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Photo Right: Lars Petersen &
Beemer, March 2010
Photo: Susan J. Stickle



A New Young Horse Training Program with Lars Petersen and Ed Borresen

Breeding on its own is a tremendous job. The amount of work, time, and dedication it takes to care for a group of broodmares and their offspring can be overwhelming. Not to mention researching bloodlines and keeping up with the latest reports on the stallions! So when it comes time to start training the young horses, many breeders are at a loss for either the time or expertise needed. This is not just a problem in North America. Breeders in Europe are also faced with this issue, and seldom does a breeder in Europe start his or her own horses. The European breeders usually turn to well qualified professional trainers.

Starting a young horse is a very special process. What the horse experiences in these formative stages will create a physical and psychological foundation that will affect the training process for the rest of the horse's life. A negative approach, even when unintended, can be disastrous for a young horse's career. By the same token, letting them sit in the pasture until they are much older doesn't bring much for a breeder financially, and this can also mean a delayed if not stunted sport career for the horse.

In Europe, there are many options for the breeders to choose from, but in North America it can be difficult to find trainers who have the specialized knowledge that is

needed. This is why the winner of the 2003 National USEF Young Championships, Ed Borresen, has teamed up with the internationally successful Grand Prix rider, Lars Petersen, to create a new young horse training program at Legacy Farms in Loxahatchee, Florida.

Both Ed and Lars envision a comprehensive program which will not only include care and training for the young horses, but eventually, European style auctions and possibly young horse shows. They feel that the breeders in North America are breeding excellent young horses, but they see that many of them are diamonds in the rough who, unfortunately, do not get the start that they need to live up to their full potential. They feel not only is this a waste of talent, it also greatly affects the value of the breeder's horses which is a financial factor that is critical for the entire industry.

The greatest advantages that Lars and Ed have are their years of experience and the extensive network that they've built up from North America to Europe. Ed Borresen and his wife, Monica Sinks, of Willow Spring Farm in Pennsylvania have travelled throughout the Netherlands and Denmark, and have spent a lot of time training there in dressage over the past 30 years. They both achieved

their USDF Gold medals in 1991, and have trained many horses successfully up to Grand Prix including Quadrant, Harlequin, Kandis, Fueling Sonne, and Carrera who won the Grand Prix Special at Devon in 2003. With Monica helping Ed as his coach, Ed also rode the Oldenburg gelding, Beemer (Laudatio x All Day Long (Aldatus)) to win the 2003 USEF National Young Horse Championships for the 5 year old dressage horses.

Lars Petersen is, of course, one of the most successful international Grand Prix riders of this generation. He is from Denmark where he had a great deal of success riding for the world renown Blue Hors. With their horses he spent 10 years on the international stage having represented Denmark in the Olympic Games, three World Equestrian Games, two World Cup Finals, and three European Championships. He was also the Danish National Champion five times. The horse that he had the most success with was Blue Hors Cavan, and thanks to their accomplishments Lars was ranked 2nd in the FEI 2001 World Rankings. In 2002, he and Cavan were a very close second in the World Cup Finals held in 's-Hertogenbosch.

What made the relationship special between Lars and Blue Hors Cavan was the fact that it was Lars who started the remarkable horse under saddle. Lars recalls, "I remember getting him started out in the muddy fields of Denmark in March. This was before Blue Hors had a good indoor, so we were out there teaching him to lunge, and got him going under saddle in the wet fields." Blue Hors is a very large breeding facility, and having been their head trainer for so many years, Lars was in charge of getting many young horses started.

After competing in the 2002 World Equestrian Games with Cavan, Lars made the decision to move to the United States. He was initially based in Virginia, and now operates from Wellington, Florida with Melissa Taylor and Legacy Farms. Since coming to the US, Lars has done exceptionally well, particularly with the horses Dacardo and Success. With Dacardo he won both the Prix St. Georges and Intermediare I at the 2006 Dressage at Devon, and in 2007 and 2008 he won the Grand Prix and the Grand Prix Freestyle with Success.

Just this year in March, things for Ed and Lars came full circle when Lars rode Ed's 2003 Young Horse Champion, Beemer, to victory at the WEF Dressage Classic CDI3* in the Grand Prix Special scoring a fantastic 70.750%! Beemer, who was bred by Gestüt Lewitz, is now 12 years old, and is owned by Global Dressage Sales LLC. He has been in full training with Lars for the past two years, but Lars has known the horse much longer due to his long standing friendship with Ed and Monica that goes back 18 years. What Ed and Lars envision for their young horse program

is to set up a center where breeders and owners can send their horses to be started correctly, and be prepared for various disciplines or events depending on the goals of the owners and the natural talents of the horse. They are more than willing to take horses as young as 2 years old out of the pasture to get them started with proper handling, lunging, and hand work, and eventually start them under saddle when they are older and ready. The horses in their training will be prepared for careers in the sports of dressage and jumping, and they will be happy to prepare young stallions for licensings and performance tests, and mares for mare performance tests.

For breeders and owners that wish to market their horses, they foresee starting a European style auction for young horses to be held in Wellington. They are keeping an eye on the global economic situation at the moment, but once they feel the conditions are right, they are ready to begin the auctions. Breeders and owners who are interested in this program will need to send in videos so that their horses can be evaluated, and the discussion about which direction the horse should go in can start. Both Ed and Lars want to be clear that they are not just looking for top international sport prospects. As Lars noted, "The young horses that do not have the special movement, but have the heart and character for the training can benefit in value as much or more from good training as the horses with the larger gaits. When they are properly trained to the correct level for their age, and they are easy to ride, their value will increase a lot."

Their team and facility at Legacy Farms is ready to begin taking young horses now. They have an excellent group of young professional riders from Europe that will be working under them, and they will be very involved with each horse in their program. Ed concludes, "We want to work for the breeders and help guide them through the process of getting a young horse started on their way correctly. It's an important investment to make in a young horse."

Ed Borresen & Beemer in 2003. Photo: Susan J. Stickle



The Oldenburg Horse