



Houston Dressage Society Hosts CDI Small Tour Showdown

The Houston Dressage Society's (HDS) Texas-sized clash of the Small Tour horses at the Shoofly Farm CDI and Houston Dressage Classic I & II in Katy, Texas, was a battle for the books.

Adult Amateur Bonnie Canter and professional trainers Nancy Hinz and Marta Renilla duked it out and each took home a win in the CDI2* Prix St. Georges, Intermediaire I and Intermediaire Freestyle April 27-29 at the Great Southwest Equestrian Center.

Canter led the class of 12 competitors in the April 27 CDI2* Prix St. Georges, where she and her own Fifinella GCF captured the win with a 68.824 percent followed by Hinz on Carzanola with a 67.843 percent and Renilla on Rhustler with a 66.569 percent.

It was the 8-year-old Fifinella's first Prix St. Georges. Canter wasn't keen to start the mare's Small Tour career with a CDI, but she was persuaded to do so



in order to support HDS and to be a part of the only CDI in the state of Texas.

"It was all my husband's idea," she said of her husband Doug, a member of the HDS board of directors. "But the CDI was a great experience. It was fun to watch all the talented pairs at work, particularly since many of them are good friends. We are lucky to have a super well-run show like this, with

this level of competition, in our own backyard. A big thank you to HDS, Shoofly Farm and the other sponsors."

Canter has owned Fifinella, a 15.1-hand, Connemara/Hanoverian cross (ES Fred Astair-South Ridge Bliss) since she was 2 and has trained the mare up the levels herself. In the last two years, they have won a championship at Second Level and two reserve championships at Third and Fourth Levels at the US Dressage Finals.

"I was happy with the ride and really, really proud of Fifi. Looking at the video you can always see things that you'd like to do better. She is just 8 this year so it's the very early days for her."



Bonnie Canter and Fifinella in the CDI2 Prix St. Georges.
Photo by Susan J. Stickle.*



Shoofly Farm CDI2 PSG winner: Bonnie Canter on Fifinella GCF with a 68.824 percent*

Since the mare has just started competing at PSG, they did not enter the other Small Tour classes at the Shoofly CDI. Instead they entered the Developing PSG class where the pair earned a 68.897 percent on April 29.

"I hope to nudge her up to I-1 toward the end of the year," she said. "At this point, she needs the strength and we need to tidy up the loose ends before we move up a level"

Small Tour Showdown Continues with Intermediaire I

On April 28, with 11 in the class, the standings changed and Renilla claimed the blue ribbon in the CDI2* Intermediaire I on Rhustler with a 68.725 percent to edge out Hinz by a quarter of a percentage point.

"Rhustler is a horse that is just getting stronger and stronger," Renilla said of her 9-year-old American Hanoverian gelding (Rosseau-Rheporter, Royal Prince). "He's taking longer than other horses. He can do everything Grand Prix but now he's starting to show off his power in the small tour."



Marta Renilla and Rhustler in the CDI2
Intermediaire I. Photo by Susan J. Stickle.*

The pair has represented Spain twice in the Nations Cup in Wellington, Florida, and in 2017, they earned a team bronze medal there. She said he got a tune-up in late March while in Florida, where she trains with Conrad Schumacher.

"I had Nations Cup and then I was able to have the clinic with Conrad," she said. "That brought me even more feel of what I am looking for and then at the show I had a plan. Rhustler is a horse who needs his mama. When I'm on his back, the world can explode but he has mommy on top. I think when you have that partnership with your horse, it's very special. I feel very grateful that he gives me his best every time I ride him."

Renilla said she will continue training the Grand Prix and enter some recognized shows at that level.

"Canter pirouettes are very easy for him and canter zig-zags are a piece of cake," she said. "He's very talented for everything. He can do the tempis for Grand Prix effortlessly. He has big suspension and big gaits but he has to learn to get shorter and quicker behind in the piaffe. Because his gaits are so huge, he's boing, boing. He's a dancer. He doesn't know how to trot average."



Shoofly Farm CDI2 I-1 winner: Marta Renilla on Rhustler with a 68.725 percent*

Freestyle Shoot-Out

On April 29, the tables turned and Nancy Hinz edged out the others in the Intermediaire Freestyle on Carzanola, her own 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding (Lanola-Tuschinski, Wellington) with a 71.808 percent. Renilla took second place with a 69.933 percent.

"It was really fun," Hinz said. "It was fun for me because it was good competition. Everybody had good rides and the numbers were close. I had been working really hard to get him ready for the PSG and I-1 and everything paid off. What I like best about that horse is, personality-wise, he is very consistent so I can count on him to do the work he knows how to do. Wherever I take him, it doesn't matter if it's inside or outside or noisy or quiet, he's not reactive to the environment."

Hinz was quick to praise the HDS for consistently putting on an organized show.

"It's an amazing group of people. There are a good number helping out and the volunteers are just wonderful. We have some people who don't even ride who come and learn how to be a ring steward. A mother of one of my students pitches in and she's not really an animal person and she was happy to run tests to the judges."



Nancy Hinz and Carzanola in the CDI2_ Intermediaire-I Freestyle. Photo by Susan J. Stickle.



Shoofly Farm CDI2 I-1 Freestyle winner: Nancy Hinz on Carzonola with a 71.808 percent*

Hinz is particularly fond of the camaraderie of the other professionals at the show and she's thankful for the support of the competitors as well as her clients. One of her junior riders, Sarah Evans, earned her USDF Bronze Medal at the show on her new horse, Winterstolz.

"She just got him in January and it was her first time competing on him," Hinz said. "This was her first third level experience. It was just a very exciting weekend for all of us."

Long-time show sponsor Kimberly Rathmann of Shoofly Farm also had praise for the competitors, show organizers and volunteers.

"It was a great show," she said. "As always, it was run to perfection. The volunteers work behind the scenes to make it happen and it's always lovely. We have a wonderful lot of great riders - people coming up to different levels and willing to try things. There's a lot to be proud of in this group of people."

Rathmann's own 16-year-old KWPN gelding (00 SEVEN-Nilzefonda) Valentino captured blue ribbons in the Grand Prix on both April 27 and 28 with Andrew Phillips aboard.



Andrew Phillips brought home two first-place wins in the Grand Prix aboard Kimberly Rathmann's Valentino. Photo by Susan J. Stickle.

She was quick to point out that other USDF Group Membership Organizations (GMO) in Region 9 helped contribute monetarily to the show

"The most important thing about this show is the team of people who put it on," she said. "They just get it done and it is better every year. We have the most wonderful group of volunteers who work tirelessly - just super-duper nice people. I appreciate HDS. They are just awesome. It's such a joy to watch people move up and really dance with their partners. I can't wait until next year."

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