

Windfall Indeed

By Timothy Holekamp, M.D.

For several years there has been something missing from the Trakehner scene here in North America – a three-day stallion. While there has been much to celebrate at the Hollenbach farm, with LARISSA representing Canada at the Sydney Olympics last summer, the fact remains that the Goodmans' beautiful cup commemorating their great stallion CÄSAR (for the year's best ATA eventing stallion) has gone unawarded recently for lack of a competitor. In the days when our stallion AMETHYST was competing under Darren Chiacchia at the upper levels there was always

a yearly struggle to win against the Whinery's good SAMURAI II. Now Amethyst is long-retired and Samurai died last fall.

For most of 2000 Darren kept mentioning to me that he wished he had another Trakehner breeding horse to take to the highest levels, planting all sorts of ideas in my mind of how this could benefit everyone in the ATA. Our home situation has gradually evolved to the point where we have kept what we thought were the best of Amethyst's daughters to ride and eventually to breed, and with our older broodmares beginning to drop out, we did need a new stallion. Most people have noticed that Amethyst's most impressive offspring have come from Thoroughbred and Anglo-Trakehner mares, but most of our "keeper" fillies carry older, less hybrid bloodlines. I guess the Anglo foals tended to catch the eyes of buyers more and off they went. One sold at less than a month of age. So for a



Photo by Countess Dohna

Windfall by Habicht, out of Wundermädel xx by Madruzzo xx

next-generation Trakehner stallion, Cheryl and I were thinking: plenty of Thoroughbred. That began to mesh with what Darren was telling us he needed in an upper level riding horse too. In Germany there are several bloodlines that seem to be particularly successful at combined training ("the military sport," as it is called there), but Darren and I kept coming back to the same one – HABICHT.

Then, last September, I read the fascinating article in this magazine by Maren Engelhardt about her family's trek from Trakehnen and their current re-attachment to the world of Trakehner horses in Germany. I wrote her an E-mail right away and what followed were dozens of back-and-forth E-mails between us about shared interests: Trakehner horses, history, and also neuroscience. It got to the point where both of us were being teased by our families about an E-mail romance, but what really happened was that a

friendship blossomed which will likely go on indefinitely.

Sometime in October I told Maren about our dream of a Habicht / Thoroughbred breeding stallion to event at the international level. To understand what happened next, I have to tell you a little about Maren's personality. She is the daughter of a brilliant and energetic theoretical physicist, Klaus, whose hobby is eventing Trakehners, and she follows him on both scores. She is a Ph.D. candidate in neuroscience and an avid

student of Trakehner breeding. Maren trains other people's horses to earn money for school and reads absolutely everything about the Trakehner world. A completely fearless young woman, she takes on any horse and is not intimidated by the biggest personalities in the breeding and riding pantheon of German horse sport. Her eye is steadily improving, and she has become a Trakehner Verband "Young Breeder" expert. After a year in America as an exchange student and time working in a research lab where English is the lingua franca, she can write and speak perfect Americanese, even all the nuances of idiom.

My mentioning our quest set her off on a "wild ride" of phone calls, E-mails, farm visits, and Körung [stallion inspection] studies, past and present. Within a couple of weeks, I knew that this was no longer a cyber fantasy, it was fast becoming reality. Through connections of her own and those of her father, she put

together a list of places and horses for us to consider. What we were actually hoping to find was a Habicht grandson who either was Verband approved or potentially ATA approvable, not too young, not too expensive, and could be ridden now or very soon by Darren. Such a thing is hard to find, believe me. We branched out into two other good event sire lines: GRAND PRIX and FONTAINBLEAU. For Habicht sons we have the stallions PARFORCE, SIXTUS, and the champion of them all, WINDFALL. No Windfall sons were available as none have yet been approved.

By the end of October we had a plan. First though, the ATA meeting was taking up a great deal of our attention. Cheryl had found a role as major worker-bee for the first annual meeting in nearby St. Louis, and I had to deal with the annual awards preparations and presentation. But three days after the meeting ended we all got on air-



Windfall and Ingrid Klimke on the cross-country course in 2000

Photo by M. Czerny

planes and met in Munich. The entourage grew and grew, finally ending up: Darren, Cheryl, our son Terry, me, Klaus, Maren,

and another Engelhardt daughter, Katrin. After a day of jet lag recovery with a grand tour of Munich led by Klaus, we set out on a three-day and two-night odyssey, most of us in a rented Audi driven by Maren.

The overview is that we drove 2,000 miles in those three days, covering all four corners of Germany, across what was East Germany twice and nearly halfway into Poland. It was a three-day-event for humans. Many interesting people and horses, plus some magnificent European scenery rewarded us, but sleep and the perfect horse kept eluding us.

One of our hottest prospects was turned up by an old school friend of Klaus', the former head of the Polish Liski Stud, current president of the Polish Trakehner Society, expert judge, veterinarian, and Trakehner breed historian, Dr. Antonin Pacynski. He met us in the little Polish town of Leszno the first day to help us look at the Sixtus son, SILVER, who has begun a promising eventing career. Afterwards, Silver's owner invited us to supper at a little country inn nearby, where we asked to try some typical local foods. The first course was a delicious beef-broth sort of soup with small chunks of somewhat gritty and odd-textured white meat in it. Hunger and



Windfall and Ingrid Klimke doing dressage

Photo by Pferdebildagentur phototec

the urge to be polite delayed Cheryl's question of our host about the meat until near the end of the course. It went across the table from English to German to Polish and back the same way: "cow stomach soup!" Shock was poorly disguised, and the laughter went on for a very long time. But enough of that tripe.

We drove on that night past Berlin to Braunschweig, slept three hours and visited more horses at the famous competition site: Luhmühlen. Then down the Rhineland to the Saarland and a look at more prospects. Along the way Maren showed us a good Anduc mare in foal to Monteverdi that she and I later bought in

partnership. After a night in the old Saar River town of Mettlach (famous as the home of Villeroy and Boch porcelain), we went on to more and more horses.

The final day found us very discouraged. A visit to the familiar and famous Hörstein Stud near Frankfurt was intended to look at a young Grand Prix son who turned out to be good but not quite what we were seeking. The stud manager, Dirk Joerss, was kind and gracious, offering to show us all their great stallions, some of their mares, and many young horses. The barns were beautiful and the horses even more so, but glum resignation was beginning to set in for all of us. Then Maren came over to Darren and me and said the most unforgettable sentence: "You will never believe who Herr Joerss just said might be for sale!" When she then said "Windfall," Darren and I looked at each other with the same wide-eyed expression. We asked to see him, then to ride him, then to jump him, then to buy him.

It all seemed to happen in slow motion. From that point on, nothing else about the trip really mattered. We were told Windfall's owners, the Diehm family, were intent on finding a home for him where he would continue upward in his



A last kiss goodbye, Dirk Joerss, manager of the Hörstein Stud, and Windfall on the night of departure from Germany

Photo by Katrin Engelhardt

three-day career but would remain a Trakehner breeding stallion. We tried our best to explain that we met those criteria. After doing our best at self-selling we left without an answer, as Herr Joerss would have to consult with the Diehms.

Back to Munich we went for a big happy dinner with everyone and a night of long discussions before parting the next morning. How could this be? Windfall! Premium stallion of the 1994 Körung in Neumünster, son of the Trakehner Verband main stud book Elite Thoroughbred mare Wundermädel, winner of countless competitions at high level in dressage, jumping, and eventing, and winner of every CIC** and CIC*** held in Germany in 1999 (a feat never before accomplished by any horse). He was named Germany's 1999 Horse of the Year (all breeds, all sports) by the readers of a popular German horse magazine. His outstanding trainer and rider, Ingrid Klimke (daughter of the late gold medal Olympian, Dr. Reiner Klimke), won the German Professional Riders' Championship on him, using him for all three disciplines, something unheard of but true. To put it all together, this was the exact horse of our collective dreams, mag-

nified by ten. And, he is absolutely beautiful in every way.

Plans were laid in hope that our offer would be accepted. The next morning we all left and spent a day traveling home and then recovering. Soon word came that the answer was "YES." Contracting, vetting, testing, and shipping-planning came next. All the steps took time and worry. The Engelhardts helped by acting as my agents there and proved to be loyal and honest, just as I expected. Klaus pulled all the stops on his horse network, lining up shippers, lawyers, bankers, and vets to get all the important parts of the transaction correct and to my satisfaction. Maren devoted so many hours working on the details of all the arrange-

ments that her laboratory boss began to complain, but she stuck to it. Six weeks it took to get everything done. The vetting was virtually perfect, confirmed by X-ray consultation here in the U.S. Windfall landed in Miami on December 23, and the day after Christmas Darren hauled him from the federal quarantine to his new farm in Ocala, which has been approved as a stallion quarantine station for CEM testing. At this writing he is still there, but will very soon begin his American competition career. With a combination of frozen semen during the spring competition season and fresh cooled semen after early May, we hope to start his breeding career off properly here as well, emphasizing correct, highest quality Trakehner mares to complement his Anglo, Arab, and Shagya background.

When we look back on this amazing turn of events, we cannot tell if this was just the dumb luck of being at the right place on the right day or something that was fated to happen to Windfall and to us. Time will tell. 🌿