

Janne Rumbough & Heidi Gaians Represent US at CDI Sydney\*\*\* (AUS) 2006  
by Cindy Stys

On Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, I left for the long trip to Sydney, Australia to attend the CDI along with Janne Rumbough and Heidi Gaian. I served as Chef d'Equipe.

Monday was our first day at the show grounds where the riders were assigned their horses. Janne was given a gentleman campaigner (T'bred) named Groover. The approximately 17.3 hand horse assigned to a rather small Heidi, on the other hand, was more complicated and insisted upon offering unsolicited tempi changes. She was determined however to figure out his buttons and rode him again on Tuesday. Although she had a better ride than the previous day, it was decided that the match was not beneficial for neither rider or horse. After explaining the situation to the organizer, Toni Venhaus, Heidi rode several other horses before choosing a lovely black Anglo-Arab gelding named Taylor, owned by a young rider. We all had our eye on this flashy horse from the beginning; he was assigned to Mika, one of the Japanese riders. Except for a hint of concavity in his face, Taylor looked like a warm blood and had by far the best movement out of the borrowed horse pool. To our delight, Mika, opted to "trade in" Taylor for another borrowed horse.

The first day of competition in the Prix St Georges showed us that the Aussies were not messing around and have been improving the quality of their dressage mounts. Heidi felt very comfortable with her new ride and rode a very good test placing 9<sup>th</sup> with a 63.10% (just out of the ribbons). Considering there were 30 starters, 26 of whom were riding their own horses, made this placing exceptional. Although she did a commendable job Janne's score was negatively influenced by the horse's tongue hanging out during various phases of the test. This however would be remedied for the next test the following day.

With Heidi's good placing on Thursday, we had high hopes for her and Taylor on Friday in the Intermediaire I since his owners told us he tends to perform even better at this level. However, luck was not on our side since during the test Taylor got his tongue over the bit which inevitably resulted in a low score for this pair. Janne was determined to prevent Groover's tongue from making an appearance again by modifying the noseband. Consequently she was able to increase her score to a 61.10% and made it into the Free Style. They were becoming a real team.

Friday night the foreign riders along with 2 of Australia's best riders drew horses to ride in Saturday's PSG Derby. The expression "luck of the draw" couldn't have rung more true for the US team. Heidi drew a bucking, rearing mare that lacked

consistent tempi changes and Janne drew a horse that barely was schooled to the PSG and perhaps never competed at this level. Having seen the other horses all week and knowing some of them were trained to the Int. II level we knew we didn't have a chance. However being the good sports that they are, both Janne and Heidi (who only had 30 minutes to ride their horses before the competition) made the best of the situation and certainly managed to get the best out of these horses.

On Saturday night, Janne and Groover had for the first time together, rode the Freestyle to a snappy repertoire of big band melodies in front of a full house. Janne is to be congratulated on having done such a respectable job. The audience and fellow riders really seemed to have appreciated her efforts and the difficulties of such a feat. Before the Grand Prix Freestyle took place the foreign riders, Chefs and Ground Jury members were asked to attend the Farewell to Nations Ceremony where we were driven around in vintage Morgans. Janne who was designated as the Foreign Rider Representative gave an eloquent speech thanking Toni Venhaus for putting on such a fine show and for inviting the foreign riders.

It was a good experience to attend this CDI which would be our equivalent of Devon, and to witness what it means to compete on borrowed horses. Having the presence of foreign riders to enhance it's international status is extremely important to this organizing committee. We were all impressed with the quality of horses we had seen there. On separate occasions, foreign judges, Volker Moritz and Cara Whitham publicly commented on their favorable impressions as well. Both Heidi and Janne carried themselves in a most professional manner and were excellent "ambassadors" for the US. They rode very well and were extremely appreciative of the owners lending their horses.

We look forward to continuing the tradition of having US participation at Australia's most important CDI.