



# A sense for coming developments

Rhineland's warmblood breeding can look back on an almost sixty-year long history. A change is about to take place. THE HANOVERIAN is introducing the studbook that the Hanoverian Association will work together very closely in the future. Relationships between both associations and there locations are already in existence in respect to breeding and marketing.

By Britta Zünger

It is a relatively young association. Even though it is one of the smaller breed associations it attracts attention amidst the big ones. About 2,200 warmblood mares are registered with the "Rheinisches Pferdestammbuch" (Rhineland Studbook); Its home is the horse centre at Wickrath's Castle. Theodor Leuchten is in the chair and Martin Spoo handles the affairs of the breed association as manager. The Rhineland is active; in addition to the riding horses the association attends to the needs of more than fifty different breeds from 'Aegidienberger' over the 'Falabella' Ponies to Welsh Cob. A total of just below 4,500 members are registered with 7,000 broodmares. The Rhineland horse was a cold-blooded horse until 1950. A radical change took place from breeding cold-blooded horses to breeding riding horses at the beginning of the sixties. The breeders from the Rhineland proved their intuition for coming developments during this drastic change. After about 25 years of close cooperation with the second breed association of Germany's western states called the Westphalian Breed Association, the Rhineland is now reorganizing itself. "The breeders from the Rhineland are full of great ideas and seek success. The good cooperation with the neighboring countries the Netherlands and Belgium present another advantage as they enrich the horse industry in the Rhineland with excellent breeding horses," says Martin Spoo. "Our geographic location is excellent being near to the metropolitan cities of Düsseldorf, Aachen and Cologne. A few international competitors live in the Rhineland area, too. Horses go straight from the breeders to the barns of top riders because of good contacts. One of many examples is the good cooperation with the stable of Isabell Werth. Rhineland horses have been bred very successfully at the farm of Family Werth for many years."

The Rhineland breeding area includes regions that offer first-rate conditions for breeding horses. The area of the North Rhine goes from Emmerich on the Rhine River in the northwest to Oberhausen in the northeast. It extends to the area around Bonn in the south. The Lower Rhine area, the so-called Bay of Cologne-Aachen, the "Bergisches Land" and the "Eifel" area characterize this region. It is a region with densely populated metropolitan areas, fertile agricultural areas and areas with a charming scenic countryside. After all there is a very good reason why Germany's leading Thoroughbred breeding-farms are located in this region. Wickrath has to thank Napoleon I for its place on the hippological map. He built a French-imperial stallion station and breeding farm in the small village in 1808; the village is a part of the city of Mönchengladbach today. The State Stud Wickrath was of-

ficially established in 1983. It took another 40 years before the final breeding goal was determined. The Rhineland Studbook has focused on breeding "cold-blooded horses with a touch of Belgian influence since 1892". In 1902 the Rhineland Horse Centre Ltd. was added and developed into a sales organization that conducted 214 auctions from 1927 until 1958. The cold-blooded horses from the Rhineland area were the strongest contingent of cold-blooded horses in Germany. They were world-renowned and an absolute must in farming. The breeding of cold-blooded horses came to a sudden stop at the end of WWII. A crash that hit its lowest point in 1975 with only eleven registered broodmares and a total of three breedings!

### A starting-signal for the breeding of riding horses

The breeders in the Rhineland area reflected on their virtues in the post-war years. Numerous stallions from the so-called East Provinces – mostly with Trakehner blood – found a new home in the State Stud Wickrath. This turned out to be a stroke of luck for the Warmblood breed. These horses became the foundation of the horse inventory in the Rhineland. The breeders placed all their energy into breeding riding horses after initial hesitation and a period of waiting from 1955 until 1960. The rapid development of the sport of riding and horse competitions quickly gained in popularity especially in the densely settled Rhineland area and encouraged the breeders. The Breeding Book was expanded by the divisions "Warmblood" with about 100 members and "Ponies and Small Horses in 1954". The Horse Breeding Book Rhineland had still steadfastly refused to establish the division "Warmblood" in 1949 as it was not in agreement with the decade-long standing tradition. Therefore the Association of Warmblood Breeders in the Rhineland registered all Warmblood mares and stallions in its area. A division Warmblood was finally established because of an initiative of the Department of Agriculture in Düsseldorf. Finally the creation of a warmblood breed was in its beginning. Nonetheless the State Stud Wickrath had to close its doors; the few stallions were moved to the State Stud in Warendorf that received the name North Rhine-Westphalian State Stud. Four years later the breeding program in the Rhineland reached its lowest point; only 1,215 horses were registered in the breeding book with only 834 members. This however was the starting-signal for a riding horse breed that was to become a top-class sport horse breed within the shortest time. The breed association was restructured in 1965.

One division handled the warm- and cold-blooded horses; another the breeding of ponies and small



Discovered in Wickrath: El Santo NRW ridden by Isabell Werth. Photo: Krenz



**Breed legend Florestan watches over the office in Wickrath's castle.**



**Top producer Lord Loxley by Lord Sinclair/Weltmeyer.** Photo: Recki

horses. The division A was just for the breeding of warmbloods while all other horses including the cold-blooded horses were registered in division B after another by-law change. A cry for its very own brand became apparent. Even though the brand for cold-blooded horses, the R with a crown, had an excellent reputation worldwide it did not seem suitable for a modern warmblood breed. Riding horses from the Rhineland area have been branded with a brand that looks like the antlers of a deer and was designed after the old Trakehner Pre-Book brand since 1966. The Trakehner Association gave permission for the use of this brand as there is a strong representation of Trakehner breeders in the Rhineland area. A breeding-book regulation came into effect under the influence of the larger breeding areas in 1967. This regulation defined the breeding goal to be the German riding horse.

The breeding of cold-blooded horses was converted to the breeding of warmblood horses in a radical fashion. It was not required to take the long road of changing the breed and refinement. The demands from competitions guided the breeders. Many of them still ride today and know all too well what is important. "The Rhineland area had a good starting point. After the era of cold-blooded horses the breeders were able to start again from the beginning. The farms in the Rhineland area were financially independent hence the early participation in competition. This participation allowed for valuable impulses that the smart breeders from the Rhineland made use of early on. These impulses strongly influenced many breeding stations and gave them the desired direction," so Martin Spoo.

### Careful selection

In addition to mares that were strongly influenced by Trakehner blood the breeders also looked round the large neighboring breeding areas Hanover and Westphalia. A change in the breeding program was under way there. Modern broodmares were not for sale; hence the horse people from the Rhineland bought fillies and raised them. They proved to have a good eye for and knowledge of valuable dam lines. A sport-horse breeding program was built up on this foundation that quickly established itself. A careful selection process in respect to mares and stallions helped, too. The small breeding area Rhineland did very well against the apparently dominant competition at the large agricultural exhibitions during the 70s. Three warmblood mares were presented on the DLG-Show in Cologne for the first time in 1970. Ballerina by Bernstein/Frustra II fought for the champion title at the DLG-Show in Munich in 1974. The Family of Fanfare by Cyrus/Sporn won the National Victory Prize at the first national show of the German riding horse in

Münster-Handorf in 1979 and became DLG-Champion Family the following year. The "Rheinische Pferdestammbuch" celebrated its greatest success in 1982. Enterprise by Ehrensold/Perser xx was the National Champion Mare. "Her pedigree goes back to a Hanoverian foundation. Enterprise also won the State Championships under Saddle which was pretty remarkable in those days," Martin Spoo remembers the bay out of the line of Narcilla from the breeding station Russ, Wagenfeld. "If you look at all the champion mares from the Rhineland, it becomes apparent that the breeders tested many of the mares under saddle, too. Therefore the breed association was able to collect valuable information long before the official mare tests. The association and the breeders were able to use these data for planning the breeding program."

The State Stud Warendorf purchased the first Rhineland sire called Pasternak by Patron/Wortschall in 1973; he was to become a stallion that wrote history. He is by a Trakehner stallion. His damline traces back to the Hanoverian mare Naderta by Negro. The sire Ehrentusch by Ehrensold/Rheingold also brought honor to the Rhineland breed. He too won his stallion performance test. He descends from the Sabifinda line that originated on the breeding farm Rethorst. The sire Florestan by Fidelio/Rheingold is poster child of the breeding program in the Rhineland. His offspring turned the performance test champion into one of Germany's most influential dressage horse producers. His foundation dam Erlenkette went to the Rhineland from the breeding station Pahlmann, Hänigsen at the beginning of the 60s. We can also find her name in the pedigree of dual World Champion of five- and six-year old dressage horses Woodlander Farouche by Fürst Heinrich/Dimaggio and in the pedigree of the former Bundeschampion Roman Nature by Rohdiamant/Ehrentusch. Florestan's blood is best represented by his grandson Fideranz. This son of Fidermark/Ravallo traces back to the mare Jucking. The producers Graditz and Royal Highness belong to her family, too. The privately owned sire Belissimo M by Beltain/Romadour II is very popular in Hanover. The expressive chestnut with his Westphalian roots won the Bundeschampionat for four-year old stallions and also competed in the CDIO in Aachen last year. Two of his Hanoverian sons called Bacchus von Worrenberg and Benicio have already won the Bundeschampionat. The tradition-rich cooperation of the Rhineland with Westphalia became closer and closer. The first joint auctions and stallion licensings took place in the Westphalian Marketing Centre in Münster in 1991. These and a joint selection process have proven to be successful over the past 25 years.



Horses from the Rhineland competed in the debut of the Bundeschampionate in Aachen in 1978 with considerable success celebrating the placements from second through sixth. Weiolet by Wächter/Wicht was the first Bundeschampion of jumper horses in 1980. Victories up to the S-level followed. Rhineland horses have been regulars on the medal platform in Warendorf since then. They have also reached the top international level of competition. Pozitano by Polydor/Waidmannsdank xx remains unforgotten after having won the team silver medal at the Olympic Games 2000 in Sydney with rider Beat Mändli. One does not have to search hard to find a Hanoverian line in the dark bay. His damline of Alferate is one of the best; famous names like Brentano II, Garibaldi II or Wolkenstein II prove this. Over the past two years especially two dressage horses have caused an international stir. Isabell Werth competed El Santo NRW by Ehrentusch/Rhythmus in the World Cup-finals in 's-Hertogenbosch. Herzruf's Erbe by Herzruf/Caletto was one of the world's best dressage competitors with rider Ulla Salzgeber for many years. They placed third in the World Cup-finals in Leipzig in 2011.

### International showcase

Herzruf's Erbe was discovered at the CHIO-Sales in Aachen. Rhineland and Westphalia had found a joint international showcase at the World Festival for the equestrian sport. There they sold highly talented up and coming horses for more than 20 years. The "Pferdestammbuch" has always written marketing in capital letters. After successful auctions for cold-blooded horses at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they introduced a Rhineland warmblood horse sale for the first time in 1963. The Rhineland was a guest at the riding horse auctions of the Trakehner Association in Wülfrath in the early years. The fact that the Rhineland breeding area was located amidst a major industrial area was rather advantageous for selling horses. The "Rheinische Pferdestammbuch" hosted their own first Rhineland horse auction in Wülfrath in 1969. The CHIO-Sales celebrated its debut in 1985. After the early auctions in Wülfrath and Langenfeld, using the huge facility in Aachen was an essential and important step. The breeders from the Rhineland area invested in Aachen and in return received valuable usage rights. The concept of exclusively offering their best horses in Aachen where the entire equestrian community meets was phenomenal," Martin Spoo recalls the past. Between 1985 and 2005 the recipe for success was to present a small selection of top horses for sale. Peter Krautwig, a person who knew the scene very well, was an essential part in this endeavor. He accomplished a great deal for the cooperation of the

Rhineland with Westphalia. Top jumpers like Jewel's Amethyst by Gunter/Pasteur xx with whom Albert Voorn and Piet Raymakers won numerous Grand Prix, stallions that were offered as young dressage horses and then became famous as Stallion performance test-winners and top producers and a great number of exquisite dressage stars were the very best advertisement for this event over many years. "The CHIO-Sales could not be continued because the Westphalian Association decided to exclusively offer the best horses in Muenster. Aachen was no longer part of the marketing plan," Martin Spoo explains. As the Rhineland is too small to provide a top collection of horses year after year this marketing avenue has ceased to exist. "Now the Rhineland focuses on the Horse Centre Wickrath and works hard to find the right customer for the horses from the Rhineland. For instance El Santo NRW who was discovered in Wickrath like so many other current athletes advertises our activities with his headlines," says Martin Spoo.

The Rhineland breeding program returned to its cradle in 2002,. The "Pferdestammbuch" moved from Bonn into Wickrath's castle. An impressive equestrian centre emerged on the widespread grounds that offer a unique ambiance. A training facility, show grounds and an event arena were built. The conditions are first class for riding ponies, cold-blooded horses and many other breeds. Seventy stalls are available to breeders for constant direct marketing. Other highlights in front of the baroque style water castle are elite mare shows and stallion presentations. ■

**Belissimo M is much in demand as a dressage producer. Next to Fider-tanz, Belissimo M is another first class producer from the Rhineland belonging to a new generation after Florestan, Ehrentusch, Ferragamo and Rheingold.** Photo: Archive

