

KWPN-NA Dressage Breeder of the Year 2023

Meet Jackie Ahl- Eckhaus, the 2023 KWPN-NA Dressage Breeder of the Year. Jackie has an extensive list with breeding and riding accomplishments behind her name: from countless 1st premium foals and Top Ten placings at Keurings, to being ranked 7th and 8th in the USDF breeder ranking, from being awarded bronze level USDF Breeder, competing at the Nationals multiple times, having bred the highest placed US Bred horse in the 4 -year-old National YH Finals to placing 26th in the USEF dressage breeder ranking, which consists of over 400 breeders... and more. Time for an interview with this inspirational breeder and successful dressage rider.

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The breeding bug

Jackie was born and raised in California and has been a Dutch Warmblood dressage breeder for over 30 years. Her passion for horses was influenced by her father, who's love of horses she inherited. "I rode my older sister's pony from the time I was three years old. I received my very own pony when I was 7 years old on Mother's Day," Jackie tells. "My father bred quarter horses. Dad would wake us up early mornings to see who arrived. We would spend the weeks ahead watching the new foals from learning to walk around on wobbly legs, get up and down, nursing, to eating hay, galloping around and playing with us. We learned to handle them and care for them. It was a wonderful time growing up with the foals."

At 14 years of age, Jackie took her gymkhana quarter horse mare for dressage lessons. "But she was too hot and not suitable for dressage or jumping. She had plenty of talent but preferred gymkhana. I bred her to an Arabian for a 1/2 Arab event prospect. After some training and shows I sold him for a small profit. That's how the breeding bug began."

Foundation mare

Jackie's Dutch breeding started with the Thoroughbred mare Getaway Road by Kennedy Road xx. "She had six foals, three of which were 1st premium. Two of them were Top Ten. I could see that the trend was improving within the KWPN- NA so I sold her. With the help of Janko van de Lageweg, I purchased Lumera (Flemmingh x Ahorn) in 2003. She had seven foals that were all 1st premium. Her daughter Ember MVS by Westpoint had five foals, of which four 1st premium, one not shown yet." Jackie also owns a mare in the Netherlands, Indy Obertje (Apache x San Remo). "Indy

Obertje had six foals of which one was presented at the Keuring. She received 1st premium and went to the National Mare Championships.”



Lumara (Flemmingh x Ahorn)

“I would say Lumara (Flemmingh x Ahorn) is my foundation mare,” Jackie continues. “She got her keur, sport dressage, preferent and Prestatie predicates. Her seven foals were all 1st premium and four of them placed in the Keuring Top 10’s. One filly registered with the Oldenburg and was Foal of Distinction there. Five of these foals are now FEI horses, of which two Grand Prix to date... Lumara had an amazing disposition and was a wonderful mother to her foals. Her Daughter Ember has followed suit with her own list of first premium and Top 10 foals.”

The start of Mountain View Sporthorses

Jackie chose the Dutch Warmblood registry after she met the well-known Dutch Warmblood breeder and trainer Willy Arts. “I met Willy Arts at a clinic in 1993, where I was riding a Thoroughbred mare off the track,” Jackie explains. “That was Getaway Road. Willy encouraged me to bring her to DG Bar Ranch. He had me trot her up and back right out of the trailer and said: ‘You need to take her to the KWPN-NA Keuring.’ They were accepting and approving Thoroughbred mares in their registry at that time. I had no idea what a keuring was back then, but I went. Willy was right, because she became 2nd in the Nation. We bred her to Wanroij shortly after which produced Madrigal, who was a 1st premium foal, and 2nd in the Nation at 3-years-old. That was the start of breeding Dutch Warmbloods at Mountain View Sport Horses. Madrigal competed through I-2. I dedicated years to riding at DG Bar, working with Willy, and absorbing knowledge on both breeding Dutch Warm bloods and advancing in dressage.”



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Kitalis MVS (Vitalis x Westpoint) Highest placed US-bred horse in the 4-Year-Old division.

Ride with a smile

Breeding good riding horses that you want to see and ride every day is the most important goal at Mountain View Sporthorses. “My goal is to breed a horse that is exciting to ride because they make you smile. A horse must be cooperative, and levelheaded. Preferably no drama. Amateur friendly and nice enough to compete with the professionals. A broodmare must have good conformation, good movement with three correct gaits and good use of the hind leg. You want her foals capable of moving up the levels. Sound of mind and body, built for longevity with a kind eye. It's nice if they have some special talents as well. Not an easy recipe.”

“To be successful in breeding, it's important to research, observe and inquire. Find the best mare you can afford. Don't breed your mare because she was trouble to ride or had lameness issues. There's a big chance these issues will be passed on to her offspring.”

Jackie only rides horses that she bred herself. Her breeding goal clearly seems to have been reached with their accomplishments at National level. “I have bred five dressage horses that have qualified for the Young Horse FEI National Championship. With a couple of them returning more than once - two of them also qualified for the FEI Festival of Champions. I went on a total of eight trips to National Championships with my home bred horses. Pretty special feeling.”

The best Dutch bloodlines

Replying to the question if she has a special preference for certain Dutch bloodlines, Jackie answers: “I appreciated the Flemmingh influence in Lumara's foals. They have all been good movers. Trainable



Wisdom MVS by Farrington x Flemmingh

to the FEI Levels and strong. Wisdom MVS, by Farrington out of Lumara, was the first horse I trained up to Grand Prix. This one was definitely special. He was versatile enough that I could ride him in the mountains or ride him on the beach. I could give a lesson on him, and he would also pack a beginner. That is the best of the best to have a horse like that. Having a horse like Wisdom MVS embodies the pinnacle of the versatility and reliability of the KWPN breed.”

“I also have an Apache x San Remo broodmare in Holland, Indy- Obertje,” Jackie continues. “The Apache influence comes with a good hind leg in all of her foals. She has had six very correct good moving foals. Her 3-year-old by Expression was invited to the National Mare Championships in Holland Last August. She finished in the Top 10. I like to try to find strong points in the stallions that will add to my mare's chance of making a good prospect. I also have used young and upcoming stallions. It's very exciting when you have a foal, and the stallion goes on to win a big event the year your foal is born. That happened with Westpoint when he won the Verden Championships as a 6-year-old and Ember was born. Same with Kjento winning the Verden Championships the year my Kjento was born.”



Newsman MVS (Desperado out of Indy- Obertje by Apache)

Breeding advice

“Breeding is not for the faint of heart. In most cases it seems so easy, and things just line up. But when you get that problem during delivery or a loss of a foal before or after it can be very traumatic as well as expensive. Some foalings are smooth and easy, and others may require emergency veterinary care. That is a stress on you as well as your pocketbook. If you raise and ride them yourself and lose a mare or a riding horse that you bred it never goes away. I think of my lost horses every day.”

“Enter your mare in a Keuring. You will get knowledgeable feedback on her conformation and movement. At the Keuring they willingly share breeding advice for your mare as well.”

“To be successful in breeding, it's important to research, observe and inquire,” Jackie continues. “Find the best mare you can afford. Don't breed your mare because she was trouble to ride or had lameness issues. There's a big chance these issues will be passed on to her offspring. Enter your mare in a Keuring. You will get knowledgeable feedback on her conformation and movement. At the Keuring they willingly share breeding advice for your mare as well. Read, watch and ask breeders many questions. Research stallions and examine their progeny. Learn what they produce and with what mare lines they are producing competitive horses. Identify the qualities in your horse that you would like to pass on and what you would like to strengthen. Look for a stallion that would complement your mare and add to her weaknesses. Attend Keurings and watch all the classes. There will be commentary from the judges on most of them. Take notes. If you are breeding dressage horses, attend some dressage shows. Same if you are breeding jumpers. Study successful examples and engage with riders and breeders. After all this, come up with an outline on how you plan to achieve what you would like to produce.”

The market in North America

“I find in the USA many people still think they need to import a horse to find a good one. I think it's because you have a thousand horses in a matter of hours in Europe to look and try. The size of the US presents a tougher challenge due to travel to find a few horses within days. But over the past 30 years, breeders in North America have been able to breed to many of the top stallions from Europe with frozen semen. The mare quality has improved over the years with importing and breeding, so we have some super horses produced here. It's the shopping that's a challenge. What we also need more is younger people in the industry that are able to bring along the young prospects. It seems there are more young riders available in Europe. I have had lots of success over the years by bringing along a lot of my own youngsters but would like to ensure continued success by finding a successor to carry on the legacy of Mountain View Sport Horses.”

The future of Mountain View Sporthorses

Jackie is currently working on developing her home bred Jett MVS (Bretton Woods x Flemmingh) to Grand Prix. “We have currently met the requirements for the Nationals. Furthermore, I will continue breeding my mare in Holland and I plan to bring home one or two of her young ones to start in the show ring. I will study to find the best stallion for her in the coming year and with luck continue to breed competitive healthy horses in the future.”



Jett MVS (Bretton Woods x Flemmingh) qualified for the developing Grand Prix National Championships 2024