

Exciting

Fiona Craig

MARCUS V

(New Zealand)

WHEN FIONA CRAIG was seventeen she caught the travel bug, headed for Europe and it was Eventing that fired her enthusiasm. On reaching England, and finding her eventing job had fallen through, it was an out-of-the-blue phone call to David Hunt that changed the course of her dressage future.

Now, several years on, Fiona has carved a promising international career for herself with Marcus V, the Irish-bred gelding rejected from the hunting field for being too nappy.

Marcus was bought by Fiona's employer, the late George Killoughery, an Irish businessman who loved horses and for whom Fiona broke and schooled hunters and later race horses.

George and David Hunt spotted that this ^{ugly} duckling could really be a swan. They had faith in Marcus and Fiona and backed them all the way to success through the grades. They qualified for Barcelona but had the disappointment of not being nominated to go by the NZ Olympic Committee.

Last year the highlight was coming third in the Grand Prix Special at Rotterdam CDIO. Fiona says: "Everything was coming together and Marcus was coming to terms with working with me." (Everyone who knows Marcus, knows his volatile and independent temperament.) "I can now ride him a lot more. Before it used to be a question of 'Please Marcus!', whereas now I can say I want



to position you here and he will say okay."

This year, the Ascot-based pair make Addington their first international show. They are working towards July's World Games in the Hague, which will be their first crack at a major championship.

Fiona says: "I will take Marcus quietly until then. We have entered Pamfou, Munich and Aachen and will carry on schooling and hacking at home about four days a week. We have permission to go to the Hague but I'm trying not to think about it too much - I'll believe it when we get there!" 🐾

A highlight for us all was Fiona Craig's test with Marcus, competing Hors Concours, as she rides for New Zealand, Marcus produced the edge of your seat test that is his hall mark. If his marks had counted he would have been in first place.