

Emile and Laura duel for top honours

SOLEY FARM by Bernadette Faurie

IT WAS an inspiring show. Laura Fry and Emile Faurie, Britain's top two, led the way in an exciting duel for the Grand Prix which Laura won, while it all came together for Emile and Virtu in the Grand Prix Special.

The selection committee took the opportunity for a final look at prospective combinations for the European Championships (September 2-5) and two judges who will be in Lipica, Dr Volker Moritz and Nick Williams, led the assessment along with Louky van Olphen from Holland.

GRAND PRIX SPECIAL

The winners, always admired for their harmony and for the freedom of Virtu's paces, showed the development of more engagement, particularly in the canter. Emile added more precision and Virtu was with him all the way. The walk



LEFT: Emile Faurie receives his prize from host Sandy Pfeuger.

BELOW: Ferdi Eilberg, who has been selected for the European team with Arun Tor.



steps are still a little tense but this pair has reached a new level of confidence.

Nick Williams said: "They made it all look easy with an elegance that everyone would love to emulate."

Of his New Zealand compatriots, Fiona Craig and Marcus V, who came second, Nick said: "Marcus certainly gave the judges the chance to use the full range of marks. When he softens and gives



all his talent, it will take a very good combination to beat them on the day."

Breathtakingly powerful extensions meant Fiona had her hands full to get him back to collection, but the rhythm of the piaffe and passage was flawless.

Laura and Quarryman had the pressure of starting in pole position. Laura, unusually riding with a whip, revved Quarry up outside the arena but he looked less smooth once inside.

There were a few mistakes but Nick commented: "Laura rode a pretty strong test and the good bits