

# EQVALAN<sup>®</sup> GOLD

## Rider of the Month

*Once upon a time, Judy Dierks revelled in competing – and winning – at FEI level, remarking that novice tests started way too early in the morning! Now she has emerged as the Queen of the Young Horse set, with wins in two out of three Young Horse championships at Dressage with the Stars...*

“As I’ve got older I’ve become more adaptable,” says Judy, “I’ve had to...”

*But also it has been a major change in Australia – suddenly Young Horse classes are a Big Thing? “There is far more prestige in the Young Horse classes now, and because of the number of quality horses being bred now, and the number of imported horses, it has become a good competitive class to be in. I enjoy it.”*

*Do you prepare any differently for Young Horse classes or are they just dressage horses that happen to be young?*

“They are just my dressage horses that happen to be young, because a young horse, ultimately you want it to go on and be a good dressage horse. I think it should be the same. It is much easier to adapt a horse that has been trained with dressage in view, and then allow it much more openness and freedom of movement in the Young Horse class. That’s much easier than running them around too long in that open frame and then trying to adapt them back to a more disciplined dressage horse that has to deal with markers.”

*Your two had done their share of ordinary dressage tests before they went to the Young Horse Champs?*

“Carina hasn’t competed all that much, but DiCaprio certainly has.”

*So when you come to a Young Horse class you just open them up a little more?*

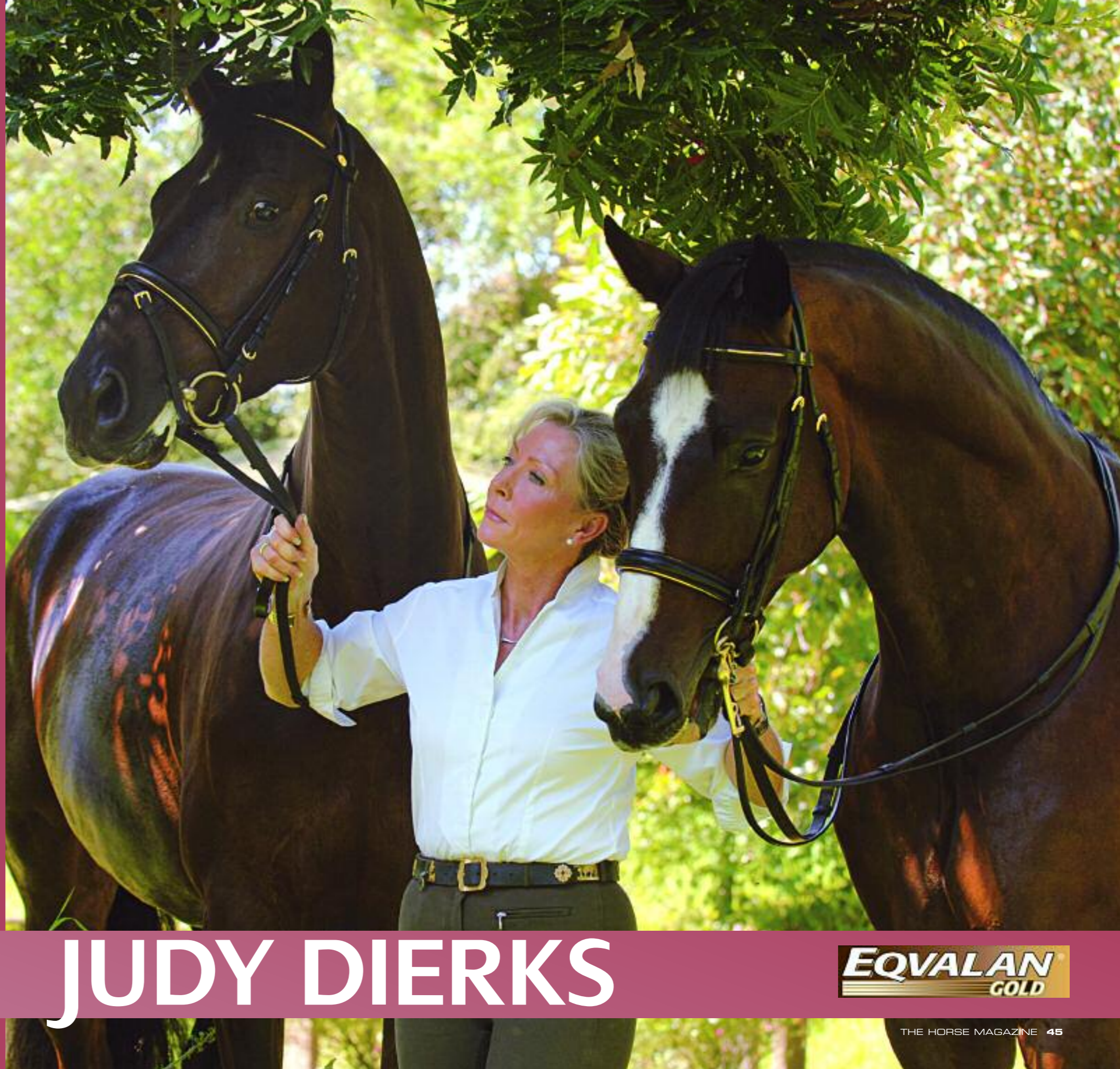
“Flowing, smoother – really trying to open up their paces. Because it is not so sharp with so many transitions, the whole thing flows and that makes it easier.”

*Back to your happy days?*

“It’s good to be able to show them off like that – it is basically showing off their paces, and you have a bit more time to do so because it is not so regimented by so many precise immediate transitions at markers. I find it easier to adjust to that.”

*And how do you feel about the prospect of taking your two winners to the World Young Horse Championships in Verden in August of this year?*

“For me it is a really good opportunity – I’m hoping to train there, observe there. I’m going to PSI, and use their facilities. They’ve got a racetrack right outside with super surface, beautiful outdoor arenas – I’m very lucky because it will be more of a training trip, including a couple of competitions, to either watch or compete at. I have been to Europe on an Australian World Championships team, and that is the ultimate, but that is a very responsible position, and there is usually quite a lot of tension about who actually gets to start, but this time there will be less pressure. We are just doing the trip to enjoy the two young horses – hopefully they do well at the championships but whatever happens it will be a good training tour for them. I hope that at PSI they will be able to help with a little work on piaffe in hand in their indoor school. We are just going to use it as a pleasure trip – look at all the nice horses while we are there and have a good time without too much stress.”



# JUDY DIERKS

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