

Oldenburg, 2000 Licensing, Oldenburg Germany from Warmblood Magazine, January-February, 2001.

Each November, the Korung (stallion licensing) in Oldenburg, Germany represents a mile post in breeding and selection of the best horses for sport. The culmination of the efforts of the breeders and the selection commission was displayed this year at the Stallion Days (November 16-18) in Oldenburg, Germany.

Spectators were treated to watching 49 young stallions, the elite, already selected from hundreds of 2 and 3 year old colts, all striving to become the ideal sport horse that will pass on their traits to their progeny. This particular Korung showed a true consistency in type. The stallions were elegant with attractive heads and necks, their physiques were sleek and athletic and their gaits were dynamic, elastic and rhythmic. This elite group of young stallions represents the evolution of the modern sport horse--a horse with elegance and utmost athletic ability.

The horses are selected for the Korung by first attending an inspection held in October in Vechta, Germany. Over an 8 to 10 day period, 400-500 horses are inspected by the Oldenburg Verband Selection Commission. The commission consists of the same individuals from year to year which allows the most effective and consistent guidance to the breeding program. The horses are presented to the commission and are examined for overall impression, type, and conformation. The handler then allows the horse to move at freedom. The commission can then evaluate the horse for gaits, balance, soundness and athletic ability. The handler

then captures the horse and presents him to a jumping shoot of 4 obstacles. Here the horse is free jumped to determine his jumping ability and style, athleticism and confidence. At the completion of this test, the commission chooses horses to be presented on a hard surface.

The presentation on the hard surface allows the horse to be evaluated for soundness, straightness and correctness of gait and conformation and type. The horse is moved to and away from the commission in order to evaluate the horse from the front and the back. After the presentation, about 10 horses at a time are brought back into the arena and shown by their handler at the walk for their final examination and tally of the previous tests that will determine their destiny. The commission at this time announces which horses will go on to Oldenburg for the stallion licensing. About 10% of the horses from the inspection in Vechta matriculate to the Korung in Oldenburg. About 70-75% of the horses that are presented at the Korung will become licensed Oldenburg stallions.

In Oldenburg, the first day of the Korung begins in the morning with the individual presentation of stallions on a hard surface. The horses are evaluated by the same commission using the same procedures and criteria that were used in Vechta at the inspection. In the afternoon, the horses perform the free jumping test. They enter the arena, individually, trotting in hand and are stood in front of the commission. They are then introduced to the jumping shoot. The free jumping begins with the obstacles low and are raised depending

on the horse's ability and their intention for use. The dressage dedicated stallions (determined by bloodlines, conformation and their gaits) might not be required to jump as high and wide as the stallions that are destined to be jumpers. Usually the jumps get to a maximum of 3'6" to 4' for the dressage horses and 4'6" to 5' for the jumpers. Some stallions have it all; super gaits, athletic jumping ability with plenty of scope and beautiful type and bloodlines that could allow them to excel in either sport and sire offspring that will be jumpers or dressage horses.

At the completion of the first day, many impressions are formed about the young stallions, which will be confirmed or negated on the trials of the second day. In the morning of the second day, the stallions enter the arena individually in hand at the trot and are presented to the commission. They are then allowed to move at freedom. The horse can be evaluated for the quality of gaits, athletic ability, balance and presence. It is also possible to evaluate the stallions temperament and character as he performs each of the tests. How the horse responds to the given task is an indication of how bold or timid the horse is, whether the horse is calm or explosive and whether the horse is amenable to training.

These young horses have been prepared carefully for these tests. They must be conditioned so they are fit and they must be trained so they trot in hand, free jump and stand for inspection. The Korung is the initial test for the stallion. At the young age of 2-3 years, the stallions are tested in a highly stressful atmosphere. They

enter a brightly lit, electrified arena in front of a crowd of 10,000+ spectators with energizing music booming and are then required to perform their tests. They must return to the arena with their handler and walk peacefully among their peers until the final decisions are made, either gekort (licensed) or nicht gekort (not licensed). The licensing at this juncture is only provisional. It permits the stallion to breed 20 mares and enables him to have 20 offspring which can be branded Oldenburg. For additional foals, the stallions must complete his testing requirement by attending and successfully completing a performance test, usually scheduled within the next year or two after the licensing. Traditionally, the final approval is based on a performance test where the horse must not only demonstrate his gaits and jumping ability at freedom, but also under the rider and cross-country as well. During this test, the horse is given scores for gaits, jumping ability, rideability and temperament. Stallions that achieve a passing score receive their final approval from Oldenburg which enables them to breed an unlimited number of mares in their lifetime.

At this year's Korung, so many well prepared and well bred stallions made it difficult, at first, to choose the best--the hauptprämie--or highest premium licensed stallion. From the initial tests on the first day a few horses became very popular with the spectators. A black, DeNiro (son of Donnerhall)/Luciano/Efendi was an early favorite. He had powerful and inspiring gaits and always showed himself well, whether at freedom, in hand or free

jumping. Another crowd favorite was a black son of Sion out of a States Premium mare by Contender/Tin Rocco. He sported a powerful trot, a naturally engaged canter and exuded a dynamic expression! His character was topped off by exotic white on all four legs and a blaze.

Sergeant Pepper (SilvioI/Ramino/Astor), a successful show jumper and winner of his 100 day performance test had a full brother at this year's Korung. This large framed, tall bay son of SilvioI wowed the crowd with his soft and capable style of jumping, regardless of the size of the jump.

The Sandro descendants made a visible impact on this Korung as witnessed by the licensing of two Sandro Hit sons (Sandro Song/Ramino), two Sandro Song sons (Sandro/Gepard) and a SilvioI (Sandro/Gepard).

The legendary, Rubinstein, could not be forgotten from this year's licensing. Unfortunately, Rubinstein died this past year but a total of 9 Rubinstein grandsons and 1 son were present at this Korung. Three Rubinstein grandsons, through the mother line were first, fourth and tenth premium. A Rubinstein grandson by Rohdiamant was 7th premium. This dark chestnut by Rohdiamant out of a FlorestanI/Francisco mare, competed as Roubeni M in the German National Championships for 3 year olds where he was 4th. Just one month before the licensing, this Rohdiamant son sold for 520,000 DM (about \$250,000 US) at the Oldenburg Elite Fall auction in Vechta! He is reputed to be a delight to ride!

Donnerhall continues to be a significant influential force in Oldenburg. Three Donnerhall sons were represented at the Korung, one bay son (Donnerhall/Landadel/Zeus) received 3rd premium. Seven Donnerhall grandsons, all from the sire line, were licensed and 5 were premium.

The highlight of this year's millenium Korung was the Hauptpramie, son of Don Gregory (Donnerhall), grandson of Rubinstein, Davidoff, the reigning 3 year old German National Champion! The tall, jet black son of Don Gregory was somewhat unimpressive in hand. He performed well in all of his tests and his high quality was evident, but he was often overshadowed by the horse that was listed in the catalogue before him, the second placed premium, son of DeNiro (Luciano/Efendi).

On Saturday, the day after the licensing, at the Stallion Parade in Oldenburg, Davidoff was presented under saddle. It was no doubt how this young son of Don Gregory and grandson of Rubinstein earned not only his first premium license, but also the three year old German National Championship. He was breathtaking! Davidoff was so soft and elegant, yet dynamic, with a large, fluid sweeping stride. Davidoff's aura was so powerful that he was presented with the unbelievable Sandro Hit (1999 German National Champion of 6 year olds), whose magnificent gaits did not overshadow those of Davidoff. And to top it off, the tranquil, 3 year old, Davidoff, gave the somewhat explosive, Sandro Hit, confidence in this electrified

arena. Davidoff is truly Oldenburg's stunning, super-stallion for the 2000 millenium.