

Marcus channels his energy for smooth victory

WEST WILTS FESTIVAL by Bernadette Faurie

HIGHLIGHT OF the gala evening which rounded off three days of good competition at West Wilts Equestrian Centre was the Kavanaghs Grand Prix freestyle won in decisive style by Fiona Craig and Marcus V.

The brooding, almost discordant vocals which punctuated Fiona's music somehow worked to enhance the harmony of horse and rider — and their individuality.

The opinionated Marcus threw his energy into his work, showing particularly his talent for piaffe and passage in a dramatic final sequence. He worked so smoothly under his rider's tactful direction that even the odd mistake was barely discernable.

Second-placed Catherston Dazzler was below par, unsteady in his carriage and in the mouth. In an uncharacteristic slip, he and Jennie Loriston-Clarke finished after their music but still received high artistic marks from one judge.

For third place in their Grand Prix debut, Alice Wilson rode a fairly difficult programme in great style to show Wendelicht's talent for passage and a promising piaffe.

Their fluent extensions were outstanding.

In the earlier Intermediaire II, Marcus V showed winning form and his increasing ability to lengthen and shorten his frame between extension and collection.

Arun Tor, second for Ferdi Eilberg, seemed to be labouring in the rather airless afternoon atmosphere with mistakes in the changes and zigzag while his piaffe-passage tour was confirmed but not as expressive as it can be.

Freja was not in her most willing mood, but alternated resentful moments with glimpses of her talents for Sarah Dwyer.

After a particularly busy stud season, Demonstrator went back into training with Ferdi Eilberg just a month ago but in his first competition exhibited a much higher level of self-

carriage. In his winning Intermediaire I, the pirouettes, Ferdi's forte, were masterly as was the extended canter for a test in a class of its own.

Lucky Penny and the Countess of Inchcape were second with third-placed Sylvia Holmes producing some quality trot work from Burchteer. Ferdi and Demonstrator were unbeatable in the Prix St Georges but the closest



Bermudan event rider Nicky de Sousa won the £300 Inch's Saddlery training bursary with her Olympic ride Prairie King.



Fiona Craig rides Marcus V to victory in the Grand Prix freestyle. **BELOW:** Winners of both the Wellington Advanced Medium and the Shell Gas Medium freestyle qualifier, Peter Storr and Eros Ramizotti.