

Dreamcatcher Meadows earning international acclaim

Dreammaster 'not a
one-horse wonder':
Giese

ERIC MACKENZIE
eric@whistlerquestion.com

Jill Giese has a message to deliver to the rest of the equestrian world: The Canadians are coming.

That's because horses coming out of Giese's Dreamcatcher Meadows in Pemberton have been garnering plenty of attention in dressage competition, which she said is rare to see from north of the border. The stable picked up four Horse of the Year honours at the United States Dressage Federation (USDF) annual awards, held in early December in San Diego, Calif.

"It was a wonderful experience," said Giese. "I think they were a bit surprised."

For Giese and partner John Dingle, 2011 was already a memorable year as their prized stallion, Dreammaster, achieved the prestigious Hanoverian entitlement after a number of successful showings in competition. Three of the Horse of the Year honours earned by Dreamcatcher Meadows at the USDF awards belonged to Dreammaster, coming in the All Breeds competition for his wins at the Prix St. Georges level.

Training with Olympic medal-winning rider Charlotte Bredahl, Dreammaster is slated to compete at the Grand Prix level in 2012, the highest level in international competition.

But not to be overlooked is homebred filly Ballerina, who picked up the USDF award for Three-Year-Old Materiale (Developing) Young Horse of the Year. Meanwhile, Ballerina also picked up another title in mid-December, as the American Hanoverian Society named her the 2011 Materiale Horse of the Year, with the award to be presented by American and German breed officials in a ceremony in Florida in early 2012.

Ballerina is owned by Earl's Restaurant founder Leroy 'Bus' Fuller, who entrusted Giese and Dingle to select a foal for him and begin training it for dressage competition.

"He originally got involved with our rescued horses, became quite intrigued by dressage and subsequently ended up buying a young filly from us three years ago and left

it up to us to choose, and I said I would pick what I thought was the best of the bunch," recalled Giese. "Then, he didn't see her again for two years, until this past spring when she's now a big, black, beautiful horse and has done extremely well in competition."

Fuller also attended the San Diego awards ceremony, and the hope is that he'll be making appearances at many more on Ballerina's behalf. Giese said that Fuller is fully supporting further training for Ballerina as she contends for the Materiale and FEI (International Equestrian Federation) Young Horse Championships in 2012, with the hope of capturing a world title the following year.

Earlier in 2011, Ballerina scored the second-highest average in all of North America among three-, four- and five-year-olds, which Giese described as "quite a coup" considering Ballerina's relative youth.

"She's got an angelic temperament to boot, so she's the total package," Giese continued, adding that five more youngsters from Dreamcatcher Meadows are likely to be hitting the competitive circuit in the next year.

All of a sudden, the Pemberton ranch is becoming a hot spot for developing horses – a pretty unlikely place for that to be happening, said Giese.

"It used to be that people had to go to Europe to find quality young horses," she said. "Because we do the breeding here as well, it's a one-stop shop from conception to competition."

"I've been studying bloodlines for the last 30 years, and what we've proved is that what we're consistently producing is of an international standard. Dreammaster is not a one-horse wonder, and wait until you see what we've got coming up this year – we've got some youngsters that we're really excited about."

Giese said she thinks Dreamcatcher Meadows was the only Canadian stable represented at the USDF awards.

"The most consistent question we got asked was, 'Why Pemberton?' It's a Shangri-la, really. I call it Canada's Kentucky for horses," said Giese, who said the location has definitely helped her and Dingle achieve success with their athletes.

"We're able to give them a really rounded experience here so they don't get sour, and that's a real problem with a lot of competition horses," she said. "We let our horses be horses."

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From left, Leroy 'Bus' Fuller, Jill Giese and John Dingle are all smiles after accepting Ballerina's Horse of the Year honour during last month's United States Dressage Federation awards in San Diego, Calif.

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