

CLAIRE AUSTRING & SPRINGTREE LEGACY CHAMPIONS OF BOTH THE FEI YOUNG RIDER DIVISION & THE FREESTYLE

By Marilyn Powell

Take a horse crazy 9 year old and the chance of riding lessons through Parks and Recreation on school horses, look ahead to 2003 when Claire's then coach Diana Davies suggested to her parents that they might consider Legacy for a mount and the attached press release tells the rest of the story. Diana had originally purchased Legacy as a young colt from the breeder, Julie Pilon of Expressway Farms in BC. His sire Wodan competed to Grand Prix jumpers, and his dam, the Thoroughbred mare Sunday's Rose, was a respectable broodmare producing several good foals including a full sister to Legacy that events in New Mexico.

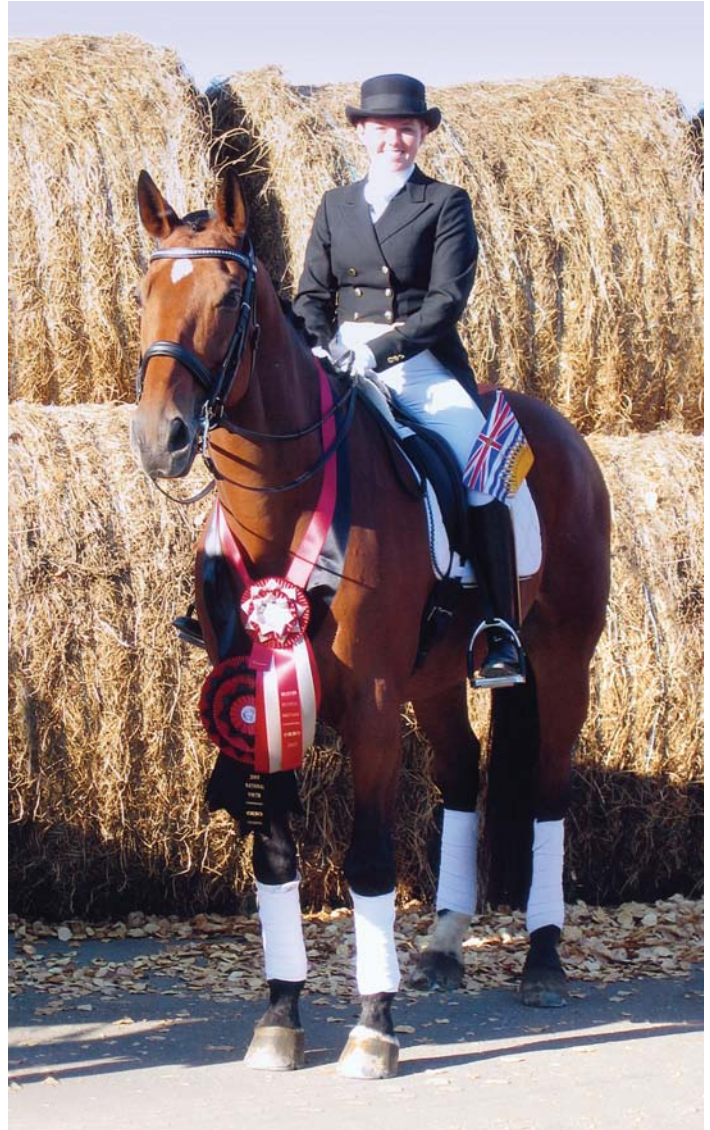
Claire had ridden under Diana's tutelage for 4 years up to 2003. She and other students had looked longingly at this big bay horse that was Diana's personal event horse. They all jumped at the chance to groom him, feed him, anything to enjoy his company. Then Diana allowed Claire to ride him for her lessons and the true love story began. Six months after first riding him, the idea hatched to purchase him. Despite a professional opinion that this 17.1 hand horse was not really a suitable match for a diminutive 5 foot, 16 year old rider going into Grade 12, that he was long and rangy, both mom Val and daughter Claire were too much in love to have heard anything being said. Then someone mentioned Young Riders!

Fast forward four years during which time Claire was a working student for Level III dressage coaches Eleanor Elstone and Carmie Flaherty (her current coach), as well as taking part-time college courses. Her goal was now a solid reality - Young Riders. A good 2007 season competing at Prix St Georges and the Young Rider divisions was about to pay off. Claire is also very fortunate to have the best support team possible with mom as the 'best' groom, dad Arnie as the 'best' stall manager and her sister Kristen as chief photographer.

Legacy and his entourage arrived in Red Deer, Alberta, the Monday prior for lessons with team Young Rider coach Albrecht Heidemann and the first competitions. This show featured the Alberta Provincial Championships as well as the Youth competitions, so there were plenty of opportunities to practice. Classes on Thursday and Friday went well, then Claire won both Saturday classes. With that came the realization that the pair may be able to win the entire division.

During my short interview with Claire and Val, it quickly became apparent that this is a very emotional family and tears flow for many reasons - for joy, for sorrow and just any reason. As Claire described her Sunday ride in the Freestyle it was difficult to know whether to laugh or cry with them. The Freestyle on Sunday was her last test of the competition.

"I woke very excited on Sunday", Claire begins, "I came down center line in my Freestyle test crying, thinking that this would be my last time riding Legacy in competition. Everything came together; the slightest of aids and he was 'through'; the cosmos aligned and it was the best feeling on earth. My test was so much fun and I was still cry-



*Claire Austring of Surrey, BC, and her horse, **Springtree Legacy** (Wodan) were the champions of both the FEI Young Rider division and the Freestyle*
Photo by Kristin Austring

ing even as I left the ring." Val goes on to say that Claire was still crying talking to coach Carmie Flaherty, who had traveled with her to Red Deer, choking back sobs as she said, "It was so much fun".

Now back at home, Claire has a stack of memorabilia that she proudly shows me and wonderful photographs of her experience. At age 16 years, Legacy is now officially retired and can assume a school master role for Val and another mature rider. Claire is immersed in full time studies in Criminology looking to ultimately join the Vancouver Police Department and possibly the VPD Mounted Squad. On behalf of the Association, I wished her well.

DRESSAGE CANADA 2007 NATIONAL YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS A SUCCESS

Friday, October 05, 2007

The third annual Dressage Canada National Youth Championships, sponsored by the Alberta Junior/ Young Riders Association and Dressage Canada, were held September 15–16, in Red Deer, AB.

In the exciting head-to-head competition, Claire Austring of Surrey, BC, and her horse, Springtree Legacy (Wodan) were the champions of both the FEI Young Rider division (64.05%) and the Freestyle (65.42%). The partnership between Austring and Springtree Legacy was first formed in 2003 when the 17.1hh bay Canadian Warmblood was purchased from Diana Davies of Springtree Farm. The pair currently trains with Carmie Flaherty, a Level 3 Dressage coach from Langley, BC.

Brittney Eastgate of Victoria, BC, and her mount Azaria (Amiro) were reserve champions in the FEI Young Rider and Freestyle (64.47%). Eastgate, who trains with Level 3 Dressage coach Roanne Tyson of Victoria, BC, and Azaria, a nine-year-old Oldenburg mare, have made the successful transition from Second Level to Young Rider in a remarkable three-year period.

The judging panel included Canadian judges Cara Whitham (FEI O) and Jacqui Oldham (EC S) as well as Janet Foy (FEI I—USA), Kurt Christensen (FEI I—DEN) and Mercedes Campdera Alatorre (FEI C—MEX).

Started in 2005, the Dressage Canada National Youth Championships provide a terrific platform for Canada's emerging talent. The head-to-head format proves to be an exciting competition as riders sharpen their skills over the competition season, collecting valuable qualifying scores in order to represent their region. The Championships provide excellent training for the future as the qualifying system is structured in a similar fashion to that used for high performance senior athletes.

Successfully qualified competitors make the journey to compete against one another in what proves to be a very competitive environment. Past National Youth Championships competitors could be seen on the international stage representing Canada this year at the 2007 North American Junior and Young Rider Championships including Jade Deter (Individual & Team Gold—FEI Junior), Sarah Regher (Team Gold—FEI Junior), Lindsay Seidel-Wassenaar (Team Gold—FEI Junior), Alexandra Duncan (Individual Gold—Young Rider), Leah Wilson (Individual Silver—Young Rider) and Julie Watchorn (Individual Bronze—Young Rider).

LES CHAMPIONNATS NATIONAUX POUR JEUNES 2007 DE DRESSAGE CANADA: UN SUCCÈS

Ottawa, Ontario – Les troisièmes Championnats nationaux pour Jeunes de Dressage Canada, commandités par l'association albertaine des cavaliers juniors et des jeunes cavaliers et par Dressage Canada, se sont déroulés les 15 et 16 septembre derniers à Red Deer, en Alberta.

Lors des excitantes épreuves de confrontation, Claire Austring, du Surrey, en Colombie-Britannique, et son cheval Springtree Legacy (Wodan), ont terminé champions de la division FEI Jeunes Cavaliers (64,05 %) et de la Reprise Libre (65,42 %). Le partenariat entre Austring et Springtree Legacy s'est formé en 2003, lorsque le Warmblood Canadien bai de 17,1 mains a été acheté de Diana Davies, de Springtree Farm. Le duo



Claire Austring and **Springtree Legacy**

Photo by Steve Charles

est présentement entraîné par Carmie Flaherty, une entraîneuse de dressage de niveau 3 de Langley, en Colombie-Britannique.

Brittney Eastgate, de Victoria, en Colombie-Britannique, et sa monture Azaria (Amiro) ont terminé champions de réserve dans la division Jeunes Cavaliers et en Reprise Libre FEI (64,47 %). Eastgate, qui s'entraîne avec Roanne Tyson, une entraîneuse de dressage de niveau 3 de Victoria, en Colombie-Britannique, en compagnie de sa jument Oldenburg de neuf ans, ont effectué une transition réussie du Deuxième Niveau au niveau Jeunes Cavaliers dans un délai remarquable de trois ans.

Le jury était composé des juges canadiennes Cara Whitham (O – FEI) et Jacqui Oldham (S – CH), ainsi que de Janet Foy (I – FEI – États-Unis), Kurt Christensen (I – FEI – Danemark) et Mercedes Campdera Alatorre (C – FEI – Mexique).

Les Championnats nationaux pour Jeunes de Dressage Canada dont les débuts remontent à 2005, offrent un important tremplin aux jeunes talents en émergence au pays. Il s'agit d'une formule d'affrontements directs qui donne lieu à une compétition très excitante. Les cavaliers peaufinent leur technique tout au long de la saison et cumulent de précieux points de qualification en vue de représenter leur région. La participation à ces championnats est une excellente formation pour l'avenir, le système de qualification étant structuré de manière similaire à celui qui est en vigueur chez les athlètes de haute performance.

Les concurrents qualifiés se mesurent les uns aux autres lors d'une compétition très relevée. Certains des concurrents ayant pris part dans le passé aux Championnats nationaux pour Jeunes de Dressage Canada ont été vus cette année sur la scène internationale pour représenter le Canada aux Championnats nord-américains pour Juniors et Jeunes Cavaliers. Mentionnons Jade Deter (médaillée d'or en individuel et en équipe – FEI Junior), Sarah Regher (médaillée d'or en équipe – FEI Junior), Lindsay Seidel-Wassenaar (médaillée d'or en équipe – FEI Junior), Alexandra Duncan (médaillée d'or en individuel – Jeunes Cavaliers), Leah Wilson (médaillée d'argent en individuel – Jeunes Cavaliers) et Julie Watchorn (médaillée de bronze en individuel – Jeunes Cavaliers).