

I N T E R V I E W W I T H

# Ignacio Ramblas

“Dressage competition is just a branch from the Classical Riding, in the Royal School we have always had dressage competition as part of the School. When I compete in Europe, or at Atlanta, it is



important for the School to be known.’

*Is the type of horse changing a little so the horses can be more successful at the Olympic Games, a modern type of Andalusian?*

Dressage has the most points for piaffe and passage. For walk and trot, the Spanish horse is not so good, but the Royal School is trying to make the breeders change the way the horse can walk and trot. The Spanish horse has a great piaffer, passage, but not a good walk, trot and canter, but he is a great horse. But the pure Spanish horse has a better walk than Bonfire! If we can make the pure Spanish horse better in his walk, trot and canter, he will be perfect.

*When did you become a rider in the Royal School?*

I don't remember when I first put my foot into a stirrup. I started with the Royal School, before it was moved to this site, at the age of 13. I studied with the horses, and became a professional rider and my whole career has been here at the Royal School. Two years ago, Mr Alvero Domeq left the school,

it was a political matter, and I became the director. I was on my way to Atlanta to compete – and I also found myself the director.

*How many horses and riders are in the School?*

We have thirteen riders, eighty horses, and at present fourteen students. We have different sorts of horses; the older horses for the students, the pure Spanish horses for the performance, several types of horses.

*Is it difficult to combine competing internationally with being the Director of the School?*

Of course it has been difficult. It was not so difficult to go to Atlanta because that was only one month – but to qualify for the World Cup was difficult because you have to go to so many qualifiers. We wanted the pure Spanish horse to be in the competition – to be known.

*Which for you is the most exciting – to ride in the classic style of the School, or the competition riding?*

Everything is important. Dressage competition is a more private goal for me, but the School has considered it very important to allow me to go out; I can never say that one is more important than the other. My roots are in the School but the School has let me go out and be a private rider.

***The Real Escuela Andaluza del Arte Ecuestre in Jerez is unique in equestrian history - combining high class performances of Classical Dressage with the production of serious competition riders and horses. New Director, Iganacio Ramblas not only leads the School in its performances but represented Spain at Atlanta and the most recent World Cup Final. An exclusive interview with Chris Hector Pix Roz Neave***

*Can we look forward to seeing you in Sydney?*

I am looking forward to a big team from the School. Now we have myself, and Rafael Soto in the Olympic Team, we would like to have all the members of the Spanish Team from the School. I hope that Evento will be right for Sydney, he has been operated on for damage to his muscles. An American surgeon came to Jerez to do the operation, he is recovering well, hopefully for Sydney. But for Jerez 2002, I hope all the team will come from riders at our School here in Jerez!

*The Spanish Team is now being trained by the German trainer, Jean Bemelmans. Is there much difference between the training methods of Mr Bemelmans and the teachings of the Royal School?*

"They are completely different. He doesn't know the pure Spanish bred horse. Each breed is different – and Mr Bemelmans is coming to know the pure Spanish horse but of course the methods have to be different because the breed he knows is different. The trainer must be there to make sure the riders don't make mistakes, to make sure they sit straight – but maybe the trainer shouldn't try to change the style of the horse, shouldn't try to change their personal style. A trainer shouldn't try to change the piaffe or passage of such a horse, he should let the horse be himself."

□

