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LeMieux National Dressage Championships, Somerford Park, Cheshire

EMILE FAURIE won the LeMieux national championship, decided by the highest combined score from the grand prix and grand prix freestyle, for the third time in his career and 27 years after his last. Emile lifted the title in 1993 and 1994 with Virtu, on whom he won individual bronze and team silver at the 1993 Europeans, and now in 2021 took the title again riding Dono Di Maggio for Theodora Livanos.

"I was watching footage of Virtu the other day and there is no doubt that he would be just as competitive now," said Emile. "I've had plenty at this level competing at the championships through the years, but these two stand out."

It was in fact Gareth Hughes who won the LeMieux grand prix, the first leg of the championship, scoring 73.34% to pip Emile and Dono into second with Martin and Claudine Kroll's KK Dominant.

The 12-year-old breeding stallion is by Diamond Hit x Rubin Royal.



"A masterclass in presentation and harmony": Gareth Hughes and KK Dominant post 73.34% to claim top spot in the grand prix

a member of the silver medal-winning British team at the Europeans, his 2021 outings have been limited.

"Obviously this year it has been tricky to fit everything in but he just comes out and tries his hardest," said Gareth. "At this stage of his development Dominant's not a horse who is going to get nines thrown at him,

horse at the moment, he has taken time and worked on the collection and the horse is in such good balance and ready for him to start to ask for more."

Becky Moody was left wondering what might have been with Carinsio. She looked to have the class in the bag but, not for the first time, the 14-year-old Painted Black son took exception to the final centre line, spinning round at X.

"At that point she was easily the winner and I really felt for her," said Clive. "The horse has history on the centre line, but he was going so well and Becky was riding him super-tactfully and there was absolutely nothing she could do. Whether he anticipates the applause at the end, who knows, but it was such a shame."

Carinsio's blip dropped him to seventh, but Becky did finish third aboard Jo Cooper's Dutch-bred mare Famke PF with 70.62%.

"WHAT A PRIVILEGE"

GARETH was drawn first of the top three in the Arika grand prix

"It is an amazing venue with a true international feel to it"

EMILE FAURIE ON SOMERFORD PARK

"I met his owners while teaching in Switzerland a good few years ago, we've stayed good friends and this horse came over three years ago competing at small tour and working towards inter II and grand prix," said Gareth.

The horse won four out of seven classes at the highest level last year, but this year with Gareth focusing on being the travelling reserve for the Olympics and

but he can do everything for an eight with no weaknesses and that in itself is a massive strength.

"I could see the marks going up on the screen as I rode and I turned down the centre line thinking, 'Don't make a mistake.'"

"Gareth's grand prix test was a masterclass in presentation and harmony," said Clive Halsall, who judged at C. "He is asking as much as he can from the

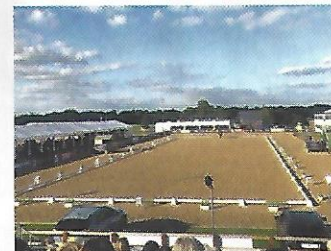
"SHE'S A PROPER BEACH BABE"

AMY WOODHEAD won the Haygain inter II on the Friday with Mount St John Kom Fairy Tale (pictured), an elegant daughter of Fürst Heinrich.

"I feel our partnership is growing all the time," said a delighted Amy. "It's nice to get out somewhere with a big atmosphere and she was really with me today - when she's like that everything feels so easy. I enjoy her so much; we hack, she jumps and she loves going to the beach - she's a proper beach babe this one."

The Finnish-bred Fairy Tale has bred four foals for Mount St John Stud. The eldest, Disney Fairytale, topped the Finnish three-year-olds last year and the youngest, Romeo, by Revolution, was up for sale this week in the stud's online auction.

ONE TO WATCH



The national championships relocated to Somerford Park for the first time this year, and the new venue received high praise from riders throughout the show

freestyle on the last day, but a mistake in the left pirouette and the one tempis proved expensive, leaving him third and putting the overall title out of reach.

Becky produced a complex floor plan with Famke to finish second, before Emile, last to go, nailed it with a foot-perfect performance. Emile rode to music specially composed by Tom Hunt, and secured the lead on 75.95% with a test that also proved popular with the spectators.

"I was quite surprised with him today, he's normally very chilled but he was really on edge going into the main arena. But he kept it together and gave me a great ride," said Emile of the Dimaggio x Santander H gelding.

Dono was part of Britain's bronze-winning World Equestrian Games team with Emile in 2018 but was sold to Greek young rider Theodora two years ago.

"The horse stayed with us after he was sold but as Theodora is currently recovering from surgery I have the ride back," said Emile.

Emile, like everyone else, was hugely positive about the championships' new home at Somerford Park in Cheshire.

"What a privilege to ride in an arena like that," he added. "It is an amazing venue with an amazing atmosphere, a true international feel to it, and the stabling and other facilities are just as good."

76.9%

the score for Emile Faurie's freestyle test according to the Spectator Judging app