



ADEQUAN GLOBAL DRESSAGE FESTIVAL

AGDF TIMES

WEEK 7 • FEBRUARY 19, 2025



ADRIENNE LYLE
PUNCHES TICKET TO
FEI WORLD CUP FINAL®

SPOTLIGHT ON:
IRON SPRING FARM

EQUESTRIAN WELLNESS TIPS FROM
DAILY HARVEST



ADRIENNE LYLE & HELIX

Punch Ticket to Basel with Personal Best

**By Alice Collins
for Wellington International**

In a beautiful display of riding, Adrienne Lyle (USA) pulled off a huge new personal best of 80.325% during AGDF 5 in the FEI World Cup™ Grand Prix Freestyle, sponsored by The Dutta Corp, on her Paris 2024 Olympic partner, Helix. With it, she booked a starting place at the FEI World Cup™ Final in Basel, Switzerland (April 2-6).

Wellington International hosted the third 'Friday-

Night Stars' of the 2025 Adequan® Global Dressage Festival (AGDF) in Wellington, FL. The stands were filled with enthusiastic fans and the atmosphere electric, motivating Lyle and Helix to score more than 2.7% higher than their previous best score, set in December 2024. They topped an all-American sweep of the top four places.

Her compatriot Anna Marek rode a powerful test on Cynthia Davila's 15-year-

old Zizi Top x Houston gelding Fayvel to claim second with 78.785%. Last to go in the class, P.J. Rizvi and the 14-year-old Lusitano stallion Vanilla Ice got the crowd clapping along to their ice-themed freestyle from the get-go, finishing third with 76.585%. American rapper and mutual friend of Rizvi, Vanilla Ice himself—Robert van Winkle—presented the awards in the prizegiving.

The class was also a qualifier for the new US Equestrian Open of

Dressage, which features 23 qualifiers—seven of which are at AGDF—before the final in California in November.

Lyle took over the ride on Helix just over a year ago and made her CDI debut with Zen Elite Equestrian's 13-year-old Apache x Jazz gelding at AGDF in 2024. Lyle competed Helix under lights for the first time two weeks earlier, and he was a little overawed. This time, she walked him around the arena giving him pats before the bell, and he duly performed.

"That is, hands down, the best feeling he's ever given me," said Lyle, who rode to a Terry Gallo music compilation. "He was able to replicate the work that I've been getting at home—the lightness, harmony, and self-carriage. Tonight, he was able

to take that into an electric environment and stay relaxed and in his own balance. It felt effortless and I didn't have to push for anything. To feel that kind of confidence from him is really exciting.

"When I saw the score, I was so excited. It's not many times in your life you're going to see an 80%; it's a huge thrill," added Lyle. "We added a high degree of difficulty to the floorplan by adding combinations, like pirouettes into the changes and the piaffe full pirouettes."

Helix will have a short break before picking up training again ahead of the World Cup Final and, hopefully, the summer competing in Europe with the U.S. squad. Lyle's longer-term goal is the 2026 FEI World Championships in Aachen, Germany.



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Rider Spotlight: Anna Marek's Growth Journey



AGDF is one of the most prestigious dressage circuits in the world. For Anna Marek, AGDF is more than just a competition; it is a proving ground, a learning experience and a place that has helped shape her career. With a winter season packed with multiple CDI events, this circuit provides ample opportunities for riders to qualify for elite competitions like the Olympic Games, European Championships, Pan-American Games, US Equestrian Open series and the FEI World Cup™ Final to name a few. Marek credits AGDF as a major factor in her journey toward qualifying for prestigious competitions. Having lived in Ocala since 2010, she has been competing at AGDF for years, knowing it is the best place to test herself against top riders.

"Each year, depending on which horses I am showing, I plan at least one show a month at AGDF. This year, with two strong horses and two major competitions, I find myself here even more, which I don't mind at all," she shared.

The 2023 season was crucial for Marek, as she began her campaign in preparation for the Pan American Games. AGDF provided the platform for her to achieve highly competitive scores, which, combined with other shows, secured her spot on the U.S. team. Once in Santiago (Pan-American Games) she contributed to the gold medal in the team competition and achieved a bronze medal individually.

Reflecting on her evolution as a competitor, Marek acknowledges how AGDF has shaped her career. "I used to be so nervous as a kid riding in this venue, but now I feel comfortable here. Global prepared me for the Pan Ams, the World Cup, and even my first European tour. The organizers know me—they know I forget things and make mistakes—but they are always friendly and willing to help."

After earning valuable points with her recent performances on Fayvel and Fire Fly (AGDF3 and AGDF5), Marek is determined to follow the sports campaign. "I'm going to make one more run at the last CDI-W in Wellington and see where that brings me," she says. With her sights set on the US Equestrian Open of Dressage in California, she is focused on gaining points toward qualification and continuing her upward trajectory in the sport.

Growing as a Rider in a High-Caliber Environment

What makes AGDF particularly special for Marek is the electric atmosphere, especially on Friday nights. "The energy is incredible," she says. "As a competitor, I can feel the excitement from the crowd, and my horses do too."

The opportunity to compete against international riders in such an energized setting pushes her to new heights, preparing her for the pressures of major global events: "In any sport, it's important to compete and train alongside those more experienced than you," she notes. Watching warm-ups has provided her with invaluable insights, from technical training techniques to mental preparation. "I've learned to manage my nerves, focus on my horse, and not worry about who I'm competing against."



Unforgettable Moments at AGDF

Looking back on her experiences, Marek recalls several standout rides at AGDF. "The first time I ever won anything was on a small Friday night back in 2013 or 2014 with my first Grand Prix horse, Unico G. I was such a green kid, kind of like a deer in the headlights. That cooler meant the WORLD to me"

Another memorable moment came

last year when she and Fayvel made a late but powerful push for World Cup qualification. "Cynthia, the owner of Fayvel, handed over the reins, and we went for it. I had a clean test, scored a 72% in grand prix, and then won the 'Friday Night Stars' with a 78%. Cynthia and I were jumping up and down, so genuinely excited about what we had just accomplished."

Looking Ahead

Next on Marek's competition schedule is the last CDI-W at the end of February in Wellington. As she continues her journey, AGDF remains a crucial part of her development, providing her with the experience, exposure, and opportunities to compete at the highest level. With her sights set on future qualifications, Marek is ready to embrace the challenges and excitement that lie ahead.



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YOUR IDEAL FOAL BEGINS WITH THE RIGHT STALLION

Discover Lowlands & Cum Laude at Iron Spring Farm



Iron Spring Farm continues its nearly 50-year tradition of bringing world-class sport horse bloodlines to North American breeders. With an outstanding stallion lineup, ISF provides proven sires to enhance your breeding program. Among the distinguished stallions this season—Lowlands OLD, a Prix St. Georges winner now standing in the United States, and Cum Laude, a proven sire of noteworthy offspring. These exceptional stallions offer winning show records, wonderful temperaments, and pedigrees selected to produce your future champion.

Lowlands OLD: A New Opportunity for North American Breeders

For the first time, North American breeders have access to Lowlands, a striking black stallion with an impressive competition record and an outstanding pedigree. The son of Millennium out of La Donna S, Elite/St. Pr. (x Donnerball) quickly established himself in Europe, earning high marks in the KWPN Stallion Performance Test, including a 9.5 for walk, 9.0 for rideability and attitude, and 8.5 for trot, canter, and elasticity. His performance success includes wins at Prix St. Georges with scores to 73%, a silver medal at the Dutch National Championships at the ZZ-Zwaar level, and standout results in young horse competitions, including a 9.34 in the FEI Six-Year-Old test on his way to the Bundeschampionate.

Lowlands' offspring are already making their mark, receiving 1st Premiums at keurings and earning top scores at breed shows. His pedigree, free of Jazz, Ferro, and Flemmingh, offers fresh bloodlines to North

American breeders seeking an elite, trainable stallion with a modern type. His exceptional gaits, work ethic, and rideability make him an ideal choice for producing top sport horses with outstanding movement and friendly, willing dispositions.

Cum Laude: A Stallion Who Delivers

A favorite at Iron Spring Farm, Cum Laude continues to impress with his exceptional movement, rideability, and proven track record of passing on his best traits. A son of Apache and out of the Preferent/Prestatie mare Pacharel T (x Weltmeyer), Cum Laude distinguished himself in the show arena, excelling in the CDI small tour classes. His Intermediate I Freestyle scores reached 78%, further cementing his reputation as a top competitor.

Cum Laude's offspring consistently inherit his trainability, confident temperament, and expressive gaits. He has

produced Elite mares, successful dressage competitors—among them a Young Rider horse—and champions at breed shows and keurings. His offspring earn 9.0s on gaits. Among them is Pontifex v/d Debbenhoeve, receiving scores to 76% in U.S. dressage competitions, and Tuxedo ISF, the 2023 USDF Breeders Championships East Coast Finals Foal Champion. If you want to produce beautiful foals with expressive movement and a willing attitude, you will find Cum Laude an ideal choice.

Breed Your Future Champion

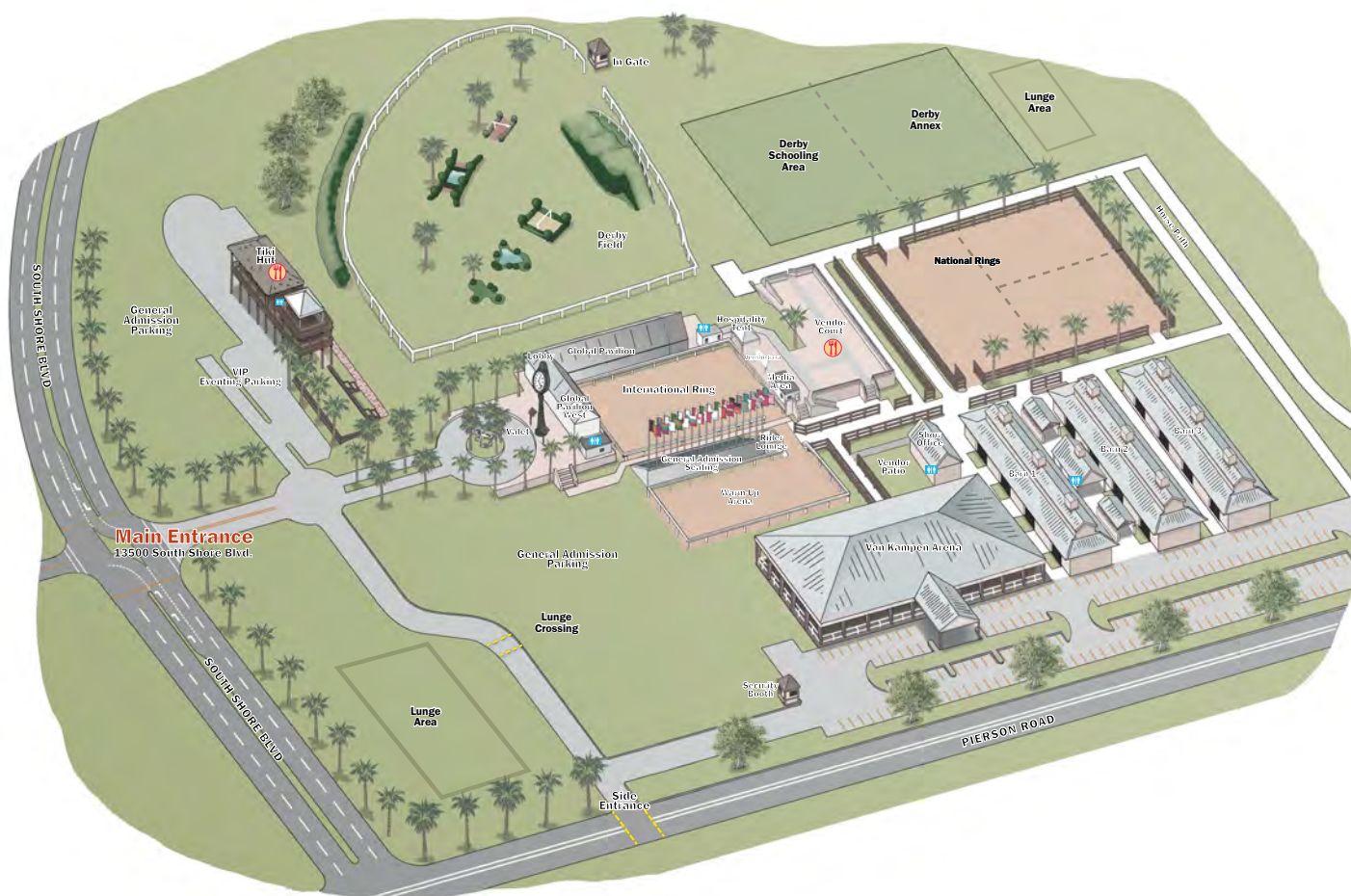
Iron Spring Farm remains dedicated to helping breeders produce their dream horses. With a legacy of excellence in sport horse breeding, the farm offers proven bloodlines, expert guidance, and an unwavering commitment to quality.

Learn more about Lowlands, Cum Laude, and the full lineup of stallions at [ironspringfarm.com](https://www.ironspringfarm.com).



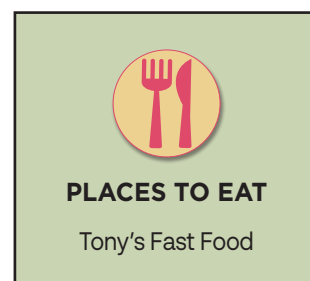


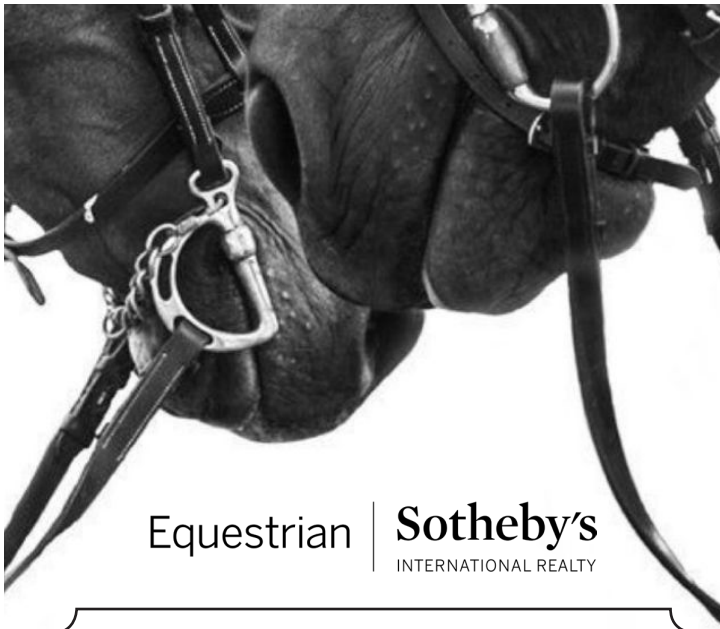
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HOPE RESTORED

for the last truly wild horses

PHOTO © JAN MENG

“If you value the natural world – if you think it should be protected for its own sake as well as that of humanity – then please support Fauna & Flora.”

– Sir David Attenborough
Vice-president and
Fauna & Flora member
since 1959.

Przewalski's horse, the world's last truly wild horse, has had a turbulent history. They once freely roamed the steppes of Central Asia, but, by the 1960s, decades of hunting, trapping, intensive farming and competition for grazing had driven them to extinction in the wild. But last year saw the return of this magnificent horse to the vast landscapes of Kazakhstan, after over a century. It was the result of a unique partnership - the

Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative – which brings together local and global expertise, including the world's oldest nature conservation charity Fauna & Flora, national government and local community work.

There is nowhere on Earth like the Kazakh steppe in Central Asia. This is the largest expanse of semi-desert grassland in the world, a true wilderness. This is the habitat to which Przewalski's horse was recently returned.

Seven horses – a stallion and six mares – were transported on a 30-hour flight from Berlin and Prague Zoos to Kazakhstan, where they were reintroduced to their native habitat. The initial seven horses are settling into their new home well.

Over the next five years, the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative and Prague Zoo plan to transport around 40 horses to central Kazakhstan to form the nucleus of a new breeding population.

Re-establishing a population of Przewalski's horse in Kazakhstan will not only help to boost their dwindling numbers in the wild, but also help benefit all the species that live on the steppe. Their dung enhances soil fertilization, boosts insect numbers and helps disperse the seeds of plants. They provide services for smaller wildlife in the landscape by facilitating access to water through their digging in dry riverbeds and lakes, and by exposing fodder hidden under thick snow cover in winter.

The partnership behind this amazing project is crucial to its success. The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative is spearheaded by Fauna & Flora's in-country partner, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, working in partnership with the Kazakh government's Committee for Forestry and Wildlife, Frankfurt Zoological Society and RSPB. This coalition have worked closely with Prague Zoo, Nuremberg Zoo, Tierpark Berlin, and Hortobagy National Park to make the reintroduction of

this incredible horse a reality. In 2024 The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative was named a finalist for the prestigious Earthshot Prize, set up by HRH Prince William, highlighting its vital work in protecting and restoring nature.

It is an approach typical of Fauna & Flora which is a global conservation charity that protects the diversity of life on Earth, for the survival of the planet and its people, working closely with local conservation partners in well over 40 countries to save nature, together.

The charity always commits for the long term and so Fauna & Flora plans to continue supporting this groundbreaking reintroduction initiative, drawing on our long history of bringing threatened species back from the brink – from the Arabian oryx to the Antiguan racer snake.

We have been using the collective knowledge and experience of our people and our partners to protect nature across the globe for more than 120 years.

Worldwide, we are helping to protect and restore over 55 million hectares of crucial habitat, including forests, peatlands, grasslands, seagrass meadows and the ocean. Living in – and relying on – these habitats are millions of plant and animal species. Many are confined to a particular landscape and exist nowhere else in the world. And every last one of them is critical to a healthy planet.

To find out more about how you can support our vital work visit www.fauna-flora.org



PHOTO © JAN MENG



N2 Saddlery's Tack Room Talk

with Adrienne Lyle *Sponsor Feature provided by N2 Saddlery*

Adrienne Lyle is one of America's top dressage riders and is currently the highest-ranking U.S. rider in the FEI worldwide rankings. She rides, trains, competes, coaches and wows the crowd at the 'Friday Night Stars' Freestyles here at the Adequan® Global Dressage Festival. She has competed in three Olympic games and won a Olympic team silver medal in Tokyo. She is also a wife and the mother of an adorable 16-month-old. Despite a schedule that most of us would find both exciting and overwhelming, Adrienne is quick with a smile, accommodating to the press and her sponsors, and never misses an opportunity to encourage a young rider coming up in the sport. Adrienne has been an avid fan of N2 Saddles for her own horses and her students. We were grateful to catch up with her for a quick Tack Room Talk.

Adrienne, how long have you been riding in N2 Saddles?

I discovered N2 Saddles when I first got Salvino in 2015, because we were struggling to find a saddle that worked on him.

What is it that makes N2 your saddle of choice?

I ride in the N2 Cardhu. I loved this saddle instantly from the second I sat in it. It put me in a very natural correct position where I wasn't fighting against the saddle to attain the correct balance. My N2 Saddle also gives me that close contact with the horse. The Cardhu is also great for my length of leg. There is a nice place to snuggle my leg in securely while I still have the freedom to use my aids effectively.

For you, the N2 Saddle is a comfortable "home base". How does it work for your horses?

Starting with Salvino, all my horses really enjoy their N2 Saddles. These saddles give the horse a lot of freedom in the shoulder and topline, allowing my horses to comfortably do their job.

Now all eyes are on Zen Elite's Helix. Has his N2 Saddle played a role in his success?

Yes, I think it is a big component. Helix has such great character. He is a very sensitive horse and teaching him to respond to my aids has been a big part of our journey together, and if you don't have a saddle that fits your horse and you correctly, you can't effectively use your position and your seats to communicate to them.

You split your time between riding and coaching. Do you recommend N2 Saddles for your students?

I believe N2 Saddles are great for amateurs for the same reasons I ride in them. They give them a secure, correct position and allow them to use their aids correctly. My professional students, Katie Duerrhammer and Quinn Iverson, also ride in N2 Saddles and have had great success in them.



ABOUT N2 SADDLERY

N2 Saddlery was founded by Sue Newell, a Certified Master Saddle Fitter and amateur Grand Prix dressage rider. The saddles are truly designed to meet the needs of the horse and the needs of the rider, allowing the rider to sit correctly and effectively communicate with the horse, while freeing the horse's shoulder and topline for comfort and optimum performance. Each N2 Saddle is crafted from the finest European sourced leathers, and the breathtaking designs are a statement of each individual rider. N2 Saddlery is proud to be the saddle of choice of adult amateurs and top professionals alike. [Learn more at www.n2saddlery.com](http://www.n2saddlery.com).



LÖVSTA GROOMS AWARD



PHOTO © SUSAN J. STICKLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Wellington International is proud to honor the grooms of the Adequan® Global Dressage Festival thanks to generous support from Lövsta Future Challenge. During 'Friday Night Stars' of AGDF 5, groom Marina Lemay is pictured with Adrienne Lyle and Helix while being awarded a check for \$500 by Tinne Vilhelmson Silfvén.

AGDF 5 SPECIAL AWARDS



The Neue Schule Bits Best Hands Award honor went to Lori Bell during AGDF 5, who successfully piloted her Oldenburg gelding Flirt in the National Prix scoring over 65%. Accepting the award with Lori is trainer Jaimy Irwin—both from Ontario, Canada.



The Omega Alpha Healthy Horse Award winner for AGDF 5 was Cali, a stunning palomino American Warmblood shown by owner/rider Nicole Acosta in the National Prix St. Georges. Trainer, Lisa Blackmon shared in the presentation both—are from Waxahachie, Texas.



The AGDF 5 winner of the N2 Saddlery Peak Performance Award was Jaime Dancer for her lovely ride in the CDI 1* FEI Intermediate-1 on Korona. Accepting the award from N2 Saddlery's Sue Newell is owner, Patricia Demas from Cream Ridge, New Jersey.

PROTEIN:

The Cornerstone of Performance in the Saddle

This article is brought to you by Daily Harvest, official smoothie provider of Wellington International

By Carolina Schneider, MS, RD

Everyone knows protein is important, but do you know why? Sure, it helps build muscle, but it does a lot more than that—especially for athletes. Every time you ride, your muscles are working hard to help you grip, balance, and absorb impact with every stride. All that effort causes micro-tears in your muscle fibers. Protein is what helps repair and rebuild those muscles, which not only makes them stronger but also more resilient over time.

Not getting enough protein might make you feel more fatigued, slow your recovery, and increase your risk of injury. Protein is also important for keeping

you satiated, which is key when you are training. While everyone needs protein, athletes require more—especially for recovery. While the average person needs 0.8–1.0g/kg per day, endurance athletes should aim for 1.2–1.4g/kg, while strength-focused athletes may need 1.4–1.7g/kg.

How you get that protein matters too. Proteins like salmon and tuna provide healthy fats such as omega-3 fatty acids that reduce inflammation, while plant-based options such as beans, lentils, and tofu offer heart-healthy benefits like fiber, and antioxidants that reduce oxidative stress after exercise. A good rule of thumb is to fill about a fourth of your



dinner plate with lean protein and pair it with fiber-rich vegetables and whole grains.

As a dietitian, my go-to post-workout recovery is Daily Harvest's high-protein smoothies. They make refueling easy with 20 grams of plant-based protein from organic peas, plus fruits and veggies packed with antioxidants to support recovery—all with no added sugars. Just blend and go! I also love snacks like protein bars made from whole-food ingredients, steamed edamame, or black bean dip with veggie slices to stay satisfied anytime.

Looking for nourishing, quick-to-prepare food that fits your busy lifestyle? Check out dailyharvest.com or scan the QR code and use code **DHWEF2025** for 20% off your first plan order over \$100. Learn more about Carolina's approach to nutrition at hungryforplants.com.



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