

# DRESSAGE AT DEVON®

*The Art of Classical Horsemanship in Competition*



## **Local Equestrian Honored with Invitation to Judge at Dressage at Devon**

*For the international trainer, competitor and judge, the offer is “an honor”*

Gabriel Armando is no stranger to the international equestrian scene. The Flemington, New Jersey resident won top honors for his riding talents in his native Argentina, and has judged around the world. Despite the show’s proximity, however, this is the first year that he has been invited to judge the prestigious international classes at Dressage at Devon, September 23-28.

Armando began riding in Argentina where, at the age of 20, he was the youngest National Champion in the country, an honor he secured in both 1982 and 1983. In 1997, he moved to Manhattan, where he worked in the banking industry. Gabriel made the move professionally to teaching and training shortly after the tragic events of 9/11 where he lost a friend in the fall of the towers. “I decided that life is really too short and that you should spend every moment possible doing what you love. For me that is dressage.” Married to dressage rider and trainer Suzanne Ross-Armando, he is based at Diamond Creek Farm in Ringoes, New Jersey where together they supervise the training of 25 horses. In the winter, they train and compete in Wellington, Fl.

“I have been all over judging dressage,” says Armando, “but getting the assignment at Dressage at Devon is totally exciting to me. This is one of the biggest shows in the United States, and for me it is the best. It has a great reputation, tradition and a lot of charm. It is,” he says, “an honor for me to judge there.”

Armando is a Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) “C” judge which means he is qualified to judge international events. He has recently been to Ohio, California and North Carolina judging at internationally-rated dressage shows. He developed an interest in judging by scribing for top international judges when he was very young. He sat at the elbow of many top dressage judges such as Eric Lette, recording scores and comments for them during competitions. “I learned so much from them and I will always be grateful. It really helped me,” he says. He started judging in Argentina when he was just 21, then traveled throughout South America to judge. At the age of 34, 12 years ago, Argentina sent his application and resume to the FEI to be considered as an international

judge. He was required to take a number of FEI-recognized seminars and a practical exam “shadowing” a judge in a recognized competition. Now, Armando explains, applicants are required to take a written exam as well as a practical exam.

Part of his schedule includes judging and teaching with the FEI World Dressage Challenge, a program designed to promote and support the sport of dressage amongst people in countries that may not have access to international competitions and instruction. He was in Asia judging and conducting clinics last year and, immediately following Dressage at Devon, will do the same in South America.

Gabriel Armando remains an active competitor as well. He won the Silver Medal for his native Argentina in the South American Championship in Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1998 and was an Argentinean team member in the Pan American Games in Dominican Republic 2003, and in the recent Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Dressage is an ancient equestrian discipline and the fastest growing equestrian sport in the USA today. Dressage, a French word meaning “training,” describes the sequential development of the horse’s suppleness, obedience and strength. The result is a breathtaking blend of power and artistry.

The 34th annual Dressage at Devon, September 23<sup>rd</sup> through 28<sup>th</sup> at the Devon Horse Show grounds in Devon, Pennsylvania, offers one of the highest-rated international dressage competitions and the most complete breed show outside of Europe. More than 700 horses are expected to compete with an anticipated 35,000 spectators. The show benefits Thorncroft Therapeutic Horseback Riding, Inc., one of the oldest and largest therapeutic riding facilities in the nation.

General admission is \$8; children under 12 are admitted at no charge. On Sunday, Family Day, each adult that arrives at the gate with a child under 12 will be admitted free. Reserved and box seats are available. For information go to [www.dressageatdevon.org](http://www.dressageatdevon.org) or 484-358-5510.

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