



Oh so special

Carl Hester wows at grand prix level with his Tokyo hope En Vogue, while a newcomer comes away from her first ever Premier League with a win

Somerford Premier League, Cheshire

By JO PRESTWICH

IT was no surprise to see Carl Hester win both the grand prix and grand prix special with En Vogue, but the way he did took the partnership up another level with a smattering of 10s in both tests and an impressive 82.24% in the special.

"Carl's just unbelievable," stated Clive Halsall, who judged at C in the grand prix and E in the special. "All those horses of his come out and enjoy their job. Vogue is a really hot horse who made those difficult exercises look ridiculously easy. Carl intuitively knows when to take risks and when to sit quietly. He is such a clever rider and that really was something special to watch."

Carl was delighted with the 12-year-old Jazz son, as he also was with his prix st georges (PSG) winner Nutbush. Owned by Carl with Roly Luard and Anne Barrott, 'Gus' is a Negro half-brother to successful stallion Timolin, who has himself competed to grand prix and intermediate CCI3* level eventing.

"Gus is just gorgeous," said Carl, who was making his competition debut with the nine-year-old. "Big, kind and with a temperament to die for - the perfect 'old man's' horse for me!"

Eilidh Grant won Friday's inter I with Mount St John Doornroos II. The 13-year-old was bought four years ago from Emma Blundell at Mount St John stud.

"I'd been looking for one which had done a bit for a while. 'Ella' was working at advanced medium but her changes were not totally safe and I like a challenge," Eilidh said. "She was a step above anything I've had before movement wise and has a great attitude for work."

For Eilidh and Ella, lockdown has been a blessing in disguise.

"We've really worked on the changes," said Eilidh, who trains with Nicola Buchanan and Carl Hester. "We've got the ones now and that seems to have relaxed her in everything else. Maybe realising that what was her worst nightmare is actually OK was the



Waverley Fellini claims the six-year-old international with Greg Sims



key. Her twos were the highlight of her tests here and got her the best marks."

INTERNATIONAL AIMS

LAST year's five and four-year-old young horse champions Mount St John Diamonds Are Forever (Amy Woodhead), and Waverley Fellini (Greg Sims), booked their tickets to this year's championships, the former in the five-year-old commanded test and the latter in the six-year-old international.

Emma Blundell bought Diamonds Are Forever as a foal in Germany from her breeder Andre Obermeyer, with Fellini being British-bred at Sara Longworth's Waverley Stud.

Greg owns the Fürstenball x Sandro Hit gelding with his

partner Stena Hoerner. Last year the aim was the Young Horse World Championships, for which they were selected, but Covid put paid to that.

"I'd love to have a chance to go this year," he said. "That was certainly the best feeling he's given me in a test and I just hope we get the chance to go abroad."

Olivia Commins and Scuderarri took the commanded six-year-old class, while Beth Bainbridge piloted Tiger to win the international five-year-olds.

The in-form partnership of Matt Frost and Helga won Saturday's PSG from Gareth Hughes and Happiness, who went on to win the next day's inter I.

Matt owns Helga with the Keenan family and is looking