



THE TRUPPAS OF ITALY

The father is an FEI "O" dressage judge, teacher and trainer; the daughter is a champion Young Rider.

By Michele Toldo, DMV

Dr. Vincenzo Truppa, known as "Enzo" in the dressage world, holds a Ph.D. in economics and is a well-

known tax consultant in Milano in his "real life." But his heart beats for horses.

Enzo is an FEI (Federation Equéstré Internationale) "O" judge and a mover and shaker in Italian dressage. He learned about dressage under the guidance of Georg Theodorescu, riding many Grand Prix dressage horses in Italy and abroad. He won Italian championships, qualified for the Olympics, and, in 1982, he was the first Italian rider to compete at the World Dressage Championships.

Enzo trains his daughter, Valentina, his best student. Under her father's guidance, she has done well in international competitions, including a silver medal at the 2004 European Dressage Champion-



Photo left, courtesy Vincenzo Truppa; center, Jacques Tuffi (arnd.nlr); right, Michele Toldo

Vincenzo Truppa with his daughter, Valentina, as a child (far left) and today (above). Center: Valentina Truppa rides Don Rico at the 2005 World Cup for Young Riders.

ships for Juniors and a bronze medal at the 2005 European Championship for Young Riders, achieving the highest score in international Young Rider competitions: 81.51 percent. Last December, she won the first FEI World Cup for Young Riders.

The Truppa family lives in Asti, between Torino and Milano, an area famous for wine, food and a landscape similar to Tuscany. The property is large enough for the family home as well as the stables, outdoor and indoor arenas, workers' houses, paddocks and more. From there, he keeps a busy schedule, spending weekdays in Milano and riding at home Friday through Monday, when he is not judging.

Enzo has officiated at important CDIs and CDIOs, including European Championships, World Cup Finals and the 2004

Athens Olympics. He was head of the ground jury for the 2006 World Cup Final in Amsterdam. At home, he holds Italy's highest award for a riding teacher, and he has trained all the top Italian judges. Currently, he teaches courses for trainers and judges for the *Federazione Italiana Sport Equestri (FISE)*—Italy's national equestrian federation.

Enzo is also a well-known event manager. He has organized many international shows in Italy, such as the dressage portion of the 1998 World Equestrian Games. In 2005, for the second time, he organized the European Championships for Juniors and Young Riders at the Pegaso Riding Club near Milano. In 1998, he published *Dressage, a Handbook for Riders, Judges and Trainers*, one of the few dressage books

written in Italian from the perspective of a judge and with particular attention to the observance of the Training Scale and classical tradition.

Three or four times a year, he arranges a two-day visit from top trainers in order to evaluate his training. For example, he invited Jean Bemelmans to observe Valentina and her 14-year-old Baden-Wurttemberg gelding, Don Rico, just before the 2004 European championships for Juniors.

Truppa Speaks

On dressage worldwide ...

Having been a rider since the early 1970s, I can state that our sport is currently exploding in terms of numbers of riders, events, importance for media, etc. Also, the quality of performances has increased, mostly due to better-quality horses that are bred all over the world. We see marvelous horses, not only in Germany and the Netherlands, as when I rode, but also in United States, Denmark, Sweden and—due to the passion of a limited number of breeders—also in Italy. For example, my daughter is riding Columbus del Castegno, given to us by an Italian breeder. This horse is now 9 years old and on the way to Grand Prix. I am pretty sure he will compete at the FEI level.

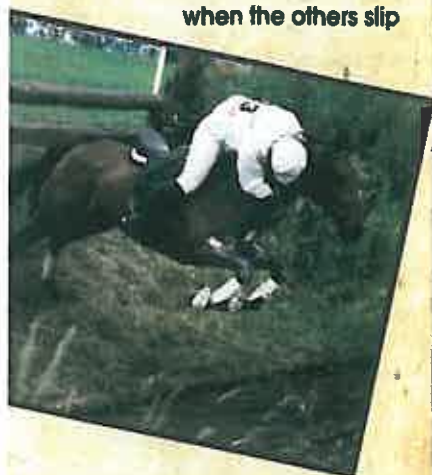
On his daughter ...

Valentina is a *Carabiniere* (Italy's top army branch—the President's Guards) and, therefore, she proudly rides in her uniform. She has learned from me to ride with total respect for her horses, and I am very proud to say that she really feels in herself the "happy athlete" concept. She thinks her horses are, first of all, her friends. (We make fun by saying that her horse, Chablis, is, in fact, her boyfriend.)

She has won many international shows, but I would say that winning the first Young Riders World Cup last December in Frankfurt has been one of the most exciting moments for our family. We had just enough time to celebrate before it was time to go back to our committed work, as is my

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life philosophy and also Valentina's. She is studying to become a lawyer and conducts a normal life for a girl of her age. I hope that my future as a judge will soon be limited by her growth to become a senior member of the Italian team. (A judge cannot officiate at a competition if a family member or student is riding.)

On dressage in Italy ...

Two of our best senior riders, Laura Conz and Pia Laus, are presently without top FEI horses. But they, together with a forthcoming group of very good Young Riders, are the result of a wise policy undertaken by the FISE designed to develop—through financial investments—Young Riders with good technical skills. In fact, many of them are ready for FEI top-level competi-

tions: Stefano Blasi, Monica Iemi, Claudia Montanari and Roberto Brenna. One day, we could add my daughter, Valentina, to this group. Unfortunately, none of them, in my opinion, has a top-level Grand Prix horse. This is partially due to a basic misunderstanding: In Italy, parents think that a fairly good horse is suitable for competing at the FEI level. This is not the case. Without quality horses, it is impossible to compete with success at the FEI level.

It is difficult to find horses that are sound and well-trained, and it takes a long time to get used to a horse that is trained by another rider. Due also to the high price of top-level FEI horses, I choose young horses of the best possible quality and put in many hours training them in order to have (I hope) a competitive horse

TRUPPA ON THE FEI ROLLKUR WORKSHOP

In my opinion, some reports and reactions to the Lausanne conference were not correct and surely somewhat controversial (see press release on p. 22). The facts are:

- Stephen Clarke, Mariette Withages and I represented the FEI Dressage Committee. Dieter Schuele was there to represent the judges.
- The audience, apart from the above persons and representatives of riders and trainers' associations, was composed almost entirely of veterinarians.
- All the reports presented by the veterinarians in Lausanne highlighted the fact that there was, at present stage, no scientific evidence of any harm made to horses that were ridden in *hyperflexion* (new term originated in that meeting) if done by experienced people and not for a long time.
- Not one of the people present, but who now are taking controversial attitudes toward the FEI on this issue, made any objection to the above statement.

Since no one on the FEI Dressage Committee is a veterinarian, we had to take note of such a conclusion. Nevertheless, we felt it very important to add our views:

- There is a need for further investigation on this matter, with special attention to the psychological effect on horses.
- There is a need to identify—by the stewarding group—prompt and suitable criteria for signs of stress (for example, a horse being totally wet) or discomfort (for example, a horse reacting with nervousness to the aids of the rider).
- There is a need to intervene, to stop and to sanction riders making wrong and excessive use of such methods.
- Most of all, we stated very clearly that FEI rules—especially article 401 incorporating the "happy athlete" concept—must be fully adhered to in judging competitions, "inviting" judges to reward lightness, self-carriage and happy athletes' performances and to be clearly adverse toward tension and use of rough aids.

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at the FEI level one day. Usually, we present young horses at national competitions to let them acquire experience, whereas confirmed horses are shown only at national championships and international events.

FISE has given priority to developing Young Riders through experience and has encouraged the organization of at least four CDIs for Juniors or Young Riders during the year, usually along with national events. This concurrent scheduling helps lessen the burden of cost for such shows, including some organization expenses.

Furthermore, at least one national show per month is organized, with expenses paid by the FISE and with some money budgeted exclusively for Juniors and Young Riders. As many as 250 horses participate in these shows. Also, many regional shows are organized every weekend. A minimum of two CDIs are held with substantial financial support from the FISE. Due to FISE's efforts, very good results have been achieved.

On breeding sport horses ...

Recently, some breeders in Italy have taken a wise policy of buying top mares and then choosing amongst the many available top stallions around the world. Presently in training with my daughter, we have three Italian horses from an Italian breeder who is breeding horses derived from top Hanoverian lines. Unfortunately, this is not a common practice. Many breeders prefer to maintain their own personal view as to which mares and stallions are to be used, creating a sort of "restricted club" with no real understanding of riders' needs. I am confident, however, that the situation will improve, thanks to the continuous efforts of the FISE to make breeders' associations sensitive to these matters.

On judging ...

I think that we should better understand the differences that sometimes arise in results between judges. We must under-