He's really a big, beautiful sweetheart of a horse," Halasz said of Paradiso B. "He loves everybody and is

always really happy to see everyone." Halasz found the horse in Holland last October for her student Chardell Steves, who made the purchase based on a videotape and Halasz's recommendation. "I fell immediately in love with him," Halasz recalled. "He is good for an amateur, but with enough talent to excel." Plans for the gelding include moving up to Prix St. Georges and Intermediaire I and doing the USEF Qualifiers next spring.

Another perennial winner at The Colorado Horse Park shows is Sarah Martin. With Sylvia Fort De Mulder's Nick, Martin earned the Overall High Point and High Point Open FEI at High Prairie Dressage III with a 73.250% in Prix St. Georges. Martin had first seen the 10-year-old Dutch gelding at a farmer's home in Holland in 2002. She had been impressed with the horse's quality at the time, but he wasn't suitable for the rider Martin was looking for.

"Nick spent seven years living in a cow barn in Holland," Martin remembers. "He was turned out with a friend for two hours every day and ridden for one hour. The rest of the time he stood in this stone stall. His owner was a farmer in his late 60s who rode Nick with so much love and tenderness that the first time I saw Nick, I just cried watching this old man with him. I said to my friend, 'I could never buy this horse from this man—they are best friends,'" she recalls. Something about this noble horse stuck with Martin and when she was looking for a future grand prix horse for Fort De Mulder, who has competed at the Pan American Games for Peru, she immediately thought of Nick.

Still living in the same stone stall, but now with the farmer's son riding him, Nick was ready for a new life with a new partner. Nick now calls Martin's barn home, while Fort De Mulder flies to the United States several times each year to ride him. "Sylvia's goals are personal more than competitive," Martin says. However with scores in the 70s at the FEI levels, she would not only make her personal goals, but also be highly competitive.

While Grant Schneidman certainly knows something about success, some of his recent victories have been on a horse of a different color, or breed actually. Collecting high scores and blue ribbons for Schneidman is Wyn de Pluum, a beautiful black Friesian stallion owned by Paula Marsh.

Earning a 72.353% in Second Level Test Four, the pair received the High Point Open Lower Level award during High Prairie Dressage III. "He's a wonderful horse and has a lot of talent," Schneidman said of the stallion, who earned the reserve championship at his keuring in 2003. While only six years old, the stallion is now competing at third level and clearly has a promising future. **H**