

“LE CAVALIER ET LE CHEF D’EQUIPE FRANCAIS”

THIERRY POMEL

By Menna Loutfy

HE DEDICATED ALMOST HALF A CENTURY OF HIS LIFE TO THE SPORT OF RIDING, WITH A PASSION THAT NEVER FADED... THIERRY POMEL STARTED HIS RIDING CAREER AS A CLEVER YOUNG STUDENT WHO GREW UP TO BE A GIVING TEACHER. BEING A FORMER WORLD MEDALIST AND THE CURRENT COACH OF THE FRENCH NATIONAL SHOW JUMPING TEAM WHO TRAINS WORLD’S TOP RIDERS, HT WAS EAGER TO MEET THE FRENCH JOCKEY, AND INDEED, WE WERE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO CATCH UP WITH HIM AND HIS NEWS AND VIEWS.

They say that the decade of the **1960s** was a **golden era** for horse sports; this is probably the time when you started riding. Tell us more about your early involvement in riding and how your family contributed to this.

I was **born in the Equestrian world**. My father was a **riding instructor** but then turned to eventing. I started competing when I was **8**, then I followed the eventing competitions in the junior and youth categories. It was at **23** years that I decided to stop eventing and do just showjumping when I created my own stables.

Being a world-class rider, you participated in a lot of national and international competitions. And as I said earlier that the 1960s was the golden era for horse riding, when was your golden era as a jockey, and what were your greatest achievements?

It was in the world championships in Rome in 1998 when I won a silver medal with the French team and a silver medal in individual competitions. I also won the **CSIO Grand Prix** in La Baule, Rome, Gijon, and the **Rolex GP** in the World Cup of Paris-Bercy.

Spending all these years as a rider and living an athletic life contributes to your personality and gives your life a very interesting rhythm. I expect all of this combined with your love of riding were the reason why you turned to coaching after retirement. So how did you modify your career after having stopped competing?

I came to coaching by following several riders in training and competitions, among others, Kevin Staut in his team debuts in France. For **6** years now, I have been the assistant coach of the French Equestrian Federation.

Currently the French National jumping team is considered one of the top teams in the world, especially after winning the Gold medal in team competitions during the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. Being a trainer for the top level, does that need further development and training?

Of course training at this level is taught in the field and every week-end in competition. We also make sure that we regularly have seminars with coaches from other sports. 

