

# **PROJECT 'GELDERS HORSES OF NORTH AMERICA'**

## **INTRODUCTION**

When I moved to the United States in July 2018, I started to do research on the Gelders horses here. This seemed relevant to me, since there were quite a few stallions with Gelders bloodlines exported to North America between the 1960's and the 1980's. It would be interesting to find out what happened since then. I found out who are or have been involved in Gelders breeding in North America and that there's still frozen semen available of some of the exported Gelders stallions. With the help of social media I managed to get in touch with a lot of breeders and owners and through them, I got acquainted with more Gelders enthusiasts. Besides doing research, I offered my services to KWPN North America regarding the Gelders Horses. They accepted my offer and asked me to write an article to inform their members in North America about the past, present and future of this KWPN foundation type. The article was published in June 2019.

After this publication I decided it was time to start my photo-project 'Gelders Horses of North America'. This project would bring everyone more insight into the Gelders bloodlines in North America and also promote the type. In 2018 I did a similar project in The Netherlands; I named this project 'Krachtpatsers', which translates to 'Powerhouses'. I started a Facebook page called 'Krachtpatsers' to share the stories and pictures. The page soon had many followers from all over the world, and I still share new stories, information, fun facts and pictures of Krachtpatsers on it. It seemed clear to me there is an interest in Gelders horses and I decided to promote the North American sequel to project Krachtpatsers on this page as well.

I applied for subsidy from KWPN NA and KWPN NL and they granted me payment for part of the four trips I planned for 2019. Since that wouldn't cover all my expenses, I decided to start a crowdfunding on Facebook. Hopefully I will find more sponsors for 2020, since there are more interesting Gelders Horses to visit and owners to interview!

# HILTON HALL SPORTHORSES, ONTARIO CANADA

KEUR PREFERENT MARE ADESSA (KOSS X AHOY X HOOGHEID) AND HER DAUGHTERS JAYA- DESSA (BY SPECIAL-D), MIRA- DESSA & NORA- DESSA (BY FRANKLIN).

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One of the first people I contacted after I moved to the United States in July 2018, was Beverley Hilton. I knew she was involved with the Gelders horses when I was still in The Netherlands, since she had imported quite a special mare in 2006. This was Adessa, by Koss out of the Keur Sport (dressage) Preferent mare Odessa (Ahoy x Hoogheid x Indiaan). Adessa is bred by Ien Verhagen in The Netherlands and was Champion Filly at the KWPN Paardendagen. Beverley managed to buy Adessa soon after this and imported her to Canada. As a 3-year old, she became the first Gelders mare at a KWPN Keuring in North America to become Champion and score higher than the dressage horses that were shown.



Adessa (Koss x Ahoy x Hoogheid)



On March 4<sup>th</sup> 2009, 'De Paardenkrant' published an article about Adessa's success at the Keuring. They also explained how Beverley came to buy Adessa and what her future plans with her were. How interesting is it to follow up on this article now, a little over 10 years later, and find out what actually happened with Adessa and her passionate owner in Ontario, Canada?

*So how did Beverley get involved with the Gelders horses in the first place? And how did she come to know about and buy Adessa?*

Beverley's love for the Gelders horse started when she boarded a horse close to where she lived in Peterborough, Ontario. This farm was called Camelot Equestrian Centre and the owner offered board and riding lessons and also stood a half Gelders breeding stallion. This stallion was 'Immigrant'. "He was such an impressive stallion, with lots of bone and substance, and light, springy movement... not something we were used to seeing with mostly Thoroughbreds being used to produce sport horses in those days," Beverley tells me. "I had a Trakehner mare back then, who I bred to him, which gave me a filly. Most of Immigrant's offspring didn't get registered, but I did want to have my foal papered. I decided to do some research into his background and take the necessary steps to make this possible."



Immigrant (Emigrant x Dutch Lane 48 XX)

Beverley found out that Immigrant was a son of 'Emigrant'. This stallion was imported in 1964 by Jon Peters. "Jon expected to get him approved by The Canadian Hunter Improvement Society when he arrived in Canada. He had a firm belief in the quality of Emigrant and his bloodlines. Unfortunately, his plan didn't work out. At that time, a lot of Canadians were using draft horses and breeding them to Thoroughbreds, using the offspring for hunting and jumping. These crosses did get registered. Emigrant, being a full Gelders horse, probably wasn't a typical modern enough jumper type stallion for this. Due to the fact he was never approved, Emigrant wasn't used a lot for breeding."



Emigrant (Wodan x Graaf van Wittenstein x Reveil)

"A man named Ed Rothkrantz who had emigrated to Canada from Europe and who owned other warmblood stallions, did see Emigrant's quality. He realized that Emigrant, crossed on a Thoroughbred mare, could produce something special. Immigrant was the result of this cross. Eventually Immigrant was sold to Camelot Equestrian Centre. All of it was quite a disappointing story for Gelders breeding though, since Emigrant had such nice original Gelders bloodlines that were never fully utilized," Beverley tells.

"I started doing more research on the Gelders horses by reading and asking questions on the North American internet forum 'The Chronicle of the Horse'," Beverley continues. "This is how I got in touch with other Gelders horse enthusiasts. Anton van Lijssel, although based in The Netherlands, was one of them. He told me about the history of the Gelders bloodlines. He also explained how the Gelders horse was slowly disappearing in The Netherlands.



Deutzia (Zichem x Wachtmeester x Orlando)

He shared his web page 'www.gelderlanderhorse.nl' with us and when I saw some of the horses depicted there, I totally fell for this type. I remember a mare named 'Deutzia', by Zichem... she especially made an impression on me."

Beverley realized what a pity it was that Gelders stallions like Emigrant didn't get a chance to pass on their unique bloodlines, because they were only used for general breeding purposes and mostly on grade or Thoroughbred mares. "These nice Gelders bloodlines, which brought the typical bone, substance and good character would disappear if breeders never purposely tried to breed Gelders anymore and just kept refining. Besides their looks, I was also convinced of their quality and really wanted to help maintain the Gelders horse."

Beverley dug deeper into the Gelders bloodlines and found out there were more Gelders stallions exported to North America, like Zoöloog (Gondelier x

Flaneur x Centurio). Although he was registered and approved as a Riding type stallion, he was a Gelders stallion in bloodlines. He actually was one of the best dressage stallions in North America. He didn't breed a lot but amongst the offspring



Zoöloog (Gondelier x Flaneur x Centurio)

he did have, were four International dressage horses and 14 children that also scored high in dressage.

With an index of 146, this made him number 17 on the KWPN dressage index list in 1998, which consisted of 181 stallions. Three of his International dressage offspring aren't even included in this calculation. Because of rules and regulations in effect in 2000, it wasn't possible to have Zoöloog offspring registered officially for a while. Eventually, he passed away without having had the chance to significantly add to the Gelders breeding direction.

When Beverley heard there was still frozen semen available from him, she decided she wanted to do something to help maintain his influence on the Gelders population. She purchased Zoöloog semen from Michelle Dorsey, who was the last person to own Zoöloog. Beverley tried breeding her half-Trakehner mare by Immigrant with it, but no pregnancy resulted. In order to make an even bigger contribution to the Gelders gene pool, Beverley decided she wanted to find a high quality Gelders mare for the Zoöloog semen.

"I monitored the KWPN results of the Keurings to keep myself updated on which were the best horses at that time," Beverley tells. "I visited the Netherlands for the first time with the goal of buying a mare, in 2004. I got help from Anton. He connected me with several breeders who had Gelders mares and foals for sale, which I visited. I also saw some KWPN approved Gelders stallions on that trip." Beverley remembers visiting Ria Hekkert, who is part of a family of well-known Gelders breeders. "Ria gave me a warm welcome and delicious soup! But I didn't buy a mare from her, since the mare I liked most wasn't for sale." Eventually

Beverley returned home without a horse. She kept closely monitoring any news about the Gelders horses and waited for the right opportunity to come along.

In 2005, Beverley looked at the results of the Keuring at the 'KWPN Paardendagen' in Ermelo. "There I saw Adessa was the highest scoring filly. I looked up pictures of her on the website of Jacob Melissen. She was gorgeous! Shortly after that, I found on another website, that a foal named 'Adessa' was for sale. I couldn't believe it... could this really be the Champion filly?! I thought it must be a different foal with the same name... But of course, if it was the Champion filly, I wanted to see if I could buy her. I immediately emailed Anton to find out more. It turned out, it was her indeed and she was still for sale!" There was also someone else seriously interested in Adessa though. "Apparently that breeder was planning on using her to produce dressage horses. When Adessa's breeder Ien Verhagen heard what my plans for her were, she decided to sell her to me... for this I was immensely grateful!"

After Adessa was weaned, Beverley sent her to stay with a good friend in Germany, where she could be turned out on a pasture with other youngsters until she was sixteen months old and could be x-rayed and transported to Canada. Adessa went into quarantine at Oak Crest Farms, the barn of Belinda Trussell. "After that, she moved to my farm. We started to build our relationship which was pretty uneven from the get-go. Adessa is a real 'Alpha Mare', and although she is never mean, she is very proud with an air of nobility. I guess you could say she is the queen and I am her servant, or better: 'master and slave'," says Beverley with a smile.



Gelders Horses of North America © LWVS 2019

Beverley allowed Adessa to just be a young horse and grow up. At age 3 she was bred to Idocus Crown (Equador x Zonneglans x Fresco), but that pregnancy slipped at 30 days. She went to the Keuring and got her Ster- and Keur Eligible predicates. "That was such an unforgettable experience, in part because Adessa was so wild, strong and fierce while being led in hand.



Adessa as a 3-year old at the Keuring

She spun and bolted, dragging me on my belly through the grass, leaving my white outfit covered with grass stains. Fortunately, there were handlers there that could help me with her. Recently, I came across pictures of Koss, where he was rearing like a wild horse at age 22. He looked just like his daughter at that Keuring at age 3, haha!" But Adessa scored high points that day and became the Champion. After this great success, Adessa went to be started under saddle so she could do the IBOP at age 4, which earned her the Keur predicate.

Knowing that Beverley wanted more than anything to produce a Zoöloog foal, and that the semen she had used on her Immigrant daughter had not worked, Michelle Dorsey decided to give Beverley 30 doses of the Zoöloog semen from different



Idocus Crown (Equador x Zonneglans x Fresco)

batches so several attempts could be made to get a pregnancy with Adessa. "I had initially planned to breed Adessa to Idocus that year but when there was a delay in receiving the Idocus semen, I decided to try the Zoöloog semen rather than missing a breeding cycle. Unfortunately, it did not catch. On a subsequent cycle Adessa was bred with the Idocus semen and became pregnant."

"At age 5 Adessa foaled and produced her first foal: a very beautiful filly named 'Finessa'," Beverley continues. "Finessa earned her Ster Predicate at the Keuring and later her Sport (Dressage) Predicate and is now owned by an amateur dressage rider who is aiming to show her at the FEI level. After Finessa was born I tried breeding with the Zoöloog semen again. In spite of numerous attempts and having a theriogenologist managing the breeding, a pregnancy was not obtained." Adessa remained open that year.



Finessa by Idocus Crown

"Michelle got two pregnancies from the Zoöloog semen, so we could only assume that the semen that I obtained from her had been compromised at some point in the storage," Beverley continues. "This was very discouraging. It would seem that the semen would be best utilized using ISCI. But of course, this is very expensive. I was really sad, as producing a Zoöloog foal was the main reason I bought Adessa in the first place. The whole process cost me a lot of money, and I couldn't afford to spend any more on this dream. I was forced to let it rest and breed her to a proven stallion the year after that."

The following year Beverley bred Adessa to Paganini Crown (Havidoff x Statuar x Galopin), on the recommendation of Scot Tolman, a well-known KWPN NA breeder, and the owner of Shooting Star Farm. "Adessa indeed gave me two good foals by Paganini: a filly named Hanna-Dessa in 2013 and a colt the year after, which I named Ivy League. The Paganini blood matched well with Adessa, giving me nice correct foals with good bone and



Paganini Crown (Havidoff x Statuar x Galopin)

substance and easy characters. Ivy League was purchased by a professional rider/trainer and has embarked on a show career. He has met with much success, earning many First-place ribbons in dressage."

After Ivy League was born, Beverley decided to breed Adessa to Special D (Metall x Zandigo x Ufarno). "He was suggested to me by KWPN Inspector- and Judge Bart Henstra. Bart told me that there were nice Special D foals born out of Gelders mares in The Netherlands. I liked the stallion in type and the Ferro bloodlines seemed very interesting for my breeding goals. This combination gave me Jaya-Dessa, one of the sweetest horses I have met in my life. I will never sell her, she is just so genuinely goodhearted."



Special D (Metall x Zandigo x Ufarno)



Jaya- Dessa by Special D



Beverley waited for the breeding season of 2015 and got Adessa in foal to Paganini Crown again. This brought her Lennox. "Lennox was tall, dark and handsome, coltish and somewhat cheeky. He could move very well and was rated highly at the Keuring." After Lennox, Beverley decided to try a more modern dressage stallion, but still stayed with the Ferro bloodlines. "As passionate as I am about the Gelders horses, I still need to eat and feed the horses too. So I decided to

'breed for the market' that year, meaning breeding to a popular dressage stallion.



Franklin (Ampère x Ferro x Flemmingh)

Especially after the disappointment with the Zoöloog semen, I financially needed to breed a horse for a wider market." She bred Adessa to Franklin (Ampère x Ferro x Flemmingh). "He was still young and just became available in North America. But as a 'Helgstrand stallion', he was already very popular, and I knew Adessa matched well with the Ferro blood," Beverley explains.

The first foal was the bay Mira-Dessa. "Probably the prettiest foal I bred out of Adessa until now. She has such a pretty face and a very sweet character. She isn't as large framed and big boned as her mother and siblings. But she is very correct and has nice substance. She is two now, and I have offered her for sale."



Mira- Dessa by Franklin



GELDERS HORSES OF NORTH AMERICA © LVWS 2019

"After Mira, I bred Adessa to Franklin again," Beverley continues. "This breeding produced Nora-Dessa. She is something else... She is stunning! Tall, with big expressive and very powerful movement, a beautiful face and lengthy arched neck... she is just like Adessa: Gelders but more modern. She has more of Adessa's character too, very noble and self-assured. I think she may be my best foal ever."



Nora- Dessa by Franklin



Gelders Horses of North America © LVWS 2019

For this coming year, Adessa is in foal to Special D again. "I hope this combination gives me another beautiful and sweet horse like Jaya," Beverley says. "Jaya is backed to ride and turned out to be the perfect family horse and very amateur friendly. She is like a huge pet: always happy to see you, loves cuddles and attention. Besides that, she loves to work and really respects her rider and handler. Unlike her mother, she doesn't think that bringing food is the only thing people are good for, haha! Jaya is exactly the type I want to breed and wish my buyers to have as well. I believe every average animal loving amateur would be very happy with a horse like Jaya."

*So how is Beverley looking back on her years of breeding Gelders horses with Adessa?*

"It's been quite a challenge to find stallions in North America that could produce the Gelders type and bloodlines, to breed Adessa to," Beverley explains. "As you know, my plan was to breed her to Zoöloog. Because that didn't work out, I had to find alternatives. As far as I knew, the only other 'real Gelders' stallion was Ijsselmeer. He was never available to me because he is in California and not in a location from which fresh semen export to Canada can be easily arranged, and

frozen semen from Ijsselmeer was never available.” Olivier (Idocus x Porter) was also considered, but he was in the USA as well and not readily accessible.



Jaya- Dessa by Special D

my understanding that a solid character like that was something the Gelders horses were known for. I wanted to make sure, as much as one can, to pick a stallion that is known for producing good character. Not because Adessa is mean in any way, but she’s not so much a pet, and being like a pet is a quality that appeals to the amateur market. I think I did that quite well, since almost all of Adessa’s children are quite easygoing, friendly and very work-willing.”

“Now that I am getting older, I have to consider retiring in a few years,” Beverley continues. “That means I might keep one or two horses for myself, but eventually, I will not breed anymore. Handling horses and raising foals can be dangerous, and the times I’ve gotten hurt have always been with the youngsters. I’m getting worried that I could get seriously hurt and perhaps be out of commission for a while. I run this business mostly by



Mira- Dessa and Nora- Dessa by Franklin

myself, so that would be quite problematic. I think it's just not realistic and safe to keep going on like this for many more years."

Adessa is only 14 years old, so she can probably produce quite a few more offspring. "Given this, I have decided to try to sell her. I put her up for sale a while ago but she hasn't sold yet, and hasn't attracted a lot of interest. This may be because most people in North America still are not familiar enough with the Gelders bloodlines: just like back in the days with Emigrant, Immigrant and Zoöloog. Maybe people also don't realize that they can be very good sport horses. You can breed amazing sport horses with them for many disciplines as well."

"For many years I have been the only person with a Gelders horse at the Keurings," Beverley continues. "That's why I think it's good that this project has been taken on by you, Liz... to give the Gelders horses the attention they deserve and to shine a spotlight on the people in North America who do breed and know the type. Maybe, if more people see the quality and value of Gelders horses, Adessa might find a good new owner as well."



*October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019. This story was written by Liesbeth van Woerden- Schotanus for project 'Gelders Horses of North America', with the cooperation of Beverley Hilton of Hilton Hall Sporthorses. For questions or more information, please contact: [Lvws80@gmail.com](mailto:Lvws80@gmail.com)/ +1-480-289-1012. This story was sponsored by KWPN NA. Do you want to sponsor this project too? Please donate through Facebook: [Project Gelders Horses of North America](#).*