

DRESSAGE AT DEVON®

The Art of Classical Horsemanship in Competition



One Family, Three Generations of Women Competing at Dressage at Devon

Devon, PA-- When Bethel resident Judy Reggio entered her first horse, Trinity, in the Breed Show at Dressage at Devon almost 20 year ago, little did she know she would be starting a family tradition. A regular competitor at the prestigious international Breed and Performance show, Judy was joined by her daughter Suzanne Reggio Belles showing horses in hand and under saddle in the Breed division. In 2001, Suzanne competed their home-bred stallion Joshua at the international levels in the Performance Division of Dressage at Devon. This September, as the reins are passed to Suzanne's daughter, Tori Belles, the third generation of the family enters the competition at Dressage at Devon. Tori will have her chance to take a turn around the venerable Dixon Oval at the first ever Dressage at Devon Leadline Class for young equestrians six and under. The class will take place on Sunday, September 28th.

The family strands to this story are even more complicated. Judy Reggio began breeding horses for her daughter when Suzanne's horse was struck by a car and no longer able to compete. The resulting foal, Joshua, was so successful in the Breed arena at Devon that Judy's life set off on a new tack. That young foal grew into a handsome stallion who continued to produce quality offspring. At the same time, he was developing into a fine performance horse and Suzanne was campaigning him successfully in the dressage arena.

It was at a competition at Dressage at Devon that Suzanne went into early labor and almost delivered Tori on the horse show grounds. Perhaps that explains why Tori is so taken with horses. At almost four years old, Tori is already a gung-ho equestrian, with more than two years riding experience. "She will ride anything with four legs," says Judy, "including the family poodle!" She enjoys being around the horses when she is out of the saddle as well. "She is very helpful, and knows how to help me to groom and tack her pony," says Suzanne. The pony Ember will be her mount at the September show, and Tori is already counting down the days. "She can't wait," says her mom. "Everyday she talks about riding her pony at Devon. She tells everyone!"

While Leadline classes, where a parent or trainer leads a child around a horse show competition ring, is not a new concept, it is just gaining ground in the dressage world,

and Dressage at Devon is the first major international show in the northeast to offer the class. It will be judged by Olympic dressage team veteran Lendon Gray. "This class is a wonderful way to introduce kids to the fun of horses and competition," says Gray. "Want to bet that one of these little ones will be on an Olympic Team in twenty years?"

Each of the children will earn a rosette for participating in the class, while winners will receive a placement ribbon as well. All will be judged as to suitability of mount to rider, position and general horsemanship. Children four and under will be judged at the walk; children five and six at the walk and trot.

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. Dressage at Devon offers one of the highest-rated international dressage competitions and the most complete breed show outside of Europe. Olympic medalist Robert Dover calls Dressage at Devon "the standard by which all American horse shows should be judged."

This year, the 34th annual Dressage at Devon Horse Show, presented by Horsecworld Ltd. and DressageClinic.com, will be held September 23rd through 28th at the Devon Horse Show grounds in Devon, Pennsylvania. More than 700 horses are expected to compete with an anticipated 35,000 spectators. The weekend offers Kids Corral, providing activities for youngsters, and exhibitions are geared towards family fun. Says Chair of Dressage at Devon Jim Hall, "Sunday is Family Day at Dressage at Devon, so scheduling the Leadline Class then is a perfect fit."

Dressage at Devon takes place at the Devon Horse Show Grounds, Route 30, in Devon, Pennsylvania and benefits Thorncroft Therapeutic Horseback Riding, Inc., one of the oldest and largest therapeutic riding facilities in the nation. Thorncroft helps the disabled to improve balance, circulation, muscle tone, and concentration, while enhancing self-esteem. Since 1991, Dressage at Devon has raised more than \$1,070,000 for Thorncroft.

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 twelve will be admitted at no charge. Reserved and box seats are available. For information go to www.dressageatdevon.org.

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