

## A Perfect 10

### Judges at the ISR North America's Mare Performance Test award a rare score.

By Mary Daniels

**S**ometimes we don't agree," said Ekkehard Brysch, CEO of the ISR/Oldenburg NA registry, as prelude to his announcement that for the first time in the registry's 20-year history, he and fellow judges Christian Schacht (breeding director) and Dieter Felgendreher unanimously awarded a perfect 10 in free jumping to the 6-year-old mare, Passion, during the Mare Performance Test (MPT).

Oldenburg Farm in Mequon, Wisconsin, bred Passion. She is by Pablito—by Pablo, by Pilot, who goes back to the Trakehner stallion Absatz—out of Corina, by the approved Holsteiner stallion Cor Noir, whose sire is the legendary German

100-Year stallion Cor de la Bryere. There is deeply ingrained dressage and jumping talent on both sides of the pedigree and, as often happens in German sport horse breeding, the offspring turn out to be multi-talented.

The winning mare's owner, Sarah Scheen of DeKalb, Illinois, bought Passion as a dressage prospect, and they had started out in that direction, "but she wanted to



Lindsay Freeland

Passion is owned by Sarah Scheen.

be a jumper," says Scheen, who put her through the Mare Performance Test "just to secure her future down the road after her performance career is over."

"The test adds value to the mare," says Brysch. If she scores 70 and is registered in the Main Mare Book, she can be upgraded to Premium Mare, a much-coveted designation by breeders.

Schacht said that Passion "would win any free-jumping class in Germany. I have never seen a more wonderful test. She has only one big mistake," he said, smiling and pausing for effect. "She is not in my barn!" What does he look for in the Mare Performance Test? "Rideability, character, balance and the ability to jump."

Felgendreher agreed. "We look for rideability just as we do in the Stallion Performance Test. It is an opportunity to show the ability of the mare under saddle."

Helmut Schrant's Meadow Brook Farm in Burlington, Illinois, hosted last year's inspection and MPT. He said he kept raising the rails for Passion in her free-jumping test in the indoor arena until they passed 4-foot-6-inches, which she sailed over as easily as if she had invisible wings, bringing gasps of delight from the audience. The judges advise owners to school their horses in free-jumping prior to the test. Show records will be taken into consideration, just as they do for stallions.

Passion had been to only one schooling show. Owner Scheen, who had just gotten out of the hospital the day before, rode her mare in the outdoor arena for the under-saddle test. Passion achieved high marks for this part, too, with a total of 78 points. Concurrently, she was "inspected," which is separate from the Mare Performance Test, giving her a Premium Mare award and registry in the Premium Mare Book. Felgendreher told Scheen that "some mares [who pass the test with high scores for jumping] become good dressage horses."

Brysch said the MPT is designed so that owners get to know the talents of their mares in addition to helping them select the right stallions. A mare should be 4 years old to participate, but he has seen a 3-year-old do the MPT and do it well. The first MPT in the United States was held in 2000. Since then, about 100 mares have passed. A mare's rideability, free jumping and basic gaits each count one-third of her final score. The MPT cost is minimal and advance enrollment is required.

Lunchtime found everyone on the deck and back lawn of the Schrant's house giving them a chance to socialize. The homemade chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies definitely deserved a Premium Award and were the object of smuggling.

While the Mare Performance Test was a highlight, the rest of the day's inspections proceeded with good results. Three stallions were approved, three mares made the Main Mare Book and six colts and fillies who passed inspection were registered and branded. At the end of the day, Calypso (by the pony stallion Champion's DeVito) ended with a score of 8.1 and the championship ribbon. Frat Boy (by Frohwind) and Coco Chanel (by Conrad) were runners-up, both with a high score of 8.0. Find out more at the Web site [isroldenburg.org](http://isroldenburg.org). 