

## In Practice

### **Mies Kloos reports on her experience with Equine Breathing an event horse**

We are a Dutch family with 4 children, all active in high level sports: basketball, rowing and horse back riding. My husband and I both started horse back riding at a very young age. After our study we lived abroad for 15 years, of which the last 7 in Bolivia, South America. In 1993 we bought 2 ponies and 2 horses for the family and since then we have been very active in the sport. In 1998 we came back to Holland and started a livery yard, which we ran for 4 years. When we sold it in 2002, our then 14 year old daughter Ellen started riding eventing with her horse Miss Galena.

Our goal was the European Championship for junior riders before she turned 18, which we reached and even surpassed: at the moment they have participated in 2 European Championships: Last year they competed in the European Championship for juniors in Saumur, France and ended as best Dutch combination on the 19th place and now, following a strenuous qualification schedule in order to gain a place on the Dutch team, we are just back from the European Championship for Young Riders in Pardubice, Czech Republic. They rode a very good tournament, what resulted in a beautiful 10th place. Again she was the highest placed Dutch team member.

Miss Galena is a 16 year old thoroughbred born in Lima, Peru. She has run 51 races on the racetrack in Lima and was bought by us early 1995. We took her with us when we returned to Holland in 1998 and had her do some light work of dressage and jumping. In 2002 Ellen started competing low level eventing and they have been growing very fast ever since.

In order for Miss Galena to perform well on this high level, especially with her age, we have always done everything possible to maintain her in perfect physical condition. She is checked by our veterinarian every month and as soon as we think something is slightly wrong, we take action. Because of this, she looks more like 5 then like 16 when you see her work

At the end of 2005 I heard about the Buteyko method of reduced breathing for people and its many successes. I also heard about Clare Hobsley, who developed a similar method for horses. As no medicines are involved and the method is logical and completely natural, I became very interested. Although Miss Galena was in very good shape, there were still some problems that we never could solve. Because of her stomach and gut problems, she was a bad eater. Furthermore she was a medium wind sucker, always reacted very irritated when groomed or saddled and had a permanent nose rash. Miss Galena has a heavy working schedule so we decided to implement it on a very extensive basis, monitoring her carefully and keeping her under close supervision of my vet.

Within a couple of weeks we already saw some noticeable improvements: She seemed fitter and happier and was more attentive at what was going on. Her recuperation time after a heavy training was faster and also her heart rate went down more rapidly after a cross country. In Holland the horses heart rates are checked before and within 10 minutes after a cross country, so I was able to document this improvement: before I started the breathing programme, she had a heart rate of 72 to 75 beats per minute, 10 minutes after finishing a cross country. Now she had around 60. Furthermore her nose rash vanished, she reacted less irritated when groomed and saddled and even her wind sucking seemed less.

After about 3 months the most astonishing result started showing itself: her eating improved. Miss Galena always had trouble digesting the high quality food that is ideal for a high performance: I was happy if I could get her to eat 2 kg a day. On several occasions we tried to do something about that, but it never lasted very long. Now slowly she started to eat more and more and she also reacted impatiently and hungrily during feeding time. In the 8 days that we were in Pardubice, she almost ate 40 kg of the high quality food, that is about 5 kg per day!



*Ellen and Miss Galena at the European Championship for Young Riders in Pardubice, Czech Republic, August 06*



I can fully conform that even a strong and healthy horse can benefit from the equine breathing method and now the European Championship is over I will continue the equine breathing to prepare Miss Galena even better for the European Championship Young Riders next year in Blair Castle, Scotland and to improve her physical condition even more to enable her to enter in some 3-star events. Recently we have ordered 3 more breathers from Clare Hobsley, so we are able to use the method on our other horses as well. Ellen has another young horse that she hopes to start internationally next year and my daughter Inger has 2 dressage horses, who's condition we also hope to improve by equine breathing. Three really great advantages are: no medicines are involved, so no side effects and no toxic residues that need to be expelled, it is cheap for it only needs discipline and it is pleasant for the horse: they doze off while being in the breather.

Before starting Equine Breathing we had decided to retire Miss Galena at the end of this season because we wanted to breed 1 or 2 foals from her but now due to her great physical condition and in discussion with our vet we feel it is not a problem to continue to compete her at this level for another year or so and then breed from her.

In 2007 Ellen is hoping to be entering in 1\* events with her young horse Rovano Rex and with MG in 2 and 3\* events, leading up to the CCI3\* of Boekelo. Her ultimate dream is to participate in the Olympic Games. Although Boekelo serves as a qualification for Hong Kong in 2008, this will probably too soon, but 2012 in London with Rovano Rex is more realistic. In order to reach these goals, we are currently looking for sponsorship. If you are interested, please contact us.

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Mies Kloos

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