

Breed of the Month: Lipizzan

Cherished rare breed has a celebrated history

Usually considered the oldest European warmblood breed still in existence, the Lipizzan descends from Spanish horses imported by the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the late sixteenth century. These horses, crossed with native Karst horses from the mountainous terrain near Lipizza, Italy (today's Lipica, Slovenia), resulted in a small, intelligent, athletic, and tough white horse that matured slowly.

The Lipizzan served as a pleasure and a work horse during peacetime, as a cavalry mount during war, and since 1735 a talented performer in the famed Spanish Riding School of Vienna.

Most Americans first heard of the breed during World War II. US Army Gen. George Patton directed the protection of the Lipizzan stallions of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna as well as the rescue of Lipizzan mares from Czechoslovakia, where the Third Reich had sequestered them. The Disney movie *Miracle of the White Stallions* dramatizes the Army's daring removal of the mares and foals from behind German lines, which rescued the breed from near extinction.

In 1958, Tempel and Esther Smith imported 20 Lipizzans from Piber, the stud farm to the Spanish Riding School. Today Tempel Farms, Old Mill Creek, IL, continues its tradition of breeding and training Lipizzans and of demonstrating the *haute école* movements.

Only 4,000 to 5,000 Lipizzans exist today. Approximately 1,500 live in the US, more than in any other country.

The Lipizzan's baroque-style body is square, usually about 15.2 hands; and his ability to effortlessly collect enables him to excel at upper-level dressage movements and the supremely difficult "airs above the ground."

Lipizzans you may know:

Siglavý Dulcibella was top-ranked in Grand Prix and GP Freestyle in Region 6 in 1990. Lipizzan crosses, including **Maple Magnum** and **Brandenburg**, were well known for their Grand Prix-level successes in the 1990s and early 2000s.

In 2010, the United States Lipizzan Federation's All-Breeds high-point winner was the mare **818 Belladiva**, ridden by Kristina Wang (pictured). Kristina and "Bella" represented Region 4 three times in the NAJYRC and competed twice at the USEF Dressage Festival of Champions. .

The organizations: The Lipizzan Federation of America (LFA) serves as an umbrella organization for the two North American Lipizzan breed registries, the Lipizzan Association of North America (LANA) and the United States Lipizzan Federation (USLF), as well as for the American Lipizzan Breeders Association (consolidated with the USLF since 2011). The LFA provides a single point of



RARE GEM: The winning FEI-level Lipizzan mare 818 Belladiva and rider Kristina Wang

contact to the Lipizzan International Federation (LIF). LANA and the USLF both respect the LIF's breed standard and have the same registration requirements. The USLF also organizes periodic breed evaluations.

All-Breeds awards offered: Open, Adult Amateur, Junior/Young Rider, Vintage Cup, and Musical Freestyle divisions.

How to participate: The owner and rider must belong to either USLF or LANA. The horse must be registered with either USLF or LANA, including part-bred Lipizzans registered with the USLF.

Organization contact info: *United States Lipizzan Federation* and *Lipizzan Association of America*: uslipizzan.org and lipizzan.org. ▲

For the Breeds, by the Breeds

Each month, "All-Breeds Connection" spotlights a USDF All-Breeds awards program participating organization and the breed it represents. Information and photos that appear in this column are furnished by the breed registries. USDF does not endorse or promote any breed or registry over another.

The All-Breeds program is designed to recognize the accomplishments of specific breeds in dressage. All participating organizations offer "open" year-end awards from Training Level through Grand Prix, and some offer awards in additional categories, such as adult amateur, junior/young rider, and dressage sport-horse breeding. Registry representatives are usually on hand to help bestow awards at the banquet held during each year's USDF convention.

All-Breeds award eligibility requirements include memberships and horse registrations with both USDF and the participating organization. For details and a list of current participating organizations, visit usdf.org. For more information about All-Breeds awards program participation, send e-mail to allbreeds@usdf.org.