

Debut event at Epona Farms sees Steffen Peters and Legolas 92 top 81%.

“Spectacular” seemed to be the word of the weekend, recounting the first ever International CDI-W, held at Michael Fowler’s Epona Farms in Thousand Oaks. Highlighting the excitement was Steffen Peters’ winning score of 81.325% in the Grand Prix Freestyle Saturday night in front of a sold-out crowd.



Peters, riding three-time US National Grand Prix Champion, Legolas 92, owned by Four Winds Farm, electrified the audience with the up-tempo performance which included a bit of humorous, rap-style vocals. This score was a personal best for Peters on the 13 year old Westphalian gelding. The pair travels next to Florida to try for an unprecedented fourth national title.

Peters described the event as his new “favorite” show. Promoted as a “Unique, Boutique, Equestrian Event,” the show was organized by Regina Antonioli of Equestrian Concepts. “I have long had the idea to produce a CDI-only show that could really feature our top riders,” Antonioli explains.

When talk started to surface that Fowler and his facility manager, Leonie 'Button' Baker might be open to the idea of Epona Farms (the site of the West Coast USEF training sessions) as the venue for such an event, Antonioli jumped at the opportunity to meet.

"Putting together a 'new' show in less than a year was probably an overly ambitious endeavor," Antonioli continued. "My staff was amazing, as was Button's crew at Epona. So many others volunteered their help." Antonioli described the most difficult parts of the endeavor as figuring out the financing, and the logistics of converting a personal facility into a legal FEI venue. The most rewarding: "The positive responses from the riders. I was also overwhelmed and thrilled by enthusiastic support of the local community, who came in such large numbers just to watch."

There was a lot to watch. In addition to Peters' Freestyle victory, he captured the Grand Prix (qualifier for Freestyle) on Legolas 92 (76.040%). He picked up another personal best on his younger mount, Rosamunde, winning the Grand Prix (qualifier for the Special) with a 75.78%, then going on to guide the 8-year-old, Rheinlander mare, also owned by Four Winds Farm, to a 74.255% victory the Grand Prix Special.

Reserve in both the Grand Prix and Freestyle went to Guenter Seidel, of Cardiff, on Charlotte and James Mashburn's Zero Gravity. Riding to a haunting instrumental, personally composed for the 11-year-old, Dutch gelding, Seidel garnered his own personal best on this mount with a 77.600%. Seidel described the event as, "perfect footing – perfect venue."

Another big winner at the show was Charlotte Jorst, from Reno, NV, who guided the 10-year-old Dutch gelding, Kastel's Adventure to close victories in both the Prix St. Georges (70.763%) and Intermediaire I (69.711%).

U.S. Dressage Chef d'Equipe, Robert Dover, who attended the show with USEF Dressage, High Performance Director Hallye Griffin, summed it up, when he described the event as "just fantastic."