

EUROPEAN PAINT HORSE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2008

Kreuth, Germany

Day Two

Wednesday, Sept. 17

Another fairy tale happened this morning. Nicole Verhulst from the Netherlands summed up all her courage to take her three-year-old mare, Shezaflybynight Honey, to the European Championship. Amateur 3-year-old and older mares was her first class, and boy was she nervous! “I guess I went over my head, I don’t think we belong here at a European Championship,” she said more than once. “Some of the other mares are taller than mine...”

Well, it was easy to find some encouraging words for her, as Shezaflybynight Honey is a typey overo mare nobody would be ashamed of. And the judges proved that size isn’t everything by using Nicole’s mare well enough for her to end up the winner of the Silver Medal! Beaten only by Italian’s Giampietro Bresciani’s mare Hot Lookin Wheels. As if that weren’t enough, later this morning, Shezaflybynight Honey reaped straight firsts under all five judges in the Open 3-year-old mares, which of course could mean only one thing: the Gold Medal! Think Nicole now feels she and her mare belong?



Nicole Verhulst and Shezaflybynight Honey – on cloud nine when winning the Gold Medal in 3- year-old mares, after the pair had already bagged a Silver Medal

Photo Oelke

It’s kind of a weird story how Nicole Verhulst got her mare, which is her first halter horse. A lady in the Netherlands who owed Nicole some money had made a down payment for a mare in the US, which she was unable to buy after all due to some financial problems. Nicole asked the party in the US whether she could use that down payment money towards another filly she would like to buy. When she got a positive reply she found Shezaflybynight Honey on the internet, which was a yearling at the time. Her husband was leaning towards another filly, but in Nicole’s mind it had to be her. The filly was a long yearling when she finally came over, and has been handled and trained by Nicole ever since. Did she get some professional

assistance? Not really, although if there is a problem, she will turn to fellow Dutch Karin van Beckum for help. But generally she says, “I don’t ask a lot of questions. I just keep my eyes peeled for what the successful guys in the business do, and try to copy them.” Atta girl!

One of the classes German riders were successful in today was the Open Solid Paint-bred Western Pleasure, with Anna Limmer on Heartbroker Review taking first place across the board and taking home the Gold, Lea Boog-Whiteside on Zippos Passing Gold earning Silver and Laura Pfeifer on Hesa Nigel Paycheck Bronze. Anna is a very versatile pro who shows very successfully in a variety of classes, from halter to reining, pleasure, or trail.

IMAGE OF THE DAY



Anna Limmer, riding Heartbroker Review in the Solid Paint-bred Trail, was in for a rather unpleasant surprise, when her mare suddenly decided the bridge wasn’t to be trusted, and tried to bolt and leave Anna in mid-air. Well, she almost succeeded, but not quite... The trails took place in the big outdoor arena, and with low temperatures and some wind chill, they were likely to present a challenge to the horses. Anna could deal with her frustration a lot easier though after having just won Gold in the Western Pleasure on that mare (Photo horsEmotion)

Below: That’s her again with APHA President Carl Thurow from Kansas during the Awards Presentation while the German National Anthem was being played (Photo Oelke)



The largest classes today were the Amateur Showmanship at Halter with 21 entries, the Senior Trail Open (17) and the Novice Amateur Showmanship at Halter (15), the 3-year-old & Aged Mares (15), and the Open Senior Hunter under Saddle (15).