

‘On the Canadian Scene’

with Jennifer Ward

Calgary, Alberta CAN – July 25, 2006 – There is a star rising in the west and her name is Tamie Phillips.

When an ambitious young rider decides to take a run at entering the top ranks of show jumping, more often than not, their first step is to go out and buy a couple of horses in Europe. Tamie Phillips took a different path - a dozen years ago she started a modest breeding program in northern British Columbia. Defying the predictions of many members of the Canadian show jumping community, she has reached the upper echelons with her own homebred horses.

Of her current Grand Prix partner Lucas, Tamie says, “He’s a big old-fashioned horse that no one believed in. I’ve actually heard people say, ‘she must be nervous

going out there on her Canadian bred horse.’ But I’m not nervous. I know my horse.” Proving her point, at the Spruce Meadows 'North American' Tournament held from July 5-9, the pair earned a top ten finish in the \$50,000 Direct Energy Cup.

In 2005, following a move from her farm in northern British Columbia to a 93-acre property only a stone’s throw from Spruce Meadows, Tamie Phillips appeared on the show jumping radar screen, seemingly out of nowhere. Winning the second of three legs in the Kubota Cup Western Series and being named the overall Western Kubota Cup Champion with Lucas, she also lit up the rankings at Spruce Meadows with another homebred, Starlet. The now twelve-year-old mare by Starman (who many will remember as Anne Kursinski's grand prix mount) carried Tamie to the Chrysler Leading Canadian Rider Award at last year's Spruce Meadows 'Masters'

Tournament. Her numerous and consistent performances in 2005 even landed Tamie on the Canadian Show Jumping Team short list.

This year, Tamie and Lucas have continued their winning ways in the 1.60 meter division and, following their exceptional successes at the Spruce Meadows 'National' and 'Continental' Tournaments in June, they were named as alternates for the Canada's World Equestrian Games Team. In addition, Jump Canada recognized her achievements by selecting Tamie as the ProChaps 'Athlete of the Month' for June. "Stepping up to the 1.60 meter has been a big move," says Tamie. "You never know until you go out there if you are going to fall on your face. It's a bit of a risk but every time out Lucas has tried harder and gotten smarter."

Tamie's success is truly a family affair. Her mother, Merle Gardner, owns Lucas, a ten-year-old Canadian Warmblood by Lucino Z.

"I've had a lot of faith in this horse for a long time, but you don't go saying that to everyone until you can go out there and do it," says Tamie.

In addition to defying the odds and holding his own against the European-breds, Tamie says Lucas has another advantage that serves him well in the Canadian climate. "He was bred in northern BC, so the mosquitoes don't bother him!"

Tamie Phillips and her home-bred CWHBA gelding, Lucas, show off their winning form at Spruce Meadows.

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Tamie recalls her first foray into the 1.45m division six years ago. "Warming up with people like Rodrigo Pessoa and the Whitakers in the ring, and kicking my little Thoroughbred down to the fences, it occurred to me that maybe I need to rethink my plan here. I was already breeding and I had done the research, but it really hit home that if I were going to do this, I'd need to breed horses. I have definitely done it my way!"

Tamie has always preferred to rely on her own hard work and instincts and continues to train Lucas and Starlet, as well as the younger horses she has at home, on her own.

Tamie does it her way, and keeps the pressure on herself to strive ever higher. As the final leg of the Kubota Cup Western Series approaches, she claims she is "out for blood. We had one rail and finished fifth in the first round in Brandon, Manitoba. At the second event in Edmonton, I lost to Jonathan Asselin by two-hundredths of a second."

When she competes in the Kubota Western Final at the Twin Oaks Derby in Richmond, BC, next month, Tamie will try to repeat last year's victory with Lucas, showing everyone that she is no shooting star that flashes brilliantly then vanishes, but one that continues to burn more brightly. And with her eyes focused in the middle distance, she says that the making the Canadian Team for the 2007 Pan Am Games is the next milestone on the horizon. "If all goes well, that's a goal we should aim for."

