

Harmonic Dressage* Seminar and Clinic

April 24 and 25, 2010

Four Seasons Hotel, Westlake, CA

U.S.D.F. University Accredited



"An enthusiastic group was fortunate to participate in Dr. Gail Hoff-Carmona's innovative symposium. Gail combined her life long experience as a rider, judge and scientist to provide us with a unique view of the classical Training Scale."

Kamila Dupont, International Grand Prix rider and resident dressage trainer at Pegasus Equestrian Center, Agoura Hills, CA.

Gail is an incredible teacher ! Her method makes life so easy for the horses and the rider! Highly recommend her teaching method. I have seen unbelievable changes in highly advanced riders! Alanna Tarkington, licensed psychologist and rider.

The beautiful Four Seasons Hotel in Westlake, CA provided an elegant and comfortable site for the first **Harmonic Dressage*** seminar produced by Janet Hawkins, presented by Dr. Gail Hoff-Carmona and featuring video clips of Kamila Dupont riding horses at various levels to demonstrate the techniques and concepts offered in the seminar. Video of Brauna Walsch and her Hanoverian gelding, Wenco, also provided valuable visual understanding of the effects and importance of the position and use of the aids of the rider.



The seminar received United States Dressage Federation University accreditation and provided a detailed, scientifically based method of training dressage horses according to the classical Training Scale (also known as the Training Pyramid.) A *Power Point* slide presentation complete with many diagrams, photographs and video demonstrations set the foundation for discussion as well as participation in the very popular active exercises designed by Gail to allow riders to develop a better understanding of feeling and biomechanics by playing "make believe."



"Make believe" exercises designed to teach riders how they should sit, balance their weight, use their seat and legs and feel contact with the horse were fun and informative. Participants got to play the part of a horse and then reverse roles with their partner to play the part of a rider.

Many ahaa moments were expressed as people learned such things as how correct flexion at the poll of the horse creates salivation or how gripping hard with the legs

is counterproductive to getting a horse to go forward. Another rider suddenly understood how "less is more" and how a rider must become like a tree keeping centered and reacting passively with the hands by not giving, not taking and not getting tense when a horse loses balance.





A very tasty buffet lunch prepared by the excellent chefs at the Four Seasons allowed time for people to get to know each other better and to share experiences. Then the spacious carpeted hallway provided lots of room for riders to pretend they were horses as they learned about various movements such as correct leg yielding, shoulder-in, circles, flexion and so much more.



People pretending to be horses in exercises designed to show them how a horse felt when asked to perform various movements was enlightening.

"Oh my gosh, I had no idea how much I unbalanced my horse by bending its neck more than its body until I felt how uncomfortable it was for me to do movements such as circles and shoulder-in with my own neck bent left or right," was the exclamation of one fourth level rider. Another participant stated that she never knew how the seat and legs were coordinated with contact to do half halts until she was able to see them described and demonstrated. She later remarked that her horse seemed much happier with her new riding skills.

Harmonic Dressage* is a system of dressage training which Dr. Gail Hoff-Carmona has come to understand and develop from several points of view. She is not only an F.E.I. level trainer, rider, coach, and judge, but also combines that experience with that gained as a breeder and a Ph.D. creative research scientist. She laughs about having made nearly every possible mistake a rider could make and then having to correct them all. Breeding and training horses of many different breeds with various outstanding assets and drawbacks also set a backdrop for better understanding how form really does relate to function. Dressage is, after all, a sport, a science and an art all rolled into one.



Kamila Dupont, who rode several horses in order to demonstrate the various concepts set forth in the seminar, was on hand to tell questioning people exactly how she had ridden a particular movement. This was much appreciated by all since her first hand input eliminated the need for people to make assumptions about how movements were performed.

Gail and Kamila first met in Germany through a mutual friend. For several years Kamila was competing at the Grand Prix level and studying with the late great dressage master, Herbert Rehbein. When she decided to move back to the United States, a friendship between Gail and Kamila was struck up when they once again met at a horse show in California. They continue to help each other and Gail does monthly clinics at Pegasus Equestrian Center in Agoura Hills, CA where Kamila is the resident dressage trainer.

On the day after the seminar, Gail gave a dressage clinic to covering all the levels from beginner to Grand Prix where she also explained to auditors what she was doing and why.

One Grand Prix rider summed up the experience of many: *Not that what we did was unknown to me, but the way Gail addressed the issue of contact (on Sat.) and how she integrated it on Sunday in her riding clinic, left me with a very different feel and perception of connection and balance. The horses also loved it and thank you as well!*

A Second Level clinic rider from another clinic wrote: *"What a fantastic clinic. Gail has the unique ability to make a difference in both horse and rider after just one hour. Her simplistic, straight forward approach and clear concepts delivered unbelievable improvements in self carriage and relaxation for both my horse and I. Correcting my seat position and use of the aids provided me with more confidence and feel. There were several "aha" moments that will stay with me throughout my training. I look forward to seeing Gail again soon."* Rebecca Greening-Vignieri and Utmost 9 yr DWB - Adult Amateur RAAC 2009 Reserve Champion, 2nd level

* Trademark Pending

Coming Clinic and Seminar Dates

Pegasus Equestrian Center

Agoura Hills, CA

Contact: Kamila Dupont, resident dressage trainer
kamiladupont@yahoo.com
805 280-5525
www.kamiladupont.com

Clinic Dates:

June 13, 2010
July 10, 2010
Sept 11, 2010
Oct. 16, 2010

Dakota Horse Fest

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Contact: Joann Messersmith
jmessersmith@legacysiouxfalls.com
402 639-3575

Dressage Show: July 17,18 2010

July 19,20 2010

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U.S.D.F. University accredited

Lorraine Kainuma

Gilroy, CA

Contact: Lorraine Kainuma
lkainuma@yahoo.com
925 487-4529

Clinic Dates

Oct 23,24 2010
March 26,27 2011
May 7,8 2011