

FENCES AUCTION 2017

THE ELITE OF THE ELITE

By Khaled Assem

THIS YEAR HORSE TIMES WAS LUCKY TO BE INVITED TO ATTEND FENCES AUCTION IN FONTAINEBLEAU, FRANCE. AFTER SOCIALIZING WITH THE ELITE HORSE COMMUNITY WHO ARRIVED FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD TO ATTEND THE AUCTION, I WAS REALLY AMAZED BY THEIR EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE. WITH SUCH A BRILLIANT SETTING, GREAT ORGANIZATION BY THE MANAGEMENT AND AMAZING HORSES, IT WAS INDEED AN "ELITE OF THE ELITE" EVENT.



THE SELECTION PROCESS

The very interesting thing about the auction is that it has been going on for **29 years** now so they have a protocol, a system. FENCES is the acronym for “*Francaise d’Encheres de Chevaux d’Elevage et de Sport*”, translated as the “French Auction of Horses for Breeding and Sport”. They travel the whole year to look at horses; they basically look at about **1,000** horses and screen them down to **150** for the auction. Afterwards, they vet them and perform their x-rays and vet exams; they give you all the details so that when you’re buying a horse you are very well informed. **You know his pedigree; you have his x-rays and vetting report.** So there’s no fishing in the dark!

Also in the book they give you, there’s a notation of how much the horse is basically valued at, so you kind of go in with a fair idea that helps you form a good picture of the horse, the price, and basic fitness.

THE FRENCH BREEDING SYSTEM

I always felt that the French horses are quite unique; “*Le Selle Francais*” is generally an **excellent breed** that you see frequently in top sport, but not as much at amateur levels.

The story behind that goes back some time ago when the French had a closed breeding system. They had an **internal breeding programme** with “*Le Selle Francais*” that was guarded and guided by the National Stud Farms who kept some of the stallions. Now with the national stud farms not being present anymore, the French have a chance to breed with stallions from other countries like Germany, Belgium and Holland.

As a result the quality of the breeding system in France lately has opened to the world and the demand on French horses in terms of genealogy is escalating tremendously.

ORGANIZATION

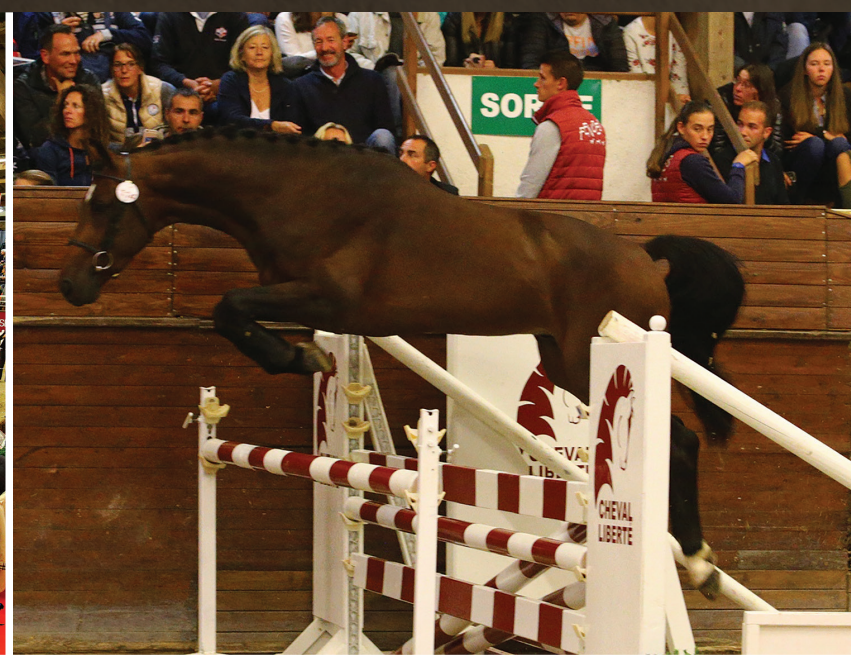
A major factor that contributed to the success of the auction is the **schedule of the day**. Meaning that in the morning the competitions of the young horses are held and in the afternoon the auctions started. The choice of this particular schedule for the day is pretty comforting to the attendees as they get to watch the horses in the morning which consequently helps them imagine the future of what they might possibly buy in the afternoon.



Approximately 500 to 800 attendees having dinner



Ten of the 11 partners of Fences (missing Eric Nègre)



At the table of JY Camenen Fences partner (standing up), Khaled Assem talking with the young international French rider Maëlle Martin (back) in front of Daniel and Juan Camilo Piedrahita, well known Colombian breeders from Haras San Isidro.

The quality of horses was particularly noticeable; there was not a single horse that was out of proportion in any way. **They all ranged from above average to excellent quality** which made the efforts exerted by FENCES through the year self-evident.

What I personally noticed was that the auction is a very particular stand-alone event because some horses were attractive particularly to Americans, others appealed to South Americans, and so on. So you find this competitive attitude when, for example, the Americans like a certain horse the price goes up, you get a feeling that there is always a general taste in terms of color, pace, and jump among each group of people.

MANAGEMENT

I had a chance to have a fruitful discussion with FENCES’ management and I came to the conclusion that they are **very well connected** to the breeders, which definitely added value. Because let’s say they’ve seen a horse somewhere that they liked in March, they ask the owner to **reserve** that horse for the auction which is held in September.

Despite the fact that the breeder might have a chance to have sold that horse before the auction with the price he requires, he rarely does that because of his very good relationship with **FENCES** and its reputation. And at the end of the day the breeder gets to sell his horse possibly for a better price than the one he initially wanted.

HT’S EXPERIENCE

The hospitality of the group at FENCES was beyond amazing. They spend time with everyone; they’re very friendly which makes a very rich atmosphere that invites one to approach, meet, and network with people from around the globe.

The auction is held at **Marcel Rozier’s** place in **Fontainebleau**, always a pleasure to visit. There you see a beautiful place, very well organized, lots of excellent quality prefabricated boxes where the horses are housed. The arrangement of everything from the design of the place, the decor, catering, dinner and drinks was spectacular and very much suited to VIPS. **It was really a delightful event that we look forward to next year.** 🍷

All Photos by: PSV