

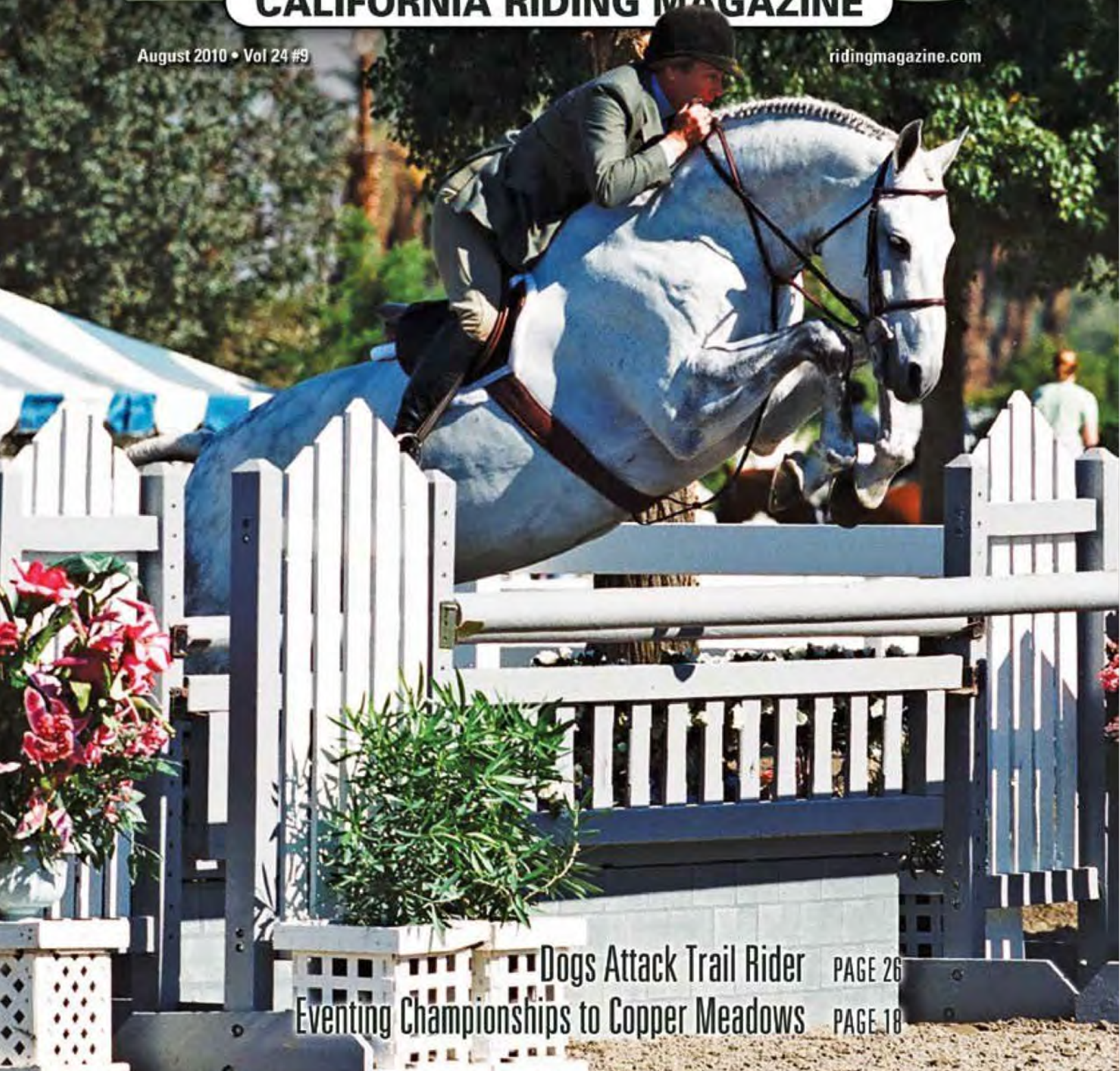
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Silverhorse Sporthorse LLC

Great bloodlines produce realized dreams for American market.

by Kim F. Miller

It would take a very long article to detail the breeding possibilities available through Silverhorse Sporthorse LLC. Suffice to say the Northern California breeding farm is the source of dreams come true for amateurs and professionals seeking the ideal sporthorse.

Trainer Rachel Jessop found her dream horse while she and her husband Don were starting a crop of Silverhorse youngsters. She asked Silverhorse owner Barb Gualco about a filly whose top quality movement especially caught her eye. Once a competitive jumping and dressage rider in her native New Zealand, Jessop longed for a horse from the Donnerhall line with whom she could return to high-level dressage competition. When Gualco explained that the filly, Diamond Lilly, was a Donnerhall granddaughter out of Silverhorse's EM Sayonara, Jessop's dream began to materialize. Working with the 5-year-old mare for nearly a year now and well ahead of where she'd hoped to be thanks to Diamond's trainability, Jessop is floating on air, much like her horse.

Diamond Lilly represents Donnerhall very well with her "incredible suspension and the beautiful elasticity, flow and rhythm of her gaits," Jessop enthuses. Her sire, Diamond Hit, one of Germany's finest from the Donnerhall line, is an "outside" stallion. This fact reflects Silverhorse's desire to offer Americans bloodlines comparable to anything found in Europe, which include those of the program's foundation sire Sir Caletto.

Stallions are often the focus of glossy advertisements and lofty praise in the sporthorse breeding business. Any horseman worth their

salt, however, knows that mares and carefully considered match-ups are equally important in producing the right result.

Thanks to extensive study and much-appreciated mentoring from top German breeders, Gualco understood this concept from the inception of Silverhorse Sporthorse in 1993. Long before she imported the elite Hanoverian Sir Caletto from Germany in 2002, she had been patiently acquiring and breeding brood mares that brought the best European sporthorse bloodlines to her program.

Diamond Lilly's mother, EM Sayonara, is a terrific example. Sired by Singular Joter out of a States Premium mare, EM Sayonara earned Elite mare status through her initial training and mare performance testing, campaigning after being imported from Germany. Her quality was well recognized at the 1999 West Coast Sporthorse Classic where she was named Senior Champion

Mare as well as Reserve Mature Horse Champion. In addition to Diamond Lilly, Sayonara's beautiful and athletic foals include Sophia Loren, by Sir Caletto, a winner of the Sallie B Wheeler Championships in 2-Year-Old Breeding. Four full sisters are being raised in the Silverhorse program.

Girl Power

Aficionados could spend many happy days tracing the bloodlines of Silverhorse's broodmares through sporthorse history. Imported lines feature Sir Caletto, Servus, Steinpilz XX, Gotthard, Prinz Gaylord, Singular Joter, Ramiro, Diamont, Trapper, Cid Pik Bube, Wendekreis, Bolero, Grande and Ars Vivendi.

Scope, athleticism, correct conformation and great temperament are common characteristics among the mares perpetuating these elite family trees at Silverhorse's 80-acre facility near Sacramento. Many have been paired with Sir Caletto

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Photos, top to bottom, left to right:

2007 hunter prospect Southern Latitude with dam EM Dori (Sir Caletto x Diamond/Trapper/Cid) Champion Colt at AHS inspection. Photo © Tamara

Sir Caletto.

Diamond Lilly (by Diamond Hit, out of the Singular Joter mare EM Sayonara), being named Champion at her AHS inspection. Photo © Tamara

Sir Caletto's Sky Captain, out of the Thoroughbred mare Billie Jean, ridden by Hap Hansen. Photo © Flying Horse Photography

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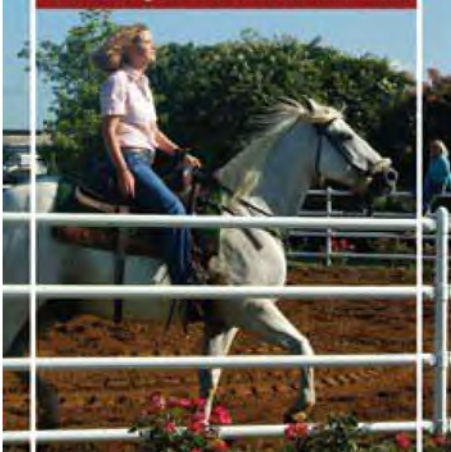
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to fantastic results, and match-ups to outside stallions fulfill the program's mission of producing a wide range of top quality horses for the hunter, jumper and dressage market. Because of their bloodlines, these horses typically have the athletic chops to compete at the highest end of the sport. Equally important, Silverhorse's insistence on breeding for temperament makes them a pleasure to work with for everyone from amateurs to top professionals.

The Servus family is another great example of the elite lines brought to North America through Silverhorse's mares. The Servus daughter Susie went straight to the breeding program for Silverhorse, but her full brother, the deceased Spartan, amassed quite a track record before his untimely death. A Grand Prix jumper in the U.S. with Sasha Himmelmeyer, Spartan had many stellar offspring. One of the best known of those is Stakkato, who became the first stallion from the "S" line to hold the coveted position of Hanoverian Stallion of the Year, an honor he attained in 2007. Susie's nephew, Stakkato became a Federal Bundeschampionate Jumping Champion in Germany, and he is one of many successful Spartan get that boosted the stallion's breed value index to a very high 169 points.

The breed value index quantifies a stallion or mare's tendency to pass on its jump, movement and conformation to its offspring. Gualco's introduction to sporthorse breeding included the advice to understand and use the breed value index. German and American Hanoverian experts, including Glenwood Farms' Volker Ehlers, "introduced me to that system and it has yet to fail me," Gualco says.

Thanks to Susie, the Stakkato/Spartan blood is now present in 60 percent of Silverhorse's breeding stock. The super mare came to Silverhorse in 1998 via the auction at North American Hanoverian pioneer, Glenwood Farms. She is known for producing athletic offspring loaded with suspension, elasticity, scope and three lovely gaits. Helping Susie perpetuate the Servus line are three of her daughters, Princess Papaya, Palestrina and Good Girl. Susie's half sister by Spartan, EM Sienna, brings even more of this impressive pedigree to the party.

"This is a great line for competitors who really want a horse that will jump, whether it's for the jumper ring or the upper level hunters and hunter derbies," says Gualco.

Foreign Fans

The same can be said, of course, of the bloodlines and byproducts of Silverhorse's foundation sire, Sir Caletto. Retired German show jumper Ute Wiegand was knocked out by the gorgeous grey stallion before she first laid eyes on him at Paul Schockemöhle's breeding and sales facility in Germany. Sired by jumping and dressage star stallion, Sandro, out of a Caletto 1 mare, Sir Caletto would be special, Wiegand knew. "Where he came from is unbelievable. He's a very well bred stallion." Wiegand is a particularly big fan of Sandro, renowned for the success and trainability of his jumping and dressage offspring. The mare she initially bred to the young Sir Caletto now has two babies that earned State Premium mare status.

Wiegand recalls that legendary horseman Paul Schockemöhle also had a high opinion of Sir Caletto. "He felt that Sir Caletto would be a wonderful stallion, especially for producing hunters with scope for the U.S. market." Caletto's jumping technique, his carefulness and his rideability were all traits predicted to translate well in the American market.

As a young stallion, Sir Caletto was leased out for breeding in Sweden, where he produced 70 foals to complement the 60 he would eventually sire while standing in Germany. The oldest of Sir Caletto's U.S.-bred babies are 6. At last count, these crops include 22 inspection champions, International Hunter Futurity winners and competitors and International Jumper Futurity champions.

He's a proven producer when matched with both Warmblood and Thoroughbred mares. After the pleasure of campaigning the 16.3 hh Sir Caletto to big Indio Hunter wins in 2004, top Grand Prix rider Hap Hansen was anxious to ride one of his youngsters. Hansen's first chance for that came recently with the 6-year-old, Sir Caletto's Sky Captain, who came to Hansen by way of a funny phone call. Sky Captain's owners, Bev and Madison Kauffman of Arizona, called Silverhorse with a "big problem," recalls Gualco. "They said, 'This horse jumps too big!'"

Twenty-four-year-old Madison Kauffman had done a terrific job of starting Sky Captain and his younger full sister SC Holiday, out of their black Thoroughbred mare Billie Jean. When Sky Captain lived up to his name by clearing the standard height on a 2'6" jump, she sought help harnessing his power.

"They did a very nice job of getting him started, but he is a really athletic, brave horse who needed a little help learning to jump big in a correct way," Hansen explains. "He is talented and beautiful to ride," the trainer adds, reflections of his sire. Predictably, Sir Caletto's cross with a Thoroughbred produced in Sky Captain a lighter, almost wiry version of his sire's build, Hansen says. A beautiful, rhythmic canter is another Caletto trait he recognized.

The quality of Silverhorse's bloodlines attracts many experienced breeders and a high percentage of return customers. However, Gualco welcomes first timers like the Kauffmans, with whom she continues the German tradition of being very open with information and advice.

"As inexperienced breeders, we were very fortunate to find someone as helpful as Barb," says Bev Kauffman. The Silverhorse service ranged from providing information on Sir Caletto's bloodlines going back several generations to helping the Kauffmans determine the best career paths for their talented youngsters.

The quality of Silverhorse's horses and its soup-to-nuts style of customer service bring a distinctly European approach to the American sporthorse market. More importantly, it's producing great horses for the happy and successful pursuit of the equestrian dream.



For more information on Silverhorse Sporthorse LLC, visit www.silverhorse.com or call Barbara Gualco at 916-351-0600.