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# RIDING

CALIFORNIA RIDING MAGAZINE

January 2010 • Vol 24 #2

[ridingmagazine.com](http://ridingmagazine.com)

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Sir Caletto's owner, Hanoverian breeder Barbara Gualco, with Germany's Gold Medal jumper, rider and breeder extraordinaire, Paul Schockemohle, from whom she purchased Sir Caletto, at Paul's annual stallion presentation in Vechta, Germany. ... see story on page 10

# SILVERHORNE SPORTHORSE LLC

*Sir Caletto delivers a legacy  
in the making for Northern California breeder.*

Hap Hansen remembers very clearly the privilege of campaigning the elite Hanoverian stallion Sir Caletto. They won just about everything winnable in the Open Regular Hunter divisions at Indio in 2004, two years after the handsome, grey 1995 sire was imported from Germany's Paul Schockemohle by Silverhorse Sporthorse LLC.

"He was one of the nicest horses I've ever ridden," says Hansen, who, in the course of becoming one of America's winningest Grand Prix riders and scoring countless hunter championships, has ridden a lot of horses. While out to dinner one night during that Indio circuit, Hansen ran into two show judges. One had pinned Hansen and Sir Caletto in the hunter ring that day and the other had been officiating in the adjacent arena from the berm where both rings' judges sat. "They told me that the judge watching Sir Caletto told the other judge to turn around and watch this horse," Hansen relays. "That judge said, 'I can't, I'm watching *this* horse.' 'Forget about that horse,' the Caletto judge insisted. 'You *have* to watch this horse.'"

Approved by the American Hanoverian Society, the NA/WPN Dutch Warmblood, ISR Oldenburg North American, the German Oldenburg and Swedish Warmblood registries, the Hanoverian has two of the world's top jumping bloodlines in his pedigree: that of his sire Sandro and his dam's sire Caletto I. Hansen campaigned Sir Caletto in the hunters with happily conflicted emotions: "I'd seen some of his jumping tapes and I knew what he could do in that ring, but I was quite enjoying him in the hunters."

The 16.3 hh stallion's big body nicely took up Hansen's considerable height and long legs and his temperament was great, the rider recalls. "He was very level-headed and very easy to work with. I hope to get the chance to ride one of his babies."

Coupled with qualifying for Germany's Bundeschampionate and winning the country's Young Hanoverian Jumper Championships, the 2004 Indio victories left little to prove regarding Sir Caletto's performance record. He went to work full-time fulfilling an already-busy breeding schedule at Silverhorse, located in the foothills just 18 miles east of Sacramento. His domestic-bred babies, the oldest of which are 6, are just now bringing Sir Caletto's remarkable traits into hunter and jumper show rings. Some of the country's savviest breeders have long been fans and many sure superstars are the result. One such example is the 2009 foal Jackson, out of Strapless. A Danish Warmblood, Strapless is one of America's most renowned hunters. She won the American Hunter Jumper Foundation's Hunter Classic Spectacular in 2001, 2002 and 2003, with professional Emily Williams, then again in 2004 with her owner, amateur rider Clara Lindner.

In addition to 70 foals bred in Sweden and 60-plus in Germany, Sir Caletto has become an increasingly popular and successful stallion in his seven breeding seasons in the States. These babies include 22 inspection champions, International Hunter Futurity winners and competitors and International Jumper Futurity champions.

Barbara Gualco, who owns Silverhorse with her husband Jackson, is thrilled with Caletto's career already but believes it is only just beginning to take hold in the States. She has taken a distinctly European approach to marketing Silverhorse's sole stallion. As is the practice among top Hanoverian breeders in Germany, Gualco wanted to first see consistency in the athletic abilities, temperament and conformation in the sire's offspring before launching a major marketing effort.

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*Hap Hansen winning the 1.30 at  
Spruce Meadows with Puccini S,  
whose three sisters and mother  
are all in the Silverhorse  
broodmare band.  
Photo: JumpShot*



1. Mare Sophia Loren S at Del Mar winning the Sallie B. Wheeler Championship in 2-Year-Old Hunter Breeding. Left to right: Hap Hansen, breeder Barb Gualco and trainers Wout Van den Brink and Nancy Stanley.

2. Sir Caletto with trainer Diane Yeager at Indio 2004.

3. The Show Barn.



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Further, she wanted to see that consistency produced when crossed with mares of distinctly differing bloodlines and to have positive results in the pairings of those lines. From the get-go, she predicted that Sir Caletto would cross beautifully with various Warmblood and Thoroughbred lines, but she wanted confirmation of that on her own farm and from others in the breeding community. She has not been disappointed. The success of Caletto's offspring in breed inspections and young horse competition has provided that confirmation in spades, a gratifying outcome for any breeder and especially so for a relatively exclusive program like Silverhorse's.

Well-set necks, nice big shoulders, very good saddle positions and round croups are distinguishing features consistently showing up in Caletto's get. They are also typically blessed with long, graceful legs and beautiful heads.

Good looks tell only half the story, however. Rachel and Don Jessop have been working with Sir Caletto babies since 2005, taking many from their under saddle introduction to jumping small courses.

"What I love most about them is their wonderful gaits and their rhythm," Rachel Jessop explains. "There is nothing nicer than a horse that comes softly to the jump, takes it in stride and jumps nice and round." These are difficult, perhaps impossible, qualities to train into a horse, she acknowledges. Every youngster is different, of course. "Some you feel as if they could jump an Olympic course right away, the way they tuck their legs and produce a beautiful bascule over the fence. Some are ideal for beginning riders. They are horses that you know you'd be very safe on."

Many inherit their sire's sense of playfulness, Jessop notes, but all in the context of being intelligent, level-headed and curious. "You are never worried about getting run over when you're working with them from the ground."

Gualco's research before buying Sir Caletto and her gut instincts upon seeing him, plus her patience, has paid off. Return customers are the hallmark of any good business and Silverhorse has many clients who keep coming back for more Sir Caletto breedings and babies. Some now own eight to 10.

### **Mares Matter**

Even being the star that he is, Sir Caletto is not the only reason for the high quality of Silverhorse's horses. "It's simple math," says Gualco of an unassailable tenant in Silverhorse's breeding philosophy. "The mare provides half of the DNA in any foal produced." Mares were the foundation of Silverhorse Sporthorse LLC long before Sir Caletto arrived in 2002. The band of 15 broodmares currently residing at Silverhorse represents the best of their breeds.

The Thoroughbred mare Love That Kennedy xx gets credit for initiating Gualco's path to breeding. In 1998, Silverhorse was a training and show barn and Gualco was an amateur rider having particular success with Thoroughbreds. Initially, she planned to breed the big jumping Kennedy xx just once, but a passion for breeding blossomed in the process. Gualco set her sights on getting the mare approved by

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the American Hanoverian Society. Conveniently, the AHS president at the time and owner of Glenwood Farms Hanoverians lived just 10 miles away and ran one of the country's pioneering and premiere sporthorse breeding programs. Kennedy xx earned entry into the AHS registry by becoming champion in the under saddle and free jumping tests at a 1998 inspection. Bred to Glenwood's Diamont, she produced a beautiful foal and inspired a winning breeding strategy.

"That started me on the path of maintaining very high standards for show mares, and their daughters we've bred, who ultimately are directed into our broodmare band if we decide they have the

athleticism and disposition for breeding and we want to keep the blood on the farm," Gualco says.

Breeding a mare simply because she's available has never been part of Silverhorse's plan. "We focus on well-known bloodlines or the mare has to have a respectable performance record, great conformation and disposition," Gualco explains. It helped that her father was a UC Davis veterinarian who emphasized the mare's equal role in any breeding equation.

#### Sporthorse Source

Breeding Sir Caletto to its own mares, Silverhorse typically puts between 10-16 foals on the ground every year. At any given time, there are a variety of young horses, from 2009 weanlings to 5-year-olds, for sale. About 70 percent are sold directly to or through

trainers, many of them return customers. Dressage clients will typically snap up the youngest horses, Gualco notes, while amateur hunter/jumper riders often lean toward the older youngsters who've been nicely started by the Silverhorse team.

"Often people will purchase the horse and we will continue to raise and even start them under saddle," Gualco says. "We have 80 acres on a very nicely set-up farm with a training/show barn, mare barns, safe fencing, shade trees and grass pastures that are all under sprinklers to combat the warm Sacramento summers. We have a fantastically constructed jump chute and a generously-sized round pen where we work and play with the horses and, of course, a great group of people that work with me to make it all possible." According to Gualco, it all comes full circle due to the customized approach to handling and raising the horses. This process has evolved, she adds, thanks to the Jessops' influence and that of resident trainer Nikki Fowler.

Silverhorse is equally interested in breeding to outside mares, but the same high standards apply to both the mares and the owner's intentions for raising their foals. "Conformation, great character,

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"There is nothing nicer than a horse that comes softly to the jump, takes it in stride and jumps nice and round."

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athleticism, show record and/or performance test scores are all standards by which outside mares are evaluated," Gualco explains. "But what I care about the most is how the foal will be raised. I have passed on selling contracts to those who are unwilling to raise a foal correctly.

"When you are establishing a young stallion's reputation, you really work to protect his interests, because he can't," she continues. "Most of our clients are savvy breeders, and I work closely with first-time breeders or breeders without the ability to raise a foal due to lack of space or the knowledge to do so and I guide them toward a workable solution. This way the breeder gets what they want, a good-minded, well-raised youngster to start. I never hesitate to say to a potential or future client that it is not possible to raise a young one in isolation or in a show barn. It's all been tried and we know what works well for the mare and foals."

As the 2010 show season gets underway, Silverhorse's youngsters are bound to turn up in winner's circles in the show ring and breeding venues. Although Gualco considers Silverhorse's efforts to just now be taking root, the seeds of a remarkable legacy are in the soil and sprouting throughout the American sporthorse breeding world.

*For more information on breeding to Sir Caletto and Silverhorse Sporthorse LLC, visit [www.silverhorse.com](http://www.silverhorse.com) or call Barbara Gualco at 916-351-0600.*