



ADEQUAN® GLOBAL DRESSAGE FESTIVAL

AGDFTIMES

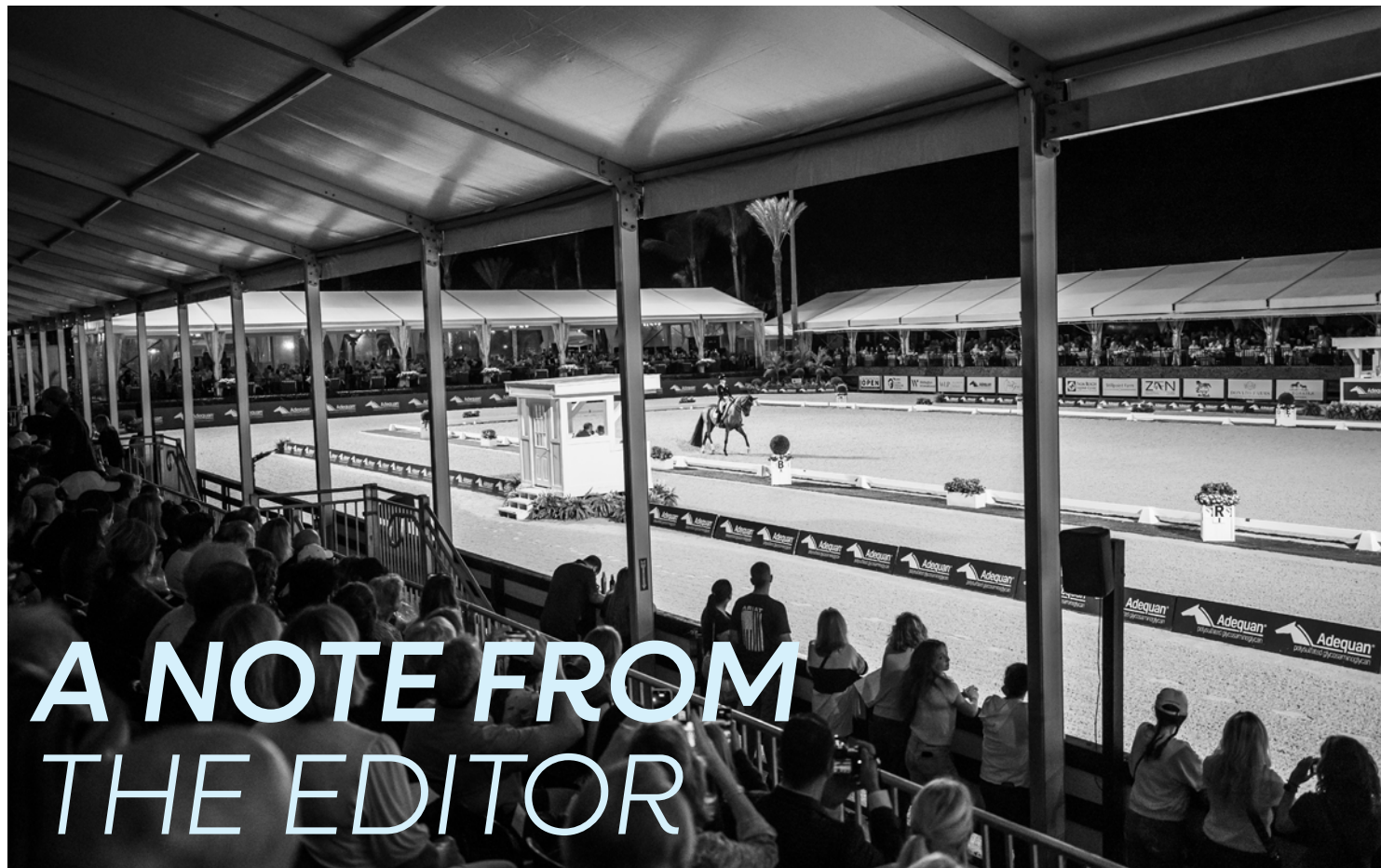
WEEK 5 • FEBRUARY 5, 2026

**SPOTLIGHT ON:
COASTAL STEEL
STRUCTURES**

**SUSAN PAPE'S
WINNING WEEK**

**CATCH UP ON PARA
COMPETITION AT AGDF**





A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Standing ringside during AGDF 3 got me thinking about my favorite ribbon. The one that came to mind isn't blue. It's not even red or yellow. It's a fourth-place ribbon that I earned at a charity horse show in Western New York. The show was at the Chestnut Ridge Equestrian Center, home to the legendary Abdullah.

Rather than buy new ribbons, the show recycled some of the ones won by Abdullah and Conrad Homfeld. I was 17 when they handed me that ribbon, and it's still proudly displayed in my home.

I want to know—what's your most cherished ribbon? Email me below, and your story could be featured in the next issue of The Wire.

Things you don't want to miss in this issue:

- Meagan Davis Gaining Ground at Grand Prix on page 19
- Catch up on all things Para Dressage from AGDF 3 on page 24
- Meet Susan Pape's daughter and groom: Laura Pape on page 26
- The GORGEOUS work coming from the Wellington International Photography Collective and GDF official photographer Centre Line Media on page 22

The Times is produced for, about and in celebration of YOU. If you have story ideas, want to share content with us from your Wellington International experience, or

would like to submit a letter to the editor—please email press@wellingtoninternational.com.

You can find The Times distributed weekly on Thursdays throughout the showgrounds and online at WellingtonInternational.com.

All the best,
Lindsay Brock
Editor



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Equestrian – Sotheby's International Realty

Each winter, Global Dressage Festival brings the world's most accomplished riders, trainers, and enthusiasts to Wellington – a destination where dressage is not simply a sport, but a way of life. Here, excellence is expected, details are paramount, and tradition evolves alongside innovation. It is within this distinctive environment that Equestrian Sotheby's International Realty continues to define the standard for equestrian-focused luxury real estate.

Dressage is built on discipline, partnership, and precision – values that extend naturally into the equestrian property market. A successful

transaction requires far more than an eye for aesthetics; it demands an understanding of how a property functions day to day. Barn flow, footing, staff accommodations, zoning, and access to show grounds all play a critical role in determining value and long-term suitability. These are nuances best navigated by advisors who live and breathe the equestrian lifestyle.

The team at Equestrian Sotheby's International Realty brings this depth of knowledge to every client relationship. With firsthand experience across disciplines and decades of market expertise in Wellington and beyond, their approach is both highly specialized and deeply personal. Clients are

guided with precision – whether seeking a high-performance training facility, a seasonal competition base, or a private estate designed to support horses and riders at the highest level.

In Wellington, location carries a unique premium. Properties with immediate proximity to show grounds are widely regarded as the equestrian equivalent of waterfront real estate—offering efficiency, discretion, and a competitive advantage during the height of the winter season. Understanding these micro-markets allows Equestrian Sotheby's International Realty to identify opportunities that align seamlessly with both lifestyle and performance objectives.

(Continued on Pg. 4)



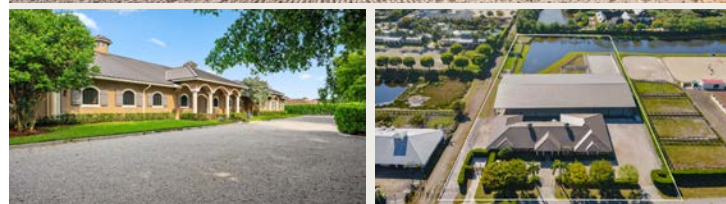
This year also marks a milestone for the global brand behind the local expertise. In 2026, Sotheby's International Realty celebrates its 50th anniversary, honoring a legacy built on integrity, excellence, and an unmatched international network. For equestrian clients, this heritage translates into global reach paired with local mastery - connecting Wellington's premier properties with discerning buyers around the world.

From world-class farms and aviation estates to refined residences and luxury condominiums, Equestrian Sotheby's International Realty curates a portfolio as exceptional as the clientele it serves. As the Global

Dressage Festival unfolds, the firm remains committed to those who recognize Wellington not merely as a seasonal destination, but as a lasting investment in both lifestyle and legacy.

Explore the collection at **EquestrianSIR.com** or consult with our luxury advisors and equestrian specialists for a tailored experience.

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in GDF's Vendor Court



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By Coastal Steel Structures, Proud Sponsor of GDF

In the dressage world, passion is not a pastime. It is discipline. It lives in the details, in repetition, and in the quiet pursuit of harmony between horse and rider. It shows up long before competition day and continues long after the last test is ridden. This level of commitment is exactly why Coastal Steel Structures is proud to sponsor the Adequan Global Dressage Festival.

We believe deeply in this community because the dedication displayed here mirrors the mindset, we bring to every structure we build.

For more than a decade, Coastal Steel Structures has worked alongside equestrians who demand more from their facilities because their horses and their sport demand more from them. We begin every project by listening. We learn how riders train, how horses respond, and how a covered riding arena must perform to

support precision, consistency, and confidence. Every arena we design is shaped with intention, strength, and care, built to serve both horse and rider at the highest level.

That commitment is why Coastal Steel Structures is honored to be the premier covered riding arena builder for the Adequan Global Dressage Festival. The newly covered riding arena at Wellington International reflects that standard.

Designed for elite dressage riders and trainers, the arena delivers the reliability and protection needed for focused, uninterrupted training. It shields horses from unpredictable weather, supports consistent footing and conditions, and creates a space where preparation can continue without compromise. It is built to support the quiet precision and discipline that defines dressage at its highest level.

To us, this arena represents more than steel and

structure. It is a commitment to the sport's future. A place where progress happens daily, partnerships deepen, and excellence is shaped one ride at a time.

Being part of the Adequan Global Dressage Festival gives us a front-row view of the dedication that defines this community. We see the early mornings. The relentless pursuit of refinement. Trust was built through patience and consistency. This arena was built for that work and for the people who show up every day to do it.

As the Adequan Global Dressage Festival continues to grow and evolve, Coastal Steel Structures is proud to support the riders, trainers, and teams who set the standard for what is possible. When passion deserves more, the standard is only the beginning, and we are honored to help build what comes next.



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To Our Clients, Partners, and Friends,

As another season unfolds, I find myself reflecting with immense pride and gratitude on the journey that has brought IDA Development to where it is today. For the past nine years, it has been an honor to sponsor at Wellington International and support horse shows across the country—events that represent the very best of this sport and the community behind it.

What began as a small operation has grown, in less than a decade, into an international equestrian design-build company trusted with some of the most high-profile facilities in the industry. That growth did

not happen overnight, and it certainly did not happen alone. It happened because of the owners, riders, trainers, managers, and organizations who believed in our work, gave us opportunities, and continue to place their trust in us year after year. For that, I am deeply thankful.

This business has given me far more than professional success. It has allowed me to meet extraordinary people from all over the world—people bound together by a shared respect for horses, hard work, and community. From Wellington to Ocala, from California to Ohio, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and everywhere in between, I have seen firsthand how global and yet close-knit the equestrian world truly is.

Those relationships are the foundation of everything we do.

IDA Development was built on simple principles: integrity, quality, responsiveness, and care for both horses and people. The same values that guided my earlier career have shaped our company culture and allowed us to grow quickly while never losing sight of what matters most. Every barn, arena, walkway, and structure we build carries that responsibility.

As we mark nearly a decade of growth, I am incredibly proud of our team and humbled by the continued support of this community. Thank you for welcoming us into your farms, your facilities, and your lives. We look

forward to building the future of equestrian sport together—one project, one relationship, and one season



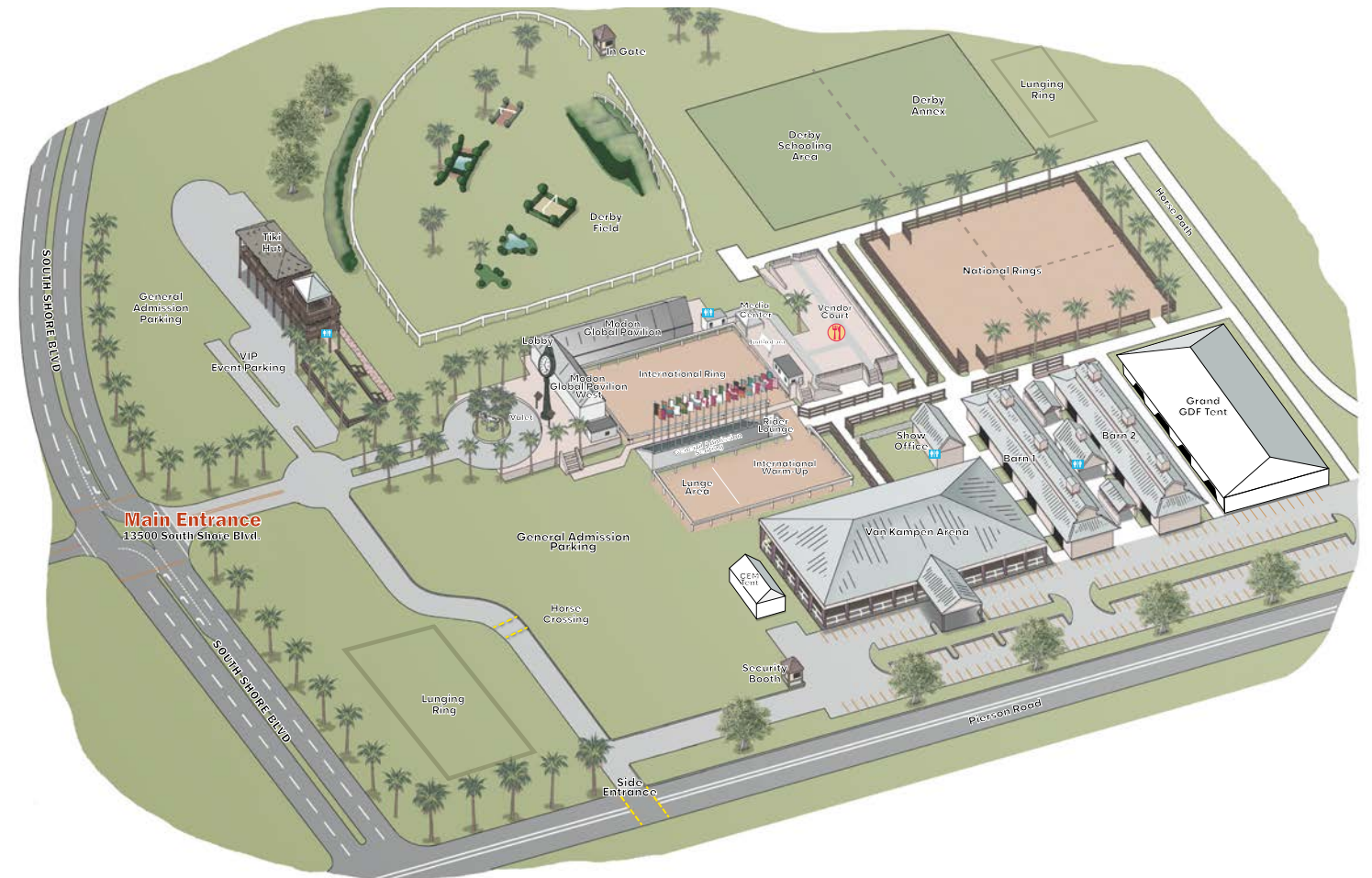
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THE PATHWAY

Daily Dose Equine (GDF 7)
Hulesbos Saddles (GDF 3 & 5)



SPECIAL AWARDS



The N2 Saddlery Peak Performance Award winner was Adult Amateur Susan Polm riding Jive V. This pair finished fourth in the Prix St. George with a score of 61.029%. Susan's husband and coach, Heidi Degele, joined her for the presentation.



The Omega Alpha Healthy Horse Award winner was Pa Missy, owned and ridden by Abigail Miller. Pa Missy (aka Tilly) underwent a major tumor removal surgery on her chest and mouth just four months ago and had to ride in a hackamore until a few weeks before this show. Tilly's sassy, playful performance earned her the Omega Alpha Healthy Horse honors.



The Garaman Lusitanos Achievement Award winner was Susan McSherry-Jones riding her own Amadeus de Massa to second place in the Prix St. George with a 64.559%.



Hemp Bedding.Org's "Top Pick Award" went to Olympian Isabel Arzu Escobar who scored a 64.338 % riding her Danzador KC in the Prix St. George. Coach, Endel Ots joined Isabel for the presentation.

PHOTOS © CENTRE LINE MEDIA



SPECIAL AWARDS



Carol Cohen-Hodess presented the 3 Graces Achievement Award to Susan Pape, who won the 3 Graces Dressage CDI5* Grand Prix Freestyle riding Harmony's Giulilanta with an 81.745 % during AGDF 3 Friday Night Stars!



Kasey Perry-Glass won the Zen Elite Award for AGDF 3, awarded to a positive person with passion, enthusiasm and great horsemanship; someone who encourages other riders, and supports teammates and competitors; someone who is Zen.



Susan Pape, aboard Harmony's Giulilanta, earned the Leading Lady Rider Award, sponsored by Frank & Eileen and presented by Thomas Baur, during AGDF 3.

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STILLPOINT FARM LEADING INTERNATIONAL FREESTYLE RIDER STANDINGS

1	SUSAN PAPE GBR	10 PTS
	CHRISTIAN SIMONSON USA	10 PTS
3	CAROLINE DAR COURT SWE	9 PTS
4	ASHLEY HOLZER USA	8 PTS
5	GEÑAY VAUGHN USA	7 PTS



SUSAN PAPE ACES

3 GRACES DRESSAGE CDI5* GRAND PRIX FREESTYLE ON 'INCREDIBLE' MARE



**By Alice Collins for
Wellington International**

Susan Pape (GBR) punched the air with delight as she concluded her foot-perfect Tom Jones-themed test on Harmony's Giulilanta in the 3 Graces Dressage CDI5* Grand Prix Freestyle during AGDF 3.

As her winning 81.745% personal best score was announced, she cried happy tears in front of the 2000-strong crowd of enthusiastic fans and

spectators. The performance marked a watershed moment in Giulilanta's career. The now 15-year-old suffered a potentially career-ending injury when she was on the brink of stepping up to grand prix. Now, with the FEI World Championships in August on the not-too-distant horizon, the mare is in the form of her life and has the scores to prove it, having also nailed Thursday's CDI5* Grand Prix with a career high score.

Five nations were represented in the CDI5*



Freestyle with three different flags ultimately adorning the podium. Anna Marek (USA) finished in second place with 76.435% on Fayvel, while Caroline Darcourt flew the flag for Sweden, claiming third with Lord Django on 76.04%.

En route to her resounding success, Giulilanta picked up nines for choreography, music and the canter pirouettes, reinforcing the Jazz x Flemmingh daughter's upward trajectory.

"I wasn't sure how she was going to cope with the audience because they were very excited," said Pape, who rides the attractive chestnut for Leslie and John and Malone of Harmony Sporthorses and is based in Germany for most of the year. "But as soon as I started the test, I felt she was with me. We're a total partnership, and it makes it so very special.

"This horse amazes me every day. Even though she's

already 15, she hasn't got so much experience under her belt, but it seems that she just gets better and better. I'm so grateful to John and Leslie who let me ride this incredible horse," added Pape.

Although Giulilanta is certainly producing the goods now, Pape explained that it was not always smooth sailing.

"We got her when she was six and struggling with learning the flying changes," she said. "It took her a very long time to make it up to Fourth Level and Prix St. Georges. Now, this is my second season with her at Grand Prix here in Wellington and she's spicy but incredibly focused."

Judge at C Dr. Sven-Günter Rothenberger agreed, saying, "This class was very good promotion for our sport; it's always a good sign when we see good riding. I liked how Susan's horse came in, how elastic she was, and how she

did the passage. During the test, there were some people clapping, but the mare was fully with Susan, and it was really enjoyable to watch."

Class sponsor Carol Cohen-Hodess of 3 Graces Dressage was also the mastermind behind the sell-out Dressage Infusion Masterclass on Wednesday evening with the three Olympians Jan Brink, Kyra Kyrklund and Cathrine Laudrup-Dufour.

Cohen-Hodess said, "I've been a resident of Wellington for over 20 years, and it's important not only to support the shows, but to help with education. That's why we brought the clinic here. Our sport is very important to me, and I want people to be educated about what good riding is."





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Palm Beach Equine Clinic: *Peak Performance and Compassionate Care*

For more than four decades, Palm Beach Equine Clinic (PBEC) has been at the heart of South Florida's equestrian community, providing exceptional veterinary care to horses



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competing at the highest levels. As the Official Veterinarians of the Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF),

Global Dressage Festival, and National Polo Center, PBEC ensures every horse has access to world-class expertise — whether for routine health papers, emergency services, advanced imaging, surgery, or second opinions in collaboration with referring veterinarians. At WEF, PBEC veterinarians are on-site daily throughout the circuit to oversee competing horses and help with any needs at their satellite location next to the Stabling Office.

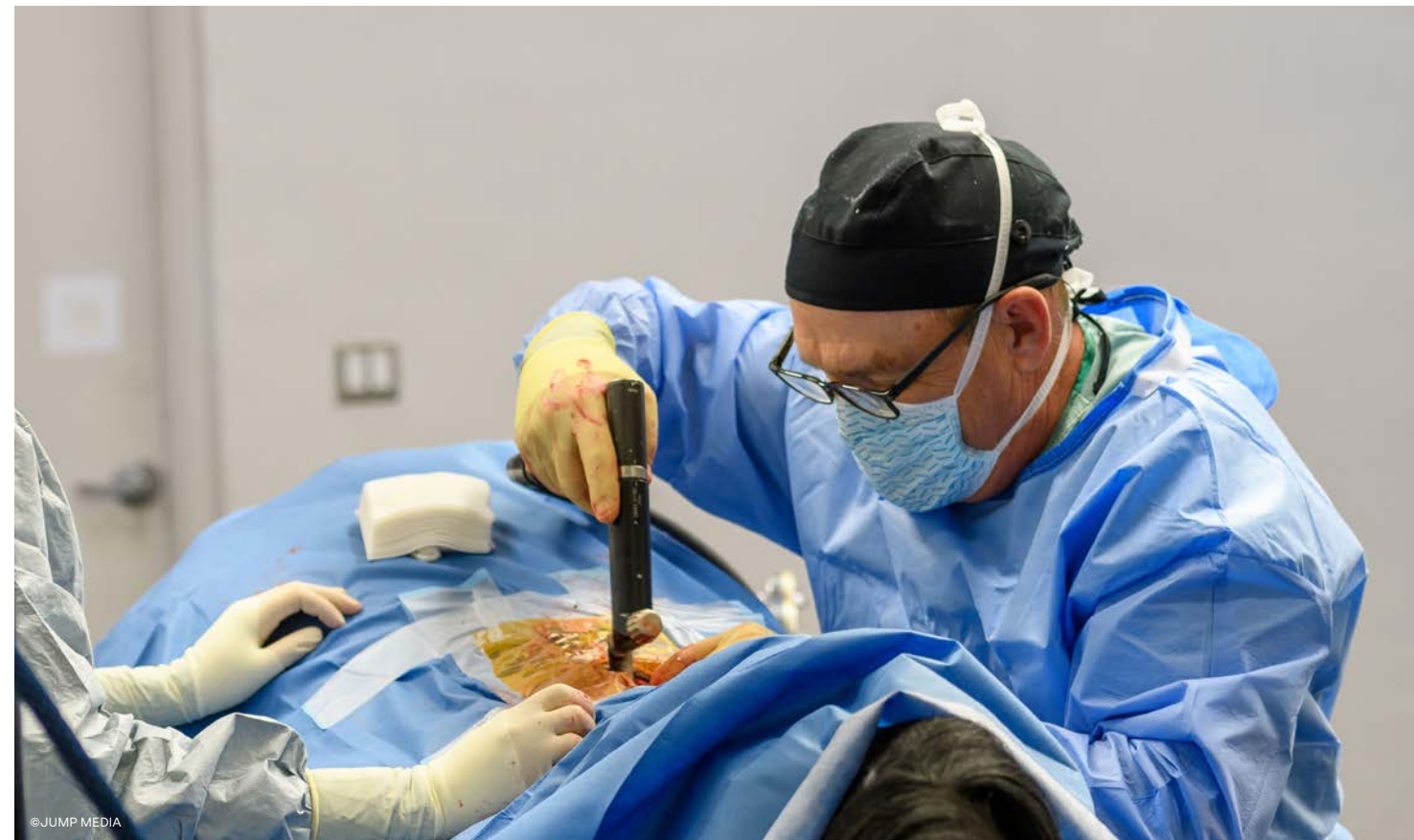
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PBEC's team of more than 30 veterinarians represents one of the most comprehensive collections of equine medical

knowledge in the region. Their specialties span internal medicine, emergency care, reproduction and fertility, regenerative medicine, podiatry, dentistry, and alternative therapies such as equine medical manipulation and acupuncture. This breadth of expertise allows PBEC to think outside the box when it comes to both prevention and treatment, keeping sport horses sound and competitive.

CUTTING-EDGE IMAGING AND TECHNOLOGY

One of PBEC's standout features is its unmatched diagnostic imaging capabilities, anchored by South Florida's only Canon Aquilion LB Exceed CT



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scanner. Unlike traditional CT machines, this advanced system moves around the patient, elevating to scan the head and neck or lowering to image the limbs of a standing horse. This level of precision gives veterinarians crucial information to make timely, accurate diagnoses — often guiding successful treatment or surgery.

"As the official veterinarians for WEF and GDF, we take great pride in being available 24/7 to care for any equine in the Wellington area," said PBEC President Dr. Scott Swerdlin. "The standards we set for ourselves — and the level of talent within our team — are second to none. We're proud to provide top-level care to horses and riders who come here from around the world."

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Whether your horse is a seasoned grand prix champion, a young horse on the rise, or a beloved family pet, Palm Beach Equine Clinic wants to be part of your team, offering the expertise, technology, and compassionate care needed to keep horses healthy and performing at their best. Trusted by top equestrian athletes from around the world, PBEC remains the gold standard in equine veterinary medicine.

To learn more about PBEC's services, visit www.EquineClinic.com or call 561-793-1599.

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OMEGA ALPHA® PRODUCTS DELIVER RESULTS... NATURALLY

Florida's show seasons demand peak support to stay in winning condition, and Omega Alpha's all-natural products are the safe and effective way to give your horses the competitive edge. Horses love Omega Alpha® products and so do the top professionals who feed and care for them. Omega Alpha® products are very palatable and most importantly, they are proven effective. Omega Alpha's all-natural supplements are made to human-grade production standards and have been scientifically tested and proven effective.

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When air temperatures drop radically at night, horses may tend to drink less, which can lead to gastric upset or even colic. Omega Alpha Equisel-Lyte™, often a hot weather go-to, can help rehydrate horses and encourage drinking in cold weather and it supports electrolyte balance while providing essential amino acids. Horses can also get immediate support from Equisel-BCAA™ Paste, which is a post-workout muscle builder that aids in rehydration. In addition to hydration, horses should already be on an effective gastric care program such as Omega Alpha's Digestive Trio, outlined below.

THE OMEGA ALPHA DIGESTIVE SUPER TRIO

These three products are digestive game changers and are favorites of veterinarians and competitors alike.

RegenerEQ™ is an innovative natural

product developed by Omega Alpha® Pharmaceuticals Inc. This is designed to support the gastrointestinal (GI) health through supporting the GI mucosal immune system which can have a beneficial effect on the overall health in equines. RegenerEQ™ is designed to encourage appetite and regenerate a healthy gastrointestinal (GI) immune system.

Biotic 8™ Plus is a pre and probiotic digestion blend with nine different species of probiotics, and includes kelp and spirulina for essential trace minerals, which synergistically support a horse's healthy digestive tract and gut flora.

Many riders rely on Gastra-FX™ with licorice, ginger and marshmallow root, to support intestinal tract health. Consider combining it with Biotic 8™ Plus to further encourage better digestion. Gastra-FX™ Ultra offers all the benefits in a convenient paste syringe that horses love! Just dose your horse when bridling and see the amazing benefits. And horses love it!

Another Omega Alpha Equine product that helps in dry cold weather as well as hot weather is Respi-Free™, which combines 15 antioxidant herbs, including Baikal skullcap, mulberry leaf, and Japanese honeysuckle, with phytonutrients and trace elements to help detoxify lung pathways and support the maintenance of normal respiratory tract health.

Canadian-based, Omega Alpha® Pharmaceuticals offer all-natural



products to support optimum health in horses, pets and humans. "We use the same equipment and maintain the same standards as our human products," says founder and medical engineer, Dr. Gordon Chang. Using HPLC (high pressure liquid chromatography, used in analytical chemistry), Omega Alpha® can ensure the detection of trace minerals to minute levels. That has built confidence in consumers who are competitive equestrians.

Experience the benefits in improving and maintaining respiratory, digestive, joint, hormone and immune system health, detoxification, muscle rehabilitation and performance. Visit OmegaAlpha.US to learn more or ask your fellow competitors, Ashley Holzer, Scott and Sara Hassler, Jacqueline Brooks, Endel Ots, Belinda Trussell or Katherine Bateson about the success they have had with Omega Alpha products year after year.



Gaining Ground at Grand Prix

By Alice Collins for Wellington International

Meagan Davis is checking off a lot of her bucket list items lately. The 36-year-old made the step up to senior international grand prix for the first time in the fall of 2024 with Scott Durkin's Totilas gelding, Toronto Lightfoot, and they have logged three wins with ever-rising personal bests in just the past two months. That included winning the Palm Beach Equine Clinic CDI3* Grand Prix Special during week three of the Adequan® Global Dressage Festival with 71.489%.

"I did the Young Riders World Cup Final in 2010 and, until Toronto came along, that was the last time I represented the U.S.," says Davis. "Even as I aged, I didn't let that diminish my hopes of doing this someday. Dressage is one of those sports where you can still go to the Olympics in your 60s or even 70s. I didn't feel that I needed to make my debut by a certain age; I just wanted to do it well. As my first senior CDI horse, Toronto is helping me achieve that.

"When Scott bought him, the goal was that he'd become an international horse. I've put in a lot of work and time

into this; this is the big goal I've always worked towards," she adds.

"It's really exciting to be gaining ground," said Davis, who rose up the FEI Dressage World Rankings for athletes this month from 90th to 65th. "Last year was a lot of firsts, and we laid the foundation so Toronto could blossom. 'Global' has a lot of atmosphere for the

Davis's hard work is getting noticed. In early February 2026 she was named to the US Equestrian (USEF) Dressage Development Program with the 13-year-old Toronto. Another check mark on the bucket list.

This year, she also hopes to represent the U.S. on Nations Cup teams and be selected onto the squad of U.S. riders who travel to Europe to compete each summer. Although Davis is very accustomed to travel—she spends summers in Saugerties, NY, and winters in Loxahatchee, FL—it would mark her first

(Continued on Pg. 20)



horses to take in, and it can be overwhelming, but he took it all in stride. As the year progressed, we challenged him more, and he rose to the occasion. He has all the talent, so now it's about finding softness coupled with electric energy in the show ring."



time showing in Europe. Questions remain for her about the minutiae of the process (“Will my dogs even remember me if I leave for a month?”), but those qualms do not dim her motivation.

As every international rider is acutely aware, this is a World Championship year. Further, it takes place at the iconic Aachen venue—in Germany in August—so the drive to snag one of the coveted team spots is amplified. Now, with the 2026 AGDF in full swing, Davis is taking

advantage of the unique benefits it proffers.

“Sometimes horses back off if

they’re unsure in the atmosphere and can become hot and cold at the same time,” she explains. “In the same test, they can be too sensitive to the leg and, in turn, not respond to the aids. Knowing when to put the gas on and when to help them with their confidence—like using extra leg or giving them a pat—teaches you about which aid you need in the moment, so the horse is at its best.

“Over the past few weeks, Toronto has come out of his shell in the show ring and started to show off instead of me just coaxing him round,” she continues. “Then, you can ride for an eight or a nine, rather than just a clean test. Global teaches us to handle horses in challenging environments, and that’s so valuable.”

LOVE AT FIRST TRY

Since the first day Davis laid eyes on Toronto in 2022 in Wellington, she was smitten. Davis went along with Durkin and her parents, Bill and Karen Davis. She tried so many horses that day her mother had to take notes.

“We’d flown all over the country looking for a horse,” she recalls. “When I saw Lars Petersen—my trainer at the time—on Toronto he looked gorgeous. As soon as I sat on him, I knew I could make him mine. He had great energy and I was able to move every part of his body. When horses are willing to do that, I know I can transform them into something better than they already are. We did a bunch of small tour movements, and he said yes to everything. It was awesome to be able to do that in the first ride. I’ve

never had a finished horse before, and I liked the fact that I could make him my ride. We decided to put all our eggs in his basket.”

Toronto was not yet confirmed at grand prix so Davis—with help from her current coach, Olympic team bronze medalist Ali Brock—got to work building a relationship and leading Toronto further up the training ladder. She discovered funny things about him: he doesn’t enjoy turnout but loves to roll while hand grazing; he adores bananas and has a special low-pitched knicker that he reserves only for requesting them; and that he looks for his people when coming out of tests.

And there is one special item of clothing that Davis has worn in each of those tests. “I’ve always hated wearing pins on my stock so, years ago, my grandmother Annamay Lawrence started embroidering flowers onto stock ties, so I didn’t have to wear a pin,” she explains. “She passed away just before the new year last year. I have a few of her stock ties that I take very good care of—they’re all I wear in the ring.”

While Davis is riding a blue wave in the competition arena, she has other irons in the fire, too. Aside from the 10-horse training barn that she and her working student Regan Walmer run—including all the day-to-day chores—she is also devising a new app with her husband, Kyle Byrne, who owns a landscape development company. The app is designed to solve problems



Davis has encountered in the process of regularly moving horses between her summer and winter bases, as well as solving equipment management issues.

“I’m a barn manager as well as a rider,” she continues. “Even just trying to collect the vet paperwork for the New York to Florida trip is a challenge. I want to create a single place where all the documents and paperwork can be stored and accessed. I also want to include a ‘closet’ for each horse to make it easy to track every piece of kit or equipment that they own. That would be especially helpful for training horses that come in, giving each one an accurate inventory.

“We’re also looking at developing wearable technology, like bell boots that measure stride length,” she adds. “They could predict if a horse is going to go lame

before they are noticeably lame. All these things being in the barn would help with welfare and management so much.”

With Davis’s meticulous management, Toronto has many years at the top level ahead of him. In the immediate term, she is excited to ride her Terry JGallo freestyle, which features Fleetwood Mac and The Bee Gees, under the lights during AGDF’s Friday Night Stars for the first time later in the season.

“It tells a good story,” she says. “I want to have everyone tap their feet and enjoy it as much as Toronto and I enjoy dancing to it.”

With Toronto blossoming and Davis’s long-held dreams finally aligning with opportunity, the 2026 season feels pivotal for the duo. And, if their upward trajectory continues, you can expect to see a lot more of this pair on the AGDF stage—and beyond.





AROUND THE GROUNDS

From the Wellington International Photography Collective



AROUND THE GROUNDS

From the Wellington International Photography Collective



PARAS HEADLINE

AGDF 3



Locally based rider Kate Shoemaker (USA) took the overall para championship at AGDF 3 for her three performances on her own 10-year-old Vianne (by Vitalis), culminating in a 78.892% in the CPEDI3* Grand Prix Grade IV Freestyle, giving them a total of 222.975 points, and the title.

Marie Vonderheyden (USA) logged three plus-70% scores on Karin Flint's nine-year-old Fürstenball gelding Fan Tastico H in the Grade I ranks to take the reserve champion's sash with 221.339.

Both third-placed Grade V athlete Cynthia Screnci riding For Memory 4 and fourth-placed Grade I competitor Roxanne Trunnell aboard Rumour Has It also put down a trio of plus-70% tests,

underscoring the depth of U.S. para dressage talent. Shoemaker, Screnci and Vonderheyden were joined by Grade III rider Hannah Kingsley to make up the U.S. Para Dressage Team at this CPEDI3*.

Shoemaker, who suffers from muscle weakness and spasms on the right side of her body, began the show feeling ill but rallied to increase her scores as the CPEDI went on.

"The week started out a bit rough, and the first ride didn't go very well [69.398% in the Grand Prix A Test]; I almost needed her to do the test for me," said Shoemaker of the American-bred Vitalis daughter. "We've been together two years, and our partnership has gotten so



close. I've never had a horse like this; she's so special with the biggest heart.

"When I first rode her in Denmark, Cathrine Laudrup-Dufour said she thought we were a gold medal partnership. We didn't quite pull off the gold medal [at the Paralympics] in Paris, but we did medal in the freestyle. Since Paris, once that pressure was off, we were able to relax and just do the best training we could. Everything has really blossomed, and it's exciting."

This CPEDI was Vianne's first international show in seven months, and Shoemaker is priming her to peak for the FEI World Championships in Aachen, Germany, in August.

"Everybody is starting to feel the pressure of selection, and we've got to get scores," continued Shoemaker. "We're thankful that this show was added to the schedule. It's tough for the organizer to add it in a five-star week, but it turned out to be incredible for the horses because the atmosphere was so big.



"Even if some people didn't have their best ride on the first day, it pays off in the end because it's an experience you can't replicate," she added. "It's good for the riders and good for the horses, as well as for the community because they get to see what it's all about."

U.S. Para Dressage Chef d'Equipe and Technical Advisor, Michel Assouline, said, "Everybody's on a good path and really

showing improvement. You could see that on the first day—and with it being a January show—that things are a little rusty. That's normal. Some of them haven't been competing for months. Here, with feedback from top international judges, it just gives the riders a guide of where they need to be."

LAURA PAPE'S NEW GROOMING ROLE BRINGS UNEXPECTED EMOTION

Contributed by Sarah Eakin/
Paper Horse Media
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Even though Laura Pape grew up surrounded by horses, she did not expect to be in the spotlight at the center of world-class dressage. That all changed when she started grooming for her mother, grand prix dressage rider Susan Pape, last August.

After finishing High School and missing out on a university place, Laura worked as a receptionist at a physiotherapist's office while reassessing her options. Laura's father Ingo Pape comes from one of Germany's most famous horse breeding families, a reputation founded on her grandfather Günter Pape. When applications to other jobs and educational opportunities did not work out, the unexpected hiatus saw Laura return home to her roots—the Hengststation

Pape Stables in Hemmoor, Germany—and unearth her connection with horses. “I rode as a hobby when I was a child, but stopped for a long time. I went back home and started working as a groom, and that’s been working out quite wonderful now,” she said. “But I am still applying for university.”

Initially based at the stables preparing horses for lessons, Laura, 20, progressed to become the full-time traveling groom, working for her mother towards the end of last year. They hit the road to some top-class competitions, including the Stuttgart German Masters in November and December’s London International Horse Show held at the Excel London in Britain’s capital.

“That was honestly my favorite horse show of all time,” Laura said.

Born in northern Germany, Laura describes herself as “very European,” with

German roots, British ties, and a strong association with the Netherlands, where her mother grew up. Susan rides for Britain—her mother was German, but her father was British. For that reason the London show carried added emotional weight. Members of Susan’s English family, rarely able to attend competitions, were there to watch—a moment Laura described as “incredibly special.”

It was also a milestone for Giulilanta, Harmony Sporthorses’s mare ridden by Susan and making a comeback to the international arena at 14, after suffering a serious leg injury at the age of 11, which sidelined her for two years. “There was a point where we didn’t even know if we could keep her as a breeding mare,” Laura said. “And now, the past three shows she keeps topping her personal best.”

The most recent of those came in the 3 Graces Dressage CDI5* Grand Prix Freestyle part of Friday Night Stars at the Global Dressage Festival. In front of a packed house, Susan and Giulilanta scored a personal best of 81.745%. Susan concluded the test by punching the air in excitement and both mother and daughter found themselves in tears in the aftermath.

“I think my knees actually went out when I saw our final score,” Laura said. “I think probably the emotional



aspect of it is what surprised me the most [about grooming]. The hours, the devotion—you know about that—but the excitement and the thrill of professional athleticism that sweeps you up like that is really something special!”

Prior to Wellington, Laura’s father has been around to help guide her, but with him at home in Europe, this winter she relies on help from the Harmony team, including dressage rider Michael Klimke and his longstanding groom Nico Wienströer.

“I’m incredibly grateful and privileged to work with these people who have devoted their lives to horsemanship,” she said.

At the heart of them all remains her mother. “My

earliest memory is my mother winning the world championships with Cayenne in 2007,” Laura said, recalling the victory in the 5-year-old division at the 2007 World Championships

for Young Dressage Horses in Verden, Germany. “Despite whatever the numbers or the stories say, my mother has always been the best rider in the entire world to me.”

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Freestyle Presented by Zen
Elite Equestrian Center

FEB 27 CDI4* Grand Prix
Freestyle Presented by
Donato Farms

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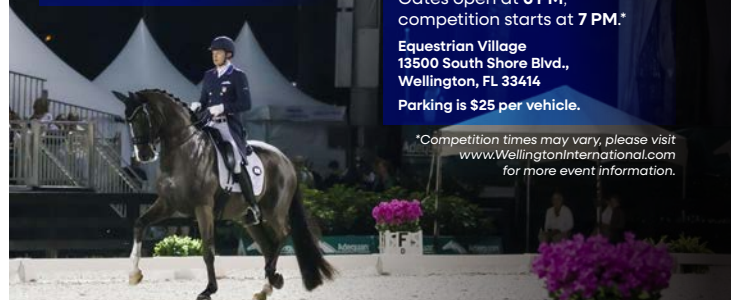
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