



AT FEI WORLD CUP 2024

# MARIANO MARTINEZ BASTIDA

By Farah Rezeika

MARIANO MARTINEZ BASTIDA, THE TALENTED SPANISH SHOW JUMPER, RECENTLY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE AT THE PRESTIGIOUS FEI WORLD CUP FINALS IN RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA. AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST IN THE SPORT, THIS WAS A MAJOR MILESTONE IN MARIANO'S ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER. IN THIS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, MARIANO SHARES HIS EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS FROM THIS HIGH-STAKES COMPETITION, SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE THRILL, CHALLENGES, AND LEARNINGS THAT CAME WITH REPRESENTING HIS COUNTRY ON THE GLOBAL STAGE





**CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE COMPETING AT THE FEI WORLD CUP FINALS IN RIYADH? WHAT WAS IT LIKE BEING AMONGST THE WORLD'S BEST SHOW JUMPERS?**

It was my first time competing at the World Cup Finals, so this was a very special experience for me. Being able to participate in one of the most important competitions in the equestrian sport, surrounded by so much talent in a place like Riyadh, has become a real highlight in my career. I am very proud and thankful for everyone who has made it possible.

**HOW DID YOU FEEL LEADING UP TO THE FINALS? WERE THERE ANY NERVES OR EXCITEMENT THAT DOMINATED?**

After finishing 3rd at the qualifier at the Madrid Horse Week and the shows leading to the Finals, I felt that my horse Belano was very fresh and in the best shape he had been in to date. So, I felt confident that we would do a great job. However, once we were in the arena... that's when things got different!



**LOOKING BACK AT YOUR PERFORMANCE IN RIYADH, ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC MOMENTS THAT STAND OUT TO YOU?**

Overall, I feel very grateful for how we performed. The first two days went almost perfectly according to plan. On the last day, I would have preferred a different outcome, but I am very happy we made it to the final. Apart from my performance, I will always remember the warm welcome and excitement from the Saudi audience. I was surprised to see their reactions after the rounds.

**WERE THERE ANY PARTICULAR CHALLENGES YOU FACED DURING THE FEI WORLD CUP FINALS, FROM THE COURSE ITSELF TO UNEXPECTED CIRCUMSTANCES?**

I think the courses over the three days were very challenging, but at the same time quite enjoyable. On the first day, of course, you don't want to let your horse go too much, but at the same time, you want to place as high as possible in the standings to have a favorable position for the rest of the championship. On the second day, you could see how it was serious business, with wide oxers,

delicate verticals, and not many places during the course where you could catch your breath, and a tight time. The last day was quite similar to the second one, adding, of course, the pressure of being in the final.

**CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR HORSE, BELANO V. WIJNHOEVE Z?**

I have had Belano for four years now. He is such a nice horse, very powerful but also very smart and easy to manage both in the ring and at the stables. I think we understand each other really well, and I know I can always trust him to do a good job.

**WAS THERE ANYTHING YOU LEARNED FROM THE FINALS THAT YOU'LL INCORPORATE INTO YOUR FUTURE TRAINING OR COMPETITION STRATEGY?**

I think it had been a while since I experienced the pressure I did on the last day of the final. After touching the first jump on the course, I lost focus a bit. This is something I now know I need to work on.

**DID YOU HAVE THE CHANCE TO EXPLORE RIYADH OUTSIDE OF THE COMPETITION?**

I did a little bit! As the competition was mostly running during the afternoon, I had time to see a few places around and try some restaurants. I was very amazed by everything the city has to offer. It was my first time here, but I am sure it will not be the last!

**WITH THE WORLD CUP FINALS BEHIND YOU, WHAT ARE YOUR UPCOMING COMPETITIONS OR GOALS FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON?**

I have just returned from France with some of my other horses for the Fontainebleau 5\*. I will be back in Spain for the Global Champions Tour in Madrid, and after that, I will let Belano rest for a bit. Ideally, we have our eyes on Paris this summer. 🇫🇷