



PERISCOPE ON JESSICA KÜRTE

By Khaled Assem

WHEN INTERVIEWING JESSICA KÜRTE, ONE CANNOT BUT BECOME IMPRESSED WITH HER CALCULATED SUBTLE VISION AND HER PRECISE AND SHEER ANALYTICAL CHARACTER. THERE IS REMARKABLE DEPTH IN HER PERSONALITY AND MOSTLY, HER SERENE YET FOCUSED PERCEPTION OF THE FUTURE.



JESSICA KÜRTEEN WAS BORN
IN CULLYBACKY, IN THE
NORTH OF IRELAND ON
NOVEMBER 24TH 1969. SHE IS
THE DAUGHTER OF A DENTIST
AND AN ARTIST. HER FATHER
CHESNEY SUCCESSFULLY
BRED HORSES AND HER
MOTHER ROSEMARY ALWAYS
SUPPORTED THE HORSEY
PASSION OF HER 5 CHILDREN.
THIS LOVE OF YOUNG
JESSICA FIRST

CONCENTRATED ON A DONKEY NAMED MR. PORRIDGE, WHO
WAS OBVIOUSLY ABLE, TO SHOW HIS STILL VERY YOUNG
RIDER THE SUBSTANTIAL CRITERIA OF THE HORSE SPORT...

STILL YOUNG, JESSICA CHESNEY CAUSED A FURORE AS A
PONY RIDER; SHE WAS 2 TIMES IRISH CHAMPION, AND
LATER A JUNIOR RIDER. THE HOBBY LATER ON CHANGED
INTO PROFESSION WITH A DIPLOMA WITHIN HORSE
ECONOMY, JESSICA CHESNEY BECAME A PROFESSIONAL
SHOW JUMPING AMAZONE AND WAS ESTABLISHED INTO THE
FIRST CLASS PROFESSIONALS ON THE EMERALD ISLAND.

SINCE 1994 JESSICA'S FELLOW COUNTRYMEN LOST TO A
CERTAIN EXTENT THEIR SUCCESS GUARANTOR, BECAUSE
IN THIS YEAR THE AMAZONE MOVED TOGETHER WITH
ECKARD KÜRTEEN TO HÜNZE (RHINELAND). IN THE
MEANTIME, BOTH ARE MARRIED AND LIVE WITH HORSES
SURROUNDING THEM AND THE ENTIRE TEAM IN HÜNZE,
WITH JESSICA STILL STARTING FOR IRELAND. THE YARD,
NOT FAR FROM THE FEDERAL ROAD (BUNDESSTRASSE) 58,
IS IN THE MIDST OF FAR LANDSCAPE AND OFFERS PLENTY
OF SPACE FOR LIFE WITH THE HORSES.

**What do you think are the elements
of success in this sport and
despite the presence of most or all
the elements, do you think
success is a choice?**

I think the key to success is a combination of horse and rider. At this level, it's important that the horse and rider are really a team. Obviously, everything around; the management and people you work with in your stable, are all very important. Matters need to be harmonious and everybody within the team needs to have the same goal and support. It is a very demanding sport; we have to ride the whole day everyday all year, and it's also very difficult because no matter how much you invest from your own time and from your own substance, it still doesn't mean you will win. You have to have a horse who is also in top form, has the ability and obviously, the two together have to be in form in order to create a winning formula. Having said so, I certainly think that success is not a choice, but it is something you

build towards and with experience success breeds more success. Nevertheless, I certainly do believe, having been in the sport for so long - that you as a rider can motivate yourself to try a little bit harder especially at a big event. I would be able to put a little extra pressure on myself and say that I must try harder and I think the horses notice this. As I mentioned, if you have a very good team, surely that would bring along good success. In addition, if you as a rider believe in your own horse you can have an awful lot more success than if you say that he is just a horse.

What about managing your time?

I normally ride all day, which means that I do not have time to look at the things in the office. My husband contributes with his time and is my manager; we discuss the planning of the calendar together. The horses and training is my area and the management around it is his area. It's



▲ Jessica Kürten riding Quibell at the GCT in Cannes



▲ With Castle Forbes at the GCT Final in Doha

difficult to do it on your own! I'm a great believer that horses are intelligent animals and I believe that some horses understand the sport better than others. I know certainly when I ride my best horses at an important event they probably feel my nerves a little bit which I think spins them also to be better.

Who were your most important sponsors?

I was very lucky to have good owners through my career. Starting with my parents, when I finished my exams in school my father bought me a five year old that I took the whole way up to Olympic and World Cup levels, and I was fortunate there were large amounts of money to invest. Upon meeting my husband and moving to Germany, I was lucky to have other good owners. I get my horses young and I produce them. Now for six years,

I've been working with Lady Gorgina Forbes from Ireland who is a great breeder and I'm lucky to have lovely horses that she's breeding or ones that we've bought together. Furthermore, companies like GPA sponsor me for my clothes, obviously, the owners are very important in this sport and I think they are the key people.

How do you choose a horse?

I think when you try a horse you have to like it, when you see it you have to like it, when you sit on it you have to like it, when you jump it you have to like it, and when you see the video of it jumping you have to like it! That is for me a very important part. For me I like very much a blood horse and not so much the big type because they are for the sport, and are faster and normally more careful. I always imagine what it would be when the horse gets experience and I have a

vision of what the horse could become.

Would you ride a good horse regardless of its breed?

Horses come from everywhere. I've had wonderful Irish horses, French, German, and Dutch horses, I even had one horse which did not come into sport till she was eight years old and became a European Champion. I find that there is a lovely story behind horses, where they come from and whom they were with. Therefore, I think one has to always keep an open mind.

What do you think of the development of the show jumping sport in the Middle East?

It's not easy as this is not the climate for the sport and, everything has to come from outside and a lot of effort has to be put in - yet I can see a lot of interest and some riders showing a lot of talent and naturally, need to be supported.

How do you see the investment of the Middle East in the show jumping sport as an industry?

It has to be structured with the support of the passionate individuals in the game. It's not enough to say we have some riders and a trainer, it has to start at the very bottom. The knowledge has to be built up from the bottom with children and ponies, competitions for young riders, which takes time, but if enough effort is put into that structuring phase, there is a good chance that the sport will be strong in Middle Eastern countries.

Do you have special plans for the upcoming three years?

Yes, I am delighted with how my two horses are developing; I think 'Muttu' and 'Cosmo' are developing to be top Grand Prix horses. I also want to go to the Olympics in London, obviously Ireland has to qualify first and I'm hoping to be part of the team. I have goals but I'm not good at saying what I would like to do because it's not like me to go out saying I went to do that, but I'm going to keep on quietly working and keep on producing my horses and maybe will pop up in the next couple of years and have a big moment. 

Photos courtesy of Cymon Taylor
www.cymontaylor.com
www.photostationonline.com
 Tel: +39 333 290 2515

Jessica prefers small blood horses to the big careful type. At the GCT Final in Doha, one of the horses she rode was Cosma, a young horse but a star at the event

