

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!

STACEE COLLIER DRESSAGE, RENO, NEVADA

DÉJÀ VU (IJSELMEER X RUBINSTEIN X VOSMAER) AND KAPIOLANI (UB40 X RUBINSTEIN X VOSMAER)

SEPTEMBER 29, 2019

The last weekend of September, I went on my way to Reno. It was snowing and quite cold, but what a gorgeous area this is. When I arrived at Stacee's place, I quickly recognized Deja's face. Can't be missed, with all the chrome! When I walked up closer to her stable, I saw she actually has two blue eyes. "Yes, she does, she really stands out with these eyes!" Stacee says. Deja introduces herself to me by hanging her head out of her stable and sniffing me. "She's very social and loves attention," Stacee tells me.



While she gets Deja out of her stable, I am in awe of how big she is. She easily measures around 17.2 hands, with a huge chest. "Yes, I know, she is a tank! She is much bigger in real life than she looks on pictures and video. People are always really impressed at

shows, when they see her. They ask me what breed she is a lot too, and when she starts to move, you see them getting a surprised look often. I figure they don't expect a big horse like her being so light footed and having such expressive movement." I am super curious of course, to see her move. Deja is allowed to move free in the arena. Which makes it quite clear to me what she's made of: such a powerful awesome mare! With a calm demeanor over her; she doesn't go crazy.



How did Stacee get involved with the Gelders horses and how she got a hold of Deja?



"When I was 18, I started working for Jeff Moore at Osierlea," Stacee tells. Jeff Moore imported and bred Gelders horses. He had Taxateur (Obelisk x Commandant x Sirius), Rubinstein (Lorenz x Allasch x Ortler) and Vosmaer (Formateur x Epigoon x Simon Bolivar). Rubinstein was a Holsteiner but approved by the KWPN. Jeff used him for his breeding program with Gelders mares. "I rode and competed a Vosmaer son, bred by Jeff," Stacee continues. "His name was Hayden and I loved his type and mind. I knew his sire Vosmaer was at Osierlea too; Jeff had ridden him but didn't compete with him. One day he was back somewhere in the pasture and Jeff wasn't in, so I just sneaked up to the pasture and got Vosmaer out. I was bald and brave back then haha!" Stacee started riding Vosmaer. "Vosmaer was an impressive guy, although he wasn't very tall, like only 16 hands. But his neck and chest were huge, so he looked much taller. Taxateur

and Rubinstein could be ridden by everyone, even a kid. But not Vosmaer, he was less easygoing and more particular in who he liked. To me he was great, we really had a good connection and were quite successful in competing dressage. I took him everywhere so by doing that he got more easygoing as well."



Stacee with Vosmaer (Formateur x Epigoon)

Stacee moved back home to Reno after a couple of years working at Osierlea. She needed to think about her future. "I didn't know what I wanted and what would suit me. Would I pursue a career in working with horses or not? It's an expensive life and you need sponsors to really be successful in any field of the horse-business. I was in doubt if I had the mind that's needed for professionally riding and training, buying and selling. I got attached to the horses I had been training and it upset me when they were sold. So yeah... I had to think about that."

"I asked Jeff if I could bring Vosmaer home to Reno with me," Stacee continues.



"But the possibilities to compete up here are much less and Jeff wanted him to keep competing on a regular basis. That's when Chelsey Sibley started riding him, which went really well too. Vosmaer got easier with the years. He was gelded, I think that helped too. Eventually, when he was 28 years old, he came and retire with me. He could go outside whenever he wanted. One day, when he was 30 years old, he just couldn't get up anymore.

I had the vet come to put him down. That was sad, but he reached a nice age and had a nice life. I loved him, and still keep his last front shoes in the window of my barn."

Stacee did decide to get into the horse-business and she started 'Stacee Collier Dressage'. "I wanted a horse for myself, and preferably a Gelders horse. I lost my heart on them since I first rode Vosmaer's son Hayden, then Vosmaer himself and many other Gelders horses at Jeff's. That type, so impressive, but yet so athletic, and a real workers' mind..."

"I knew Deborah Harrison at Lio Lomas Dutch Warmbloods was breeding with Gelders mares too," Stacee continues. "Many of them also came from lines that Jeff and his partner Liz Searle had imported. I saved up money to be able to buy a good Gelders horse, that would stay with me forever, I contacted Deborah and we arranged a visit." When Stacee arrived at Deborah's, she showed her the Gelders horses she had available. "I hoped to find direct offspring of Vosmaer, but Deborah had bred many of her mares to her stallion Ijsselmeer (Vosmaer x Taxateur). She showed me them as well. Déjà Vu stood out immediately with her big white face and blue eyes. She was only a yearling then, but compared to the



Stacee showing Deja in 2012 (picture by Tamara)

others, she was huge! As soon as she started to trot, I was sold. 'I'll take her!', I exclaimed. How could I not? She was exactly what I was looking for and looked a lot like Vosmaer. Well, besides her size then!"

Stacee brought Deja home as a two-year old and slowly has been training Deja up to Grand Prix dressage. "Because I have always

been training horses for clients, besides being an instructor, Deja's training came last on my list for a long time. That's the main reason I took it quite slow with her training. But that's fine, we have time. For the coming season I plan on competing her more but it's not very easy to compete in this region. Everything is quite far of a drive, with lots of mountains and bad weather in the fall and winter."

I ask Stacee if she has plans to ever breed with Deja. "No, I don't have any ambition to breed. I don't think it's something I'd like doing and also I am not into the bloodlines and wouldn't know what to breed her to." She also has never been to Keurings with Deja. "No, I haven't. Deja is KWPN registered, but as a Dressage horse. I do know she is actually Gelders, so I probably should bring her to a Keuring as such. The thing is, the Keurings at DG Bar Ranch are probably the closest to me. That would still be over a five-hour drive. And they are always planned around the same time that a big show is held here, where I really want to go, since there are already so little shows held in this area. All of that are basically the reasons I never went to any Keurings with her," Stacee explains. "The predicates don't really matter to me anyway, since I don't want to breed her and



I will never sell her. The only thing I could imagine, since her bloodlines are so special, is that I'd get embryos from her. But only if that's not harmful to her, doesn't cost me anything and is not interfering with my training."



After taking pictures of Deja, Stacee shows me her half- sister Kapiolani. She is by UB40, who is by Olivi (Jazz x Aktion) x Michelangelo (who is a Thoroughbred x Trakehner cross) x Farn) out of the same dam as Deja, Ualani by Rubinstein x Vosmaer, bred by Debby at Lio Lomas. 'Kappi' is allowed to run free in the arena as well, which is pretty amazing. She is such an impressive mover!

"Kappi is now mine, I bought her from a client," Stacee says. "She is super fancy and much more sensitive and modern than Deja. But still a very sweet girl. I take it easy with her, let her grow out a bit more. I am superlucky to have her! I will keep her as the successor of Deja."



How is Stacee's view on Gelders horses now, looking back on the years that have passed?

"Looking back, I'd probably won't choose a big horse like Deja again. For what I want to achieve with her, which is dressage at the highest levels, it would just be easier if she would have less substance to do certain dressage exercises on this high level. But, of all the horses I've ridden, I still like the mind of the Gelders horses best. I especially like the way the Gelders horses let tension flow out so easily. In general, of course. Like Deja: she can spook on a hack, but never goes nuts and easily recovers. Deja is just such an amazing horse, there's no horse like her. I let young kids ride her, to let them feel passage and piaffe, like Jeff let me experience this on his horses when I just came to work for him. How special is that? I can't imagine doing that on the average modern dressage horses nowadays."



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