

# PREMIUMARES

## BREEDING FOR SUCCESS

A grand prix horse typically completes a first-round track in just a matter of minutes; it's often just seconds for a jump-off. But the time it takes to get that horse into the ring to begin with—the thoughtful breeding, endless care, training, and dedication—is a process many years in the making.

Milena Pappas, business woman, amateur rider and founder of the elite sport horse breeding company, PremiuMares, understands the irony of this situation all too well. And, for Pappas, it's a more than worthy tradeoff. "[We feel] it's important that our foals and mares enjoy enough time out in the fields, especially during the young horses' tender years," she says.

"We are very selective in the mares we keep and breed. For this reason, we choose to give them extra time before introducing them to the sport. That extra year or two might put them at a disadvantage when compared to young horses that have been in the sport from an earlier age.

But, in our experience, being out in the field with other horses builds [strength in] their bodies, joints, and muscles as much as it builds their character and determination."

In that respect, Pappas notes, a little extra patience pays dividends. "A healthy and happy horse will do anything for its rider, and that extra time usually translates into a longer career."



PremiuMares has plenty of evidence to support their mentality, beginning with the continued success of their progeny at all levels of the sport. In seven years of operation, the breeding company has produced a number of top equine athletes from the Young Horse classes on up through the five-star tours. At present, two PremiuMares horses with superstar potential, Unyke and Jardezza, are being carefully developed under the watchful eye of Swiss Olympian Pius Schwizer, Pappas's business partner of more than 10 years.

"Our cooperation is founded on mutual trust and honesty," says Pappas, who first purchased a horse from Schwizer back in 2010. The pair went on to co-own Grand Prix de la Mairie de Mâcon CSI 3\* winner, Cortney Cox, purchased as a 6-year-old; as well as PremiuMares' About a Dream, who earned five-star wins with Schwizer at the Stuttgart Masters and CHI Geneva, among other venues.

"I told [Pius] about the mare, but it was not until she did the 7-Year-Olds in Arezzo that he asked for her. I had to reject a big offer (at that time) in order to send About a Dream to him, but Pius promised he would bring her to the top level, and that is exactly what he did! About a Dream was awarded the prize for being one of the best horses in Switzerland in 2018 at only nine years old.

"Pius is a competitive rider of the highest level," Pappas continues. "He makes things happen, but at the same time, he is respectful toward the horses and toward us. He takes his time and will not rush [them] before they are ready to step up their game. He gives all of them a fair chance to show their best selves."

Far away from the bright lights of the international circuit, PremiuMares' foals are allowed to grow up at a leisurely pace in Holland's sprawling green countryside. From the beginning, they are monitored closely for signs of potential, something that Pappas says is easy to spot—if you know what you're looking for.

"What we [watch] for first is their attitude; how they react to their environment, and how they interact with their similar-aged peers. Initiative, bravery, and curiosity are always good indicators, as is intellect," Pappas says. "Then, of course, come the physical foundations: How does a young horse move? Is it light on its feet? Does it have a good gallop?"

At age three, free jumping can provide the PremiuMares team with additional insights, to see how their young horses react when presented with an obstacle in their path for the first time. Staff members look to see if the horses exhibit carefulness in these early encounters, and also how they move and carry themselves over the jump. "These are all indicators, however, there is always that one, late starter who needs more time for his or her body to develop, or for the mind to mature," Pappas explains.

In fact, supporting that "late bloomer" is another facet of PremiuMares' program that truly sets it apart. "One of the reasons that we keep our program smaller than 70 horses is so that we can give each youngster individualized attention and adequate time to grow into him or herself, and to be ready to show what they are worth."

It's also the reasoning behind the PremiuMares method: young mares are typically bred once or twice before being trained for sport, while colts are directly sold, either through auctions or private sales. "As we are very selective with the mares we breed, when they are finally introduced into the sport, they are quite green compared to the young horses of their age. However, we use this to our horses' advantage," Pappas says. "At the age of seven, having enjoyed enough field time, but also having been under saddle for a year or two, they start showing what they can do, and that potential is a magical moment!"

Equally enjoyable for Pappas is the breeding process, itself; that golden hour when a new PremiuMares foal enters the world, healthy and happy alongside his or her mother. "That moment is a miracle, a mixture of emotions that never fails to bring tears to my eyes," she says. And while it might also mark the start of a long road to success—one that's full of ups and downs, wins and losses, and lots of patience required—it's an undertaking that Pappas looks forward to with joy.

"Each foal represents hope and a smile for someone in the future," she says. "To me, each one is a wonder."

## THE PREMIUMARES AMBASSADORS

THESE FOUR PREMIUMARES SUPERSTARS-IN-TRAINING  
ARE POISED TO MAKE THEIR MARK



### JARDESSA

Age : 7

Breeding : Berlin x Kashmir van Schuttershof

Competing With : Pius Schwizer

Standout Traits :

"Jardezza is a flashy, beautiful, bay mare. She is brave, very careful, athletic, and always up to answer any question her riders pose. She is very straightforward and a true fighter!"



### UNYKE

Age : 9

Breeding : Uccello x Laptop

Competing With : Pius Schwizer

Standout Traits :

"Unyke is a winner! She's the definition of an athlete, ready to give it all. She is superbly fast, courageous, careful, and the most reliable partner for her rider. At nine years old, Unyke is now ready to step up her game in the grand prix ring."



### TOULANDA DEGLI ASSI

Age : 9

Breeding : Toulon x Nabab de Reve

Competing With :

Helmut Schonstetter (rider for Max Kuhner)

Standout Traits :

"Toulanda is all character and speed. Descended directly from the incredible line of Glock's London and Golden Hawk, her pedigree speaks for itself. Having had two magnificent foals, she has now stepped up to the 1.45 level at only 7 years old, and already has been clear and placed 2nd in the GP of Ranshofen!"



### FANTASIE VHW Z

Age : 10

Breeding : Filou de Muze x Canturo x Parco

Competing With :

Helmut Schonstetter and Milena Pappas

Standout Traits :

"Fantasie has a massive stride and is very elastic, with an impressive, airy jump. She has the same dam line as Glasgow de Muze and Costa Rica VHW, with proven results at the 1.50m-1.60m level."