

# GENEVIÈVE MEGRET

## GUIDED BY PASSION

INTERVIEW JESSICA RODRIGUES PHOTO J. RODRIGUES / R&B PRESSE

Normandy-based owner and breeder Geneviève Mégret plays a vital role in the success of Pénélope Leprévost, currently the world's best female rider. After spending 25 years as a doctor, she decided to give up her profession and devote herself entirely to her passion, with the support of her husband and daughter.

### Where did your desire to become an owner of high-level horses come from?

I used to be a competitive rider, and I didn't start entrusting my horses to other people until I stopped competing. It was a natural progression for me, though. My work with very high-level horses began when I bought Nayana when she was three years old in 2004. It didn't take long for her to prove that she was different from the others, although it wasn't until Eric Levallois started riding her when she was eight that she really came into her own. When Pénélope started riding her, we wanted to take it even further and become more involved in the high-level competitions.

### Nayana's story is quite incredible. Can you tell us about her?

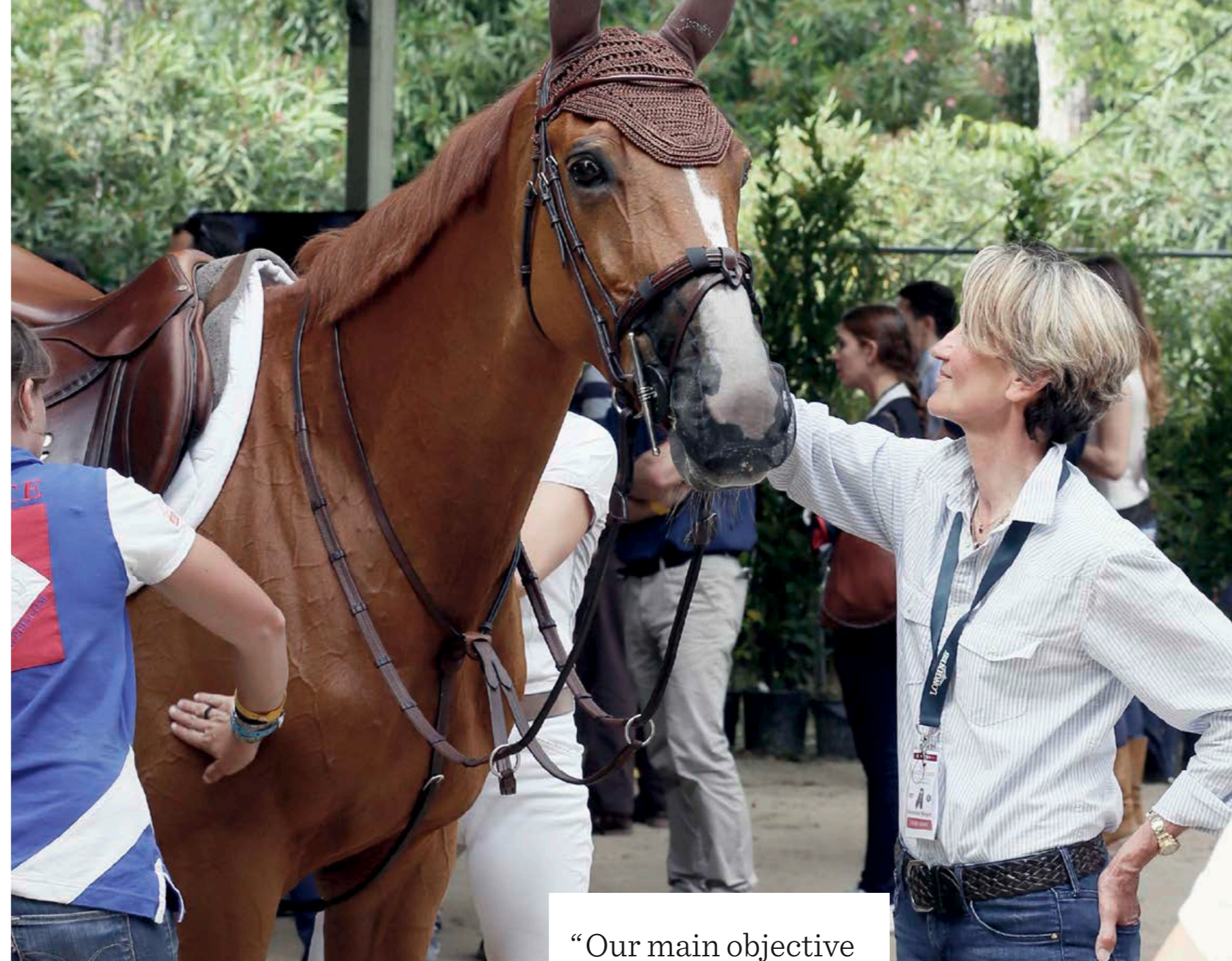
Our daughter Elise used to play the lottery when she was younger, and once, she was lucky enough to win. She decided to spend her winnings to buy a filly, La Perouse, who was Nayana's sister. We became friendly with her breeder, Jacques Féron, who really loves his work, and started visiting him regularly. He knew how much we liked Elise's mare, which performed well in 1m45 classes, and he recommended that we buy Nayana. We have never looked back: she's a very special horse which is very dear to our hearts.

### The Haras de Clarbec is primarily a breeding farm: could you give us a brief description of it?

The Haras de Clarbec has several functions. Breeding: the foals we produce are either from broodmares or from competition mares by embryo transfer. Competitions, firstly with the young horses bought from elsewhere and trained at the farm, and secondly with our high-level horses. We are hoping to establish a succession of leading horses in order to retain a high standard for our competitive stables in the long run. Lastly, we have been developing the stud for the past two years with our sport stallions.

### How does it work when you buy a horse for Pénélope? Does she suggest it to you? Do you scout out a horse first?

Sometimes the initiative comes from our side—usually from Elise, who goes to a lot of competitions and has a keen eye—and sometimes it comes from Pénélope. Often, we are contacted directly as well, because a lot of people know that we are always on the lookout for top horses. However it comes about, we always discuss each purchase together and come to a joint decision beforehand.



“Our main objective has always been to take each horse to the highest level possible, while respecting its physical and mental well-being”

### When you buy a mare, do you already have plans to use it for breeding after its sports career?

Our primary focus when buying a mare is her sports career. At the moment, we have some very successful high-level mares in our stables with which we have not yet carried out any embryo transfers. High-level training is so demanding and complicated that we find it very hard to tackle other things at the same time. Nevertheless, when Dame Blanche was injured before the WEG, we took the opportunity to do a transfer with Armitages Boy.

### Is there a breed or a lineage for which you have a particular preference or affinity, or are you more like Hugo Simon, who said that a good horse can be of any breed, sex and color?

I definitely think that a good horse is a good horse regardless of its background; quality is the driving force behind our choice of

respecting its physical and mental well-being. Naturally, there are iconic competitions that we dream about winning, like the Aachen Grand Prix and indoor events such as Paris and Geneva. Winning an Olympic medal would obviously bring us a great deal of pride and happiness.

### As an owner, what is your view of the international circuit and the way it has developed over the past few years?

The sport has changed a lot over the past years. We receive more media coverage, and we have more sponsors to raise the sport's profile. But the increase in the number of circuits has made managing horses' careers more difficult—there's a risk of asking too much of them. We strive to preserve the horses and Pénélope shares this attitude. I really like the format of the Nations Cup. I think that team competitions are the best ones, so I believe that we should continue to give them priority. —

horses and our breeding practices. As far as possible, we try to produce and buy fast, modern horses with Thoroughbred influences that have a great mindset. The psychological aspect is essential to be successful today. The more I progress, the more I believe that a horse's mentality is the most important quality to look for.

### What are your stables' objectives? Which title or Grand Prix would you most like to see Pénélope win?

Our main objective has always been to take each horse to the highest level possible, while

### MRS. JANE CLARK NAMED AS JUMPING OWNERS CLUB OWNER OF THE YEAR 2013

Mrs Jane Clark, owner of the top ranked grey Belgium Warmblood mare Cella, has been named Owner of the Year for 2013.

Ridden by Great Britain's Ben Maher, Cella enjoyed a string of successes throughout 2013, including notable victories in the inaugural Global Champions Tour event in London and the Warsteiner Grand Prix during CHIO Aachen, and second place in the FEI European Championships in Herning, Denmark. The presentation of the award to Mrs. Jane Clark was made by HRH Princess Haya, President of the FEI, Mrs. Madeleine Winter-Schulze, representing the Jumping Owners Club, and Ben Maher, at the Stade d'Ornano during the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ 2014 in Normandy. Created by the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) in 2005 and supported by Rolex, the Jumping Owners Club is an exclusive organisation of international owners which works towards growing the popularity of the sport around the world. It is the only body which represents the views and opinions of the owners, and works closely alongside the FEI in building the profile and inclusiveness of Jumping.

Mrs. Jane Clark said, “Cella has been an amazing horse and, despite only being with Ben since 2012, she has enjoyed great success all over the world. We are extremely proud of her achievements and delighted that, as Owner of the Year, we are following in the footsteps of some great horses, including Hickstead and Big Star, who have won this award in previous years.

May I take this opportunity to thank all the support team who work so hard to prepare Cella for her competitions, without their dedication and focus, we would not be where we are today.”



From left to right: HRH Princess Haya, Mrs Jane Clark, Ben Maher and Mrs Madeleine Winter-Schulze, representing the Jumping Owners Club.

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