

# Interviewing Arno Neessen

**HORSE Times (H.T):** Mr. Arno how long has been since you first came to this country? Which year was it?

**Arno Neessen (A.N):** That was on the Movenpick show in 95, exactly 9 years ago. During that show I got in contact with Mr. Abd El Fatah Ragab, and they asked me to come over to do a clinic here which has been repeated several times and on regular basics up till now in 2004.

**H.T:** So you have actually visited this country maybe once or more than once yearly?

**A.N:** Definitely more than once yearly, I think five to six times per year.

**H.T:** Well, in your opinion sir, as you have seen this sport develop and grow, what are the positive changes that you have seen, as we all do know that you have won lots and lots of shows in this country and that you are one of the people who could detect positive points and negative ones, what do you think are the positive changes that happened lately in Egypt?

**A.N:** Of course, creating new facilities for organizing shows, big space, good service, that most of the shows are going to be held on these facilities, and that goes step by step, but it's more than 100% progress compared to ten or nine years ago. Also the qualities of the horses imported to Egypt has tremendously changed, people are more alert on having the quality not the quantity as well as critical of what they are buying.

**H.T:** I do know sir, that you are part of the improvement of bringing in better quality horses to Egypt. But as you have said horses are part of it, clubs and facilities are part of it, what have you noticed regarding grooming conditions, shoeing, feeding, and the elements that are necessary for the horse to be well nourished?

**A.N:** Everybody tries everything possible. I know that in a country like Egypt, not everything you need is available most of the tools has to be imported which takes time, sometimes its quiet complicated.

Shoeing also is improving; bringing in a Farrier from abroad, every now and then, to teach the local Farriers; it all made sense and it all worked well at the end for better results. This also made the horses last longer because "the horse shoe is the basis of the horse, the foundation of a horse; no foot no horse".

**H.T:** Now sir as you have pointed out the positive aspects which are all very important elements that do, as you have said, take quiet a while to improve upon, and polish, and practice over several years, what do you think are the negative points that still needs to be improved?

**A.N:** Going back to horse shows, I would like to see more; although they did split up the competitions into classes, attending the last few shows I discovered that, for instance, the C-level they have to jump all shows over the same course designed for the A1 and A2 levels. The point is that, the A1 and A2 are already to cope with more technical difficulties. I think they should make for the C class a less technical course, because the C class riders are usually either young or inexperienced riders with young horses. And they all deserve to have a fair road to the top to develop themselves positively.

**H.T:** That also bring us to a very important question, the courses that you have seen built in National competitions, do you think that these are good (qualifier) courses that would bring up a horse to an upper level smoothly and intelligently? Are we similar to the path they have in Europe?

**A.N:** Definitely the course designing is a very important element in the development of a show jumper and I think especially for the younger novice riders, the course should be easier than the courses designed for the more experienced riders and the more experienced horses because you know "the same tracks for these young riders and these young horses, it's in my opinion still too difficult". The thing is that it's also for the audience; it's more attractive to see riders go over the day successfully, but it would be more enjoyable in a couple of different courses not the same track all day long.

**H.T:** As you have seen developments go through in the equestrian field in Europe, do you feel that Egypt now is on the right track, or are we missing

anything?

**A.N:** Well, I think that Egypt is definitely on the right track, they do everything possible to send their selected, talented riders abroad to gain some experience on international shows and that is very positive.

**H.T:** We are all for sure familiar with your achievements but I would like you to first tell us some of your remarkable achievements as a rider. And then tell us the qualifications of a good trainer because a good rider is not necessarily always a good trainer?

**A.N:** Well, my highlight in my career actually was when I got the opportunity as a junior rider to have a position in the stables of Mr. Melchior and Zanger Sheide in Belgium. Then the gentlemen sent me to Germany to the top trainer, Herman Schrieder, and that guy who was an Olympic champion from Tokyo made me realize that I understood nothing at all in this sport, starting with schooling a horse basically on the flat. It took me quiet a long time to get that under control and that made me confident. Before that time, before I got that feeling, it was quiet a tough time for me, which made me sometimes think of stopping everything. However, after a year of training with him he brought me to the world championships where I was competing as the youngest competitor in 1974, in which I finished 12th in total and I won a couple of grand prix. I competed for Holland in around ten nation cups; I also represented

Holland in a lot of international unofficial shows and was quite successful. Until I got a request to be a trainer in Iraq, Paul Schockemohle asked me and I accepted the job, and worked in it for four years. Then training took all my concentration because I liked to do it. I think a good trainer should be around in the world, different countries, different work, different mentalities which help him to be a multifunctional person through dealing with a lot of different mentalities, you have to deal with different cultures, and I think that's very important for any human being's life. I think I have learned a lot from Herman Schieder; he was always explaining to me things with examples, and I tried to bring it in the practice every way I can.

**H.T:** You were a very successful rider, a very successful coach, and most of all you have a particular passion for horses; so what would you dream to achieve in the equestrian world?

**A.N:** What I would like to do is to work around the world, in as much countries as possible, to find talented students and help them choose the right horses so as to produce together successful couples of riders and their horses

We thank Mr. Neessen for his insight. A credit due to Mr. Arno Neessen is that the top two horses in the A class "Carta" and "MeshMesh Z" where brought in and chosen by himself for the Police Barracks ■



Mr. Arno Neessen