

Golden Anniversary California Dressage Society Championship has many highlights.

photos: Jennifer M. Keeler

In 1967, the idea of the California Dressage Society (CDS) was born among friends gathered in a living room. One of their main objectives was to create an annual showcase event where competitors could gather to pursue their passion. The Championship show has grown from its debut with 67 entries paying \$5 per class to the 50th anniversary show this year where 330 competitors rode for more than \$30,000 in prize money.



The excitement was palpable in all six rings of competition on the first day of showing. This year's event was held September 21-24 in Rancho Murieta at the Murieta Equestrian Center.

One of those appreciating the festive atmosphere was Karen Cornelius from Nipomo, with her five-year-old Hanoverian stallion, Fiderello. The eye-catching pair was presented with the first championship title of the year in the Great American Insurance Group/USDF Region 7 First Level Freestyle Championship for their '80s-themed performance earning a score of 76.750%.

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Monday, 30 October 2017 21:27

Cornelius' journey to this show with Fiderello was literally years in the making. She purchased the colt when he was just four months old from breeder Bjoern Kommerell in Southern California. "I knew that the only way I could afford a super horse was to buy one young, and he is my dream horse," she explained. "This is hopefully just the start of a long journey and a promising future with him."

At Third Level, Hilda Gurney from Moorpark, topped a hard-fought freestyle class with 72.833% aboard Lotta Silver, a seven-year-old Trakehner gelding she bred, raised, rides and owns. Gurney has been a legendary figure in CDS' 50-year history, having attended the inaugural Championship show in 1968 and almost every edition since.

Hailing from Auburn, Jennette Scanlon and four-year-old Oldenburg gelding Bronson won the Four/Five-Year-Old Materiale performance on day one as part of the Great American Insurance Group/USDF Breeders Championships-West Coast Final, and on day two, they claimed the Region 7 Open Training Level Championship as the only pair to impress the judges enough to break the 70% mark (71.932%).

"I feel so fortunate that his owner really understands the proper development of a young horse," said Scanlon, who has trained the promising youngster for the last year for owner Leslie Blaney. "Because Bronson is so talented, it would be easy to push him too fast. But my philosophy is to make sure to develop a horse's mind and body together, so we are taking it slow with him and we do different classes like the materiale to get mileage and experience for him. I don't want the act of going in the ring to get redundant for him, and we do lots of different activities to keep the work fun and eliminate mental stress from the equation. So far I'm very impressed with how he's handling everything about this show like a pro."

To top a large field for the Second Level Adult Amateur title with a score of 71.037% was Kasey Cannon of Moorpark with her Hanoverian stallion Diesel CF, who she purchased sight unseen off of a video from Europe 18 months ago. "I actually saw him for the first time in the Amsterdam airport when he was on his way to the States. Sure, it was a gamble, but it worked out, and I think we're lucky to have each other," Cannon explained. "He keeps impressing us. He's so consistent and reliable and handles travel well, so it's no problem being away from home. Plus it's fun because there's no stress in riding him. He seems to easily handle Second Level because he has a talent for collection and is really coming into his own, very rideable and adjustable. He's the horse of a lifetime."

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http://california-dressage.org/PDF_files/CDSchp2017results_w.pdf