

OWNERS

BERNADETTE LEJEUNE OWNER AND BREEDER

Text **Pascal Renaudon**



The “Elevage du Tillard” is one of the most renowned horse-breeding farms in France. Indeed, how could anyone forget the “Olympic” *Viking du Tillard* (Hervé Godignon)? Hidden behind this stud name is Bernadette Lejeune, a horse-lover at heart, having chosen, despite market temptations, to retain a certain number of offspring for her own pleasure as the owner of high-level horses.

How long have you owned horses destined for international competitions?

When we bought our first broodmare, *Quanagra*, who was *Jalisco B's* half-sister (same dam), she was in foal. She had been covered by *Laudanum* and the foal did not survive. She was at the origin of the “du Tillard” stud name. Success was already in the making with her second offspring, *Viking du Tillard*, later to be ridden by Hervé Godignon at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. As novice breeders, we were extremely lucky! **What are the reasons and the origin of this passion?** I have always been fascinated by horses since my childhood. My father, an amateur rider, transmitted this love of horses to me when I was a teenager. This passion never dwindled and in turn, my daughter caught the virus.

Between *Viking du Tillard* and *Mic Mac du Tillard*, how do you view the evolution of showjumping competitions?

The luxurious and glamorous showcase now offered by high-level sport, combined with celebrity events, have encouraged media coverage, which, although of course being positive, has perhaps distorted the overall image. In a sport often considered as “elitist” by the general public, this tends to place a blinder on the reality of the vocation, namely the necessary daily commitment required in terms of time and energy in order to have any hope of one day possibly attain the highest level. **How do you feel about**

horses which are sold for several million euros, sometimes even 10 times over, as well as the emergence on the market of certain countries that attempt to push up prices even further for high-level horses? I Generally believe that it is a godsend for the survival of the equine sector, particularly for breeding (though

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perhaps not for French riders themselves). The horse world has considerably evolved since the time of *Jappeloup* when horses were often bought off a farm in Normandy,

seen at the bottom of a field, hardly brushed or even broken in! The arrival of emerging countries brings new impetus to our sport with competition becoming tougher due to these new nations implementing all available means in an effort to catch up with the historically leading countries of the discipline. Different cultures are reunited around a same passion, and I find that enriching. **You are the breeder of *Mic Mac*, what is your motivation to keep the horse and not to sell her?** Like every breeder, it's a question that I've often asked myself, particularly before the Olympic Games when major transactions take place. *Mic Mac* was a filly that very quickly proved to have an exceptional ability, but was also rather moody and untameable with quite a personality of her own. At the age of 6, I sent her to Dietmar

Gugler in Germany with the aim “to try and do something”: he already had several “du Tillard” horses in his stables for training or for sale, and I had bought some “ready-to-use” horses from him for my own use.

Mic Mac, seemingly having been tamed, was sold on at the age of 8 to Georgina Bloomberg, already in possession of the stallion *Metropolitan* (originally named “*Made in Tillard*”) that she still owns and from which she has a few offspring in the US. The combination worked for a while with *Mic Mac* (renamed “*Midtown du Tillard*”), and then hit another snag, with *Mic Mac* reverting to her unmanageable attitude. At that time, I took *Mic Mac* back and I sent her to her trainer in Germany again where she started working with Angelica again. The first Grand Prix successes came along and



Mic Mac and Angelica were entered in a stage of the World Cup in Gothenburg on February 28th 2011. And we won! That evening, in Gothenburg, I said to myself that this time, we would experience this wonderful adventure to the end, that I would keep *Mic Mac* and bring her back to the stud as a broodmare in any event, as soon as her sports career was over. Grand Prix wins came one after another, until the disappointment of being unable to participate in the London Olympics for health reasons, despite having been selected. Then there was the magnificent bronze medal at the European Championships in Herning. She (Angelica) was the only woman to reach the podium out of the eleven riders. I am delighted that a young lady is riding *Mic Mac*. Without Angelica, *Mic Mac* would probably not be the exceptional mare that she has become, as she has always been very difficult and unpredictable.

This why I am keeping *Mic Mac*: as a mare I hope she will become a broodmare. Additionally, I am not sure that there are too many other riders who would like to try their hand at riding her ... —

At the time of going to press, we have just learned that Angelica Augustsson will be joining the Ashford Farm stables as of January 1st 2014.

JUMPING OWNERS CLUB SUPPORTED BY



The Jumping Owners Club with FEI extends a warm Welcome to Mrs Bernadette Lejeune who joined the club in August 2013.

After successful European Show-Jumping Championships in Herning the JOC is proud to congratulate its members: Mrs Georgina Forbes for the Individual Gold Medal of Castles Forbes, Myrtille Paulois & Roger-Yves Bost, Mrs Jane Clark for the Individual Silver Medal of Cella & Ben Maher, Mrs Madeleine Winter-Schulze for both the Team Silver Medal of Chiara 222 & Ludger Beerbaum and Team Bronze Medal of Gotha FRH & Henrik von Eckermann. Mrs Bernadette Lejeune for the Team Bronze Medal of *Mic Mac du Tillard* & Angelica Augustsson.