

**BERNADETTE FAURIE** looks back on Britain's most successful year yet with two medals won at the European Championships in Lipica, Slovenia

# European breakthrough at long last



The team which was third at Aachen CHIO and went on to win Britain's first team medal at the European Championships: Emile Faurie (Virtu), Laura Fry (Quarryman), Richard Davison (Master JCB) and Ferdi Eilberg (Arun Tor).

## Most impressive national win

Kay Maxted and Jo-Jo's double at Addington CDA — hard work and dedication do pay off. Peter Storr (Jachtsky) and Alan Doxey (Royal Star), who both achieved doubles at the Shell Gas National Championships and European bronze medal winners Emile Faurie and Virtu's National Grand Prix win — probably the best national test we have ever seen.

## Most impressive international win

Britain's silver medal winning performance in Lipica. We have been saying it is on the cards for some time, but Ferdi Eilberg, Emile Faurie, Laura Fry and Richard Davison will be the names that go down in history. Third place at Aachen CHIO was a great confidence boost and got us noticed.

## Most impressive newcomers

Sarah Millis and Virginia. When they represented Great Britain at the Pony European Championships in Belgium they were both aged 11. Sarah did her first affiliated test in March this year, won both of the subsequent pony selection trials and she also produced the best British performance at the championships.

## Most impressive team win

Germany still sits at the top of the pyramid, with no sign of change. The European gold win was masterly in terms of producing a team score more than 500 points in the lead, while still saving the best for the individual contests.



Emile Faurie with his European individual bronze and silver team medal.

BELOW: German trainer Harry Boldt and Desi Dillingham celebrating in Lipica.



Nicole Uphoff-Becker's Grand Gilbert only started in Grand Prix last year as her second horse. This year they took the European Kür title.

## Season's greatest loss

Rembrandt — his magic was missed in Lipica but Nicole Uphoff-Becker says: "Remmi started trotting at the beginning of October. He does a bit more every day and should start cantering next

month. He isn't lame any more, riding him is very exciting — he plays around at being like a helicopter!"

The Carl Hester/Giorgione partnership — they prepared the ground for European success and it

was a pity they were not there to reap the glory.

This was the last year of dressage at Goodwood after 21 years — thanks for the memories.

## Horses/ponies most admired

Marcus V, New Zealand rider Fiona Craig's partner, combines his athleticism with an arrogance that gives the judges a chance to run up and down the scale of marks like virtuoso pianists. Marcus produced his best performance yet for third in the Grand Prix Special at Rotterdam CHIO. Not bad for a horse rejected from the hunting field as too nappy!

Herrmanns Grand Gilbert's started Grand Prix last year as Nicole Uphoff-Becker's second horse, but this year not only kept Nicole's place on the German European team but took the individual gold for the Kür as well: "He puts so much more into his work since he's been number one, he really likes it."

Gigolo — who could fail to admire Isabell Werth's outstanding partner, winner of the European individual gold medal?

## Most unlucky

Dutch star Anky van Grunsven — the girl most tipped to break the German stranglehold. To have two stunning horses (Olympic Bonfire and Olympic Cocktail) yet miss the European Championships was more than bad luck.

Anky says: "I felt really sick for a day, but the next day we picked a nice place in the south of France, packed up and followed everything from there. It was lovely, much better weather than the rain in Lipica!"

Germany's Klaus Balkenhol and Goldstern, odds-on favourites for the individual European Kür title, whose chances were wrecked by the worst of Lipica's storms.

## Greatest contribution

Having German coach Harry Boldt as team trainer for the European Championships.

All our sponsors, who each cast an individual flavour on their particular events and, of course, Shell Gas, whose second year of support gave each area its own championship and culminated in the best National Championships ever.

The British Dressage Supporters Club, led by the irrepressible Desi Dillingham, is the envy of the other nations. As for the famous Dillingham whistle, rumours that earplugs will be issued for next year's World Championships at The Hague are as yet unconfirmed!

## Best run show

Sevenoaks Riding Club Dressage Championships is run by a great team with Simon Fry's entrepreneurial enthusiasm at the helm. It has all the elements of a "mini CDI", is backed by a blue chip list of sponsors and draws the crowds.

Nominee Assurance Dressage Horse of the Year Final at Addington: the Barnett family not only put up the biggest purse for a Grand Prix, but ensured a big boost to fund-raising for the RDA World Championships and provided a real

