



# Triumpf Scores A Triumph At Fleur De Lis Classic

*Holly Shepherd guides the young horse to victory in the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby.*

Anne Lang

**WHEN TRIUMPF ARRIVED** at Holly Shepherd's barn in September of 2010 from the Netherlands, it didn't take the trainer long to realize she had an extra-special horse in her care.

The 6-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding had been on U.S. soil for less than a week when Shepherd decided to ride him in the USHJA National Hunter Classic at the Gallop In The Glen I Horse Show (Tenn.). There he bested 29 others to win the event, scoring several mid-90s from the judges in the process.

"He was pretty green then, and he still is," said Shepherd. "But he's an amazing hunter."

Triumpf proved Shepherd right once again on Oct. 30 at the Fleur de lis Classic in Bartonville, Texas, when he led a field of 28 to win the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby over a challenging course that included a chute, large bank, grob, path through a tree cluster, walk-through element, undulating terrain and plenty of options.

"This was his first time going on a real derby field," Shepherd said. Triumpf

won the handy round and was third in the first round. Second overall (and first-round winners) were Courtney Calca-gnini and Carson, owned by Kristen Blomstrom, who finished just 2 points behind Triumpf.

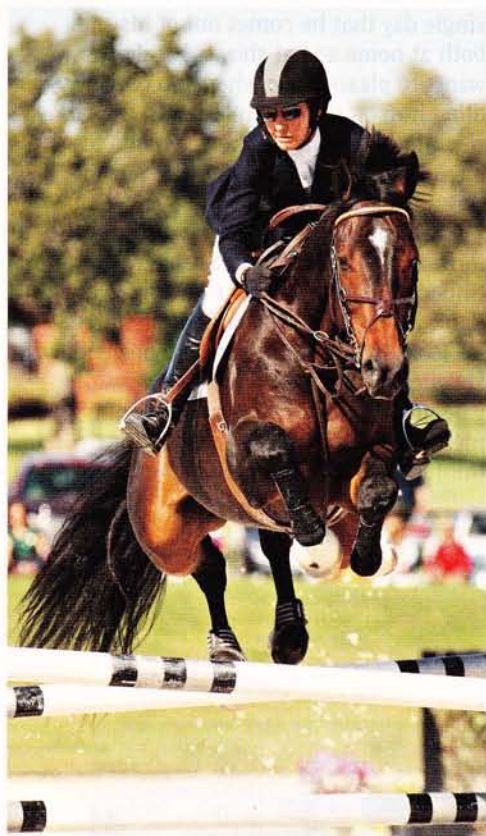
In both the classic and handy rounds, the final fence turned out to be the undoing of numerous entries, causing riders to miscalculate an optimum speed. "The jump rode on a half-step, downhill off the big bank," Shepherd said. "We were one of the few pairs who galloped to do that in three rather than



(David Mullinix Photography Photo)

Triumpf showed off his versatility by winning the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby at the Fleur de lis Classic and then putting in a clean first round in the \$25,000 Fleur de lis Classic Grand Prix with Holly Shepherd.





(David Mullinix Photography Photo)

Patty Stovel traveled all the way from Chester Springs, Pa., to Bartonville, Texas, to win the \$25,000 Fleur de lis Classic Grand Prix aboard Carigor Z.

four. You had to do some major riding to make that last jump look good."

Fence 2 in the handy round involved going down into a chute and jumping a wall with no standards. "It looked like a little bridge," Shepherd said, "about 6 feet wide. Only about half of the horses jumped it well. It didn't ride that great, and the uphill and downhill were pretty drastic. My horse was fantastic there, considering he really doesn't know how to do any of this."

Also in the handy round, the large bank again presented a challenge, this time after a trot fence—requiring horses to land and then immediately ascend the 6-foot hill. "That got ugly at times," observed Shepherd. "There really wasn't a good place to hand-gallop on the course, so I hand-galoped at the top of the bank. But I got a little faster than I'd planned, so I had to bend to that last jump going downhill off the bank."

Shepherd, who opted for nearly all of the high options, praised course designer and show manager Patrick Rodes

for his efforts. "It was a great course," she declared.

## ► A Versatile Talent

Shepherd, 42, acquired Triompf (Tangelo van de Zuuthoeve—Etriompf) from Stal Hendrix through agent Sean McCook. At the time, Triompf had only shown in the Netherlands for about a year, doing 1.15-meter and 1.20-meter jumper classes with a junior rider. After the horse's success at the hunter classic in Tennessee, Shepherd moved him up to the 1.25-meter and 1.35-meter jumper ranks at one more show that fall, then kept him home to prepare for the 2011 season.

"When we first got him, he was low in his front end and very slow," Shepherd recalled. "I'd have to gallop around the courses just to stay under the time allowed. We had to teach him to canter on more of a roll and not so low."

Still, Shepherd said Triompf displayed extraordinary talent, versatility and willingness. So she and his owners, mother and daughter Loretta and Sarah Patterson of Omaha, Neb., decided to try some hunter derbies as well as some grand prix.

Triompf rose to the occasion, and his record steadily improved. Last summer he placed third and fourth in two consecutive grand prix in Oklahoma. Then he pulled off a coup at Brownland Farm (Tenn.) in September, winning a hunter derby during the first week and nabbing a \$25,000 grand prix the following week at the same venue.

"It takes a very special horse to do either one of those events as well as 'T' does," Shepherd said. "To be able to do both well is a total fluke. I'm not sure

## \$25,000 FLEUR DE LIS CLASSIC GRAND PRIX

Argyle, Texas—Oct. 30

HORSE/RIDER	FAULTS	TIME	PURSE
1. Carigor Z/Patty Stovel	0-0	37.07	\$7,500
2. MTM Timon/Tracy Fenney	0-0	37.35	5,500
3. Seagull/Eugenio Garza	0-0	39.66	3,250
4. NKH Barbosa/ Christian Heineking	0-4	40.15	2,000
5. Alamo/Erin Davis	0-4	40.42	1,500
6. South Bound/ Martien Van Der Hoeven	0-4	41.44	1,250
7. Triompf/Holly Shepherd	0-4	42.62	1,000

21 horses competed.

that there's another horse in the country like him. It's a mental thing that gets a horse from that first ring to the second one, and they need to have a certain kind of brain. If a horse doesn't want to do both, they're going to let you know. But T is only 7, so I have to be careful that I don't do too much with him too fast."

**"It takes a very special horse to do either one of those events as well as 'T' does. To be able to do both well is a total fluke."**

—Holly Shepherd

The Fleur de lis Classic was the first time Triompf did both events in one day, with just a few hours off between the end of the derby and the start of the grand prix.

"I'd spent the past couple of weeks getting him really fit," Shepherd said. "Since it was just one day of showing,

\$25,000

## USHJA INTERNATIONAL HUNTER DERBY

Argyle, Texas—Oct. 30

Judges: Panel 1: Nancy Jones, Alice Griffin; Panel 2: Mike Lowry, Scott Hofstetter

HORSE/RIDER	1ST ROUND		2ND ROUND		TOTAL
	Score/ Height Option	Score/ Height Option	Score/Bonus/ Height Option	Score/Bonus/ Height Option	
1. Triompf/Holly Shepherd	83/4	82/4	84/9/3	85/9/3	366
2. Carson/Courtney Calcagnini	86/4	85/4	84/8/2	82/7/2	364
3. Alezio/Kelsie Brittan	82/0	83/0	82/7/0	82/6/0	342
4. Ostentacius/Kelley Farmer	74/2	74/2	85/8/0	84/8/0	337
5. Ovation/Courtney Calcagnini	77/3	82.5/3	74/6/2	78.5/7/2	335
6. Taken/Kelley Farmer	75/1	76.5/1	77/8/4	78/8/4	332.5
7. Shine/Liza Richardson	82.5/0	84/0	76/7/0	75/6/0	330.5
8. Right On/Ciara Murphy	78/1	78/1	78/6/1	79/6/1	329
9. Tell All/Peter Pletcher	84/4	81.5/4	65.5/7/4	60/5/4	319
10. Surprise/Kelley Farmer	81/4	80/4	66/7/4	63/6/4	315
11. Usher/Michael Wallace	79/0	79.5/0	65/5/0	64/7/0	300.5
12. Neander/Audrey Watkins	79/1	77.5/1	63/5/4	60/5/4	299.5

28 horses competed.





## HORSE SHOWS

we figured we could just do both and see how it turned out. And we had a lot of fun."

Of 21 entries in the first round of the grand prix, seven jumped clean, Triompf among them. However, Shepherd wasn't so sure he'd be fit to go back into the ring after he stumbled during schooling for the jump-off.

"He fell forward on his nose," she said, "so I climbed off to check him out. Even though he was fine, I changed my plan in the ring and didn't do the inside turns. I rode more conservatively, because he'd had a long day, and I didn't want to push him." The pair had a rail

in the jump-off and ended up seventh.

"He was just slow," Shepherd said. "This horse is learning how to gallop, but he hasn't quite figured out how to run. The jumpers down here are just really fast. Winning will be next to impossible for this horse, unless I do some major inside turns. I can do those, but he still jumps a little high and a little slow."

However, Shepherd doesn't spend a lot of time worrying; instead, she continues to marvel at Triompf's can-do attitude and capabilities.

"He's the most willing horse," she said. "He just doesn't care what's in front of him, although he gives 110 percent every

single day that he comes out of his stall, both at home and at shows. He always wants to please, even when you're handling him on the ground or with the farrier. Maybe one in 200 horses wants to please you all the time, and T is one of those.

"It's just amazing that he can perform as well as he does," Shepherd continued. "His body is super-soft, he's very light, and he looks like a Thoroughbred. He looks like a hunter in the jumper ring: He goes the same way, with no martingale, no spurs and practically no equipment. He goes in a slow twist in the hunters and a rubber pelham in the

## TIDBITS



- Patty Stovel came all the way from Chester Springs, Pa., to win the \$25,000 Fleur de lis Grand Prix aboard her own Carigor Z, a 10-year-old Zangersheide gelding who she imported from Argentina in 2004. In the seven-horse jump-off the pair was one of only two entries to go double clear, the other being runner-up Tracy Fenney and MTM Timon. "Tracy was very fast, and I thought: 'OK, now I just have to be faster!'" said Stovel, 54. "In September, at the HITS Grand Prix at Culpeper [Va.], Tracy was first and I was second, so 'Carlin' and I have been practicing."

- Lucas Porter, 14, and brother Wilton, 17, live just around the corner from Fleur de lis Farm. Their family's Sleepy P Ranch is "within hacking distance," said their mother Suzanne, who owns the ranch with husband B.G. Lucas was set to ride Coupe de Paris in the \$10,000 Fleur de lis Jumper Derby but fell off in an earlier round. Although he was uninjured, Lucas passed the ride on 12-year-old Holsteiner "Coupe" to Wilton, who won the class out of 32 entries.

The former grand prix horse has partnered with Lucas on a successful equitation career, and last summer he carried him to jumper ribbons at Spruce Meadows (Alberta) and in France, where the family's trainer, Katie Prudent, is based for part of each year. Coupe also showed in the jumpers with Suzanne and Wilton, although Wilton hadn't been on the horse for six months prior to his win at the Fleur de lis Classic.

- Peter Pletcher, 51, made his return to the saddle in the hunter derby after being laid up since mid-August with a spinal disk herniation. Given doctor's clearance just five days prior to the event, Pletcher, of Magnolia, Texas, used that time to reawaken his riding muscles. But he didn't take into account the particularly rugged demands of the derby field at Fleur de lis Farm.

"It was a lot more than I should have done for my first show back, I'm sure!" admitted Pletcher, who nonetheless



(David Mullinix Photography Photo)

After Lucas Porter had a fall, his brother Wilton stepped in to ride Coupe de Paris in the \$10,000 jumper derby—and claim the blue—at the Fleur de lis Classic.

finished second in the classic round aboard Susie Baker's Tell All. "I was so ready to ride and show, but I didn't really think about the fact that this derby is a different than a derby in a ring. You're going up and down banks and across ditches, and the footing's not real smooth. I really felt it in the turns. But it went as well as I could have expected for being my first show back. And everything still feels good."

- Porter and Ashley Trimble own the 30-acre Fleur de lis Farm, which they purchased in 2008. This was the Louisiana natives' third year of hosting the "specialty" horse show, which offers just four classes. They were inspired to develop the facility by their teenage equestrian daughters, Audrey and Camille.



## HORSE SHOWS



(David Mullinix Photography Photo)

Eugenio Garza rode El Milagro's Maximus to victory in the children's/adult jumper classic at the Fleur de lis Classic.

flew me back and forth to the shows."

Shepherd moved to California when she was 19 to train for two years with Susie Hutchison and Jimmy Williams. Following a subsequent stint running a

show stable in Houston, Texas, Shepherd returned to her Alabama roots in 1997 and established the 60-acre Accolade Farms. Shepherd said that in 2012 her barn will once again set up its winter base at the circuits in Jacksonville (Fla.) and Gulfport (Miss).

**ARGYLE, TX—OCT. 29-30.**

▲ **\$10,000 Jpr. Derby** - 1. Coupe De Paris, Sleepy P Ranch LLC; 2. NKH Carlo, NKH LLC; 3. Lochivar, M. Cyphert & A. Taylor. ▲ **Child./Adult Jpr. Classic** - 1. Maximus, El Milagro; 2. Cinco, E. Walker; 3. Always In The Blue, B. Holloway.

jumpers. He's the easiest horse I've ever ridden."

### ► From Humble Beginnings

At Accolade Farms in Grand Bay, Ala., (about 30 miles inland, near Mobile), Shepherd and assistant Dani Grice keep about 35 horses in training. Most are sales horses—a mixture of hunters, jumpers and equitation mounts.

Shepherd's son, Greyson, 10, happily prefers baseball to riding. His childhood is unlike that of his mother, who at age 8 traded her Mickey Mouse record player for a horse owned by her brother. Slick was half Tennessee Walker, one-quarter Arabian and one-quarter Paint. "He shuffled at the canter," Shepherd said with a laugh, "but he could jump. I showed him in hunters and jumpers, and he was a 4-H champion five times."

By the age of 12, Shepherd had developed into a competitive rider at rated shows on a variety of hunters and jumpers—mostly training (as a junior and then later as a professional) with Jerome Robertson in New Orleans. She also campaigned ponies for Rob and Allyson Coluccio of Middleburg, Va. "I rode for them for about four years when I was a teenager," Shepherd said. "They