

Schelstraete Horses

‘THE TRAINING AND THE ATTENTION MAKE THE SUCCESS’.

Winding country roads through a Brabant landscape lead to the Schelstraete family in Gemonde. This is where Luc and Jonna live with their children Micky, Amber and Oskar. Their passion: practising top sport and training talented dressage horses to the absolute top. Many of their horses have found their way to top international riders in America, Sweden, Italy, Germany and England over the past fifteen years. What is the secret of a couple who originally came from the world of show jumping and who have trained and successfully sold so many top horses in a relatively short time? The horses certainly lack nothing in their brand new stable complex.

TEXT: CHRISTA VAN DUIN | PHOTOGRAPHY: WWW.MADEBYJESSY.COM

Jonna and Luc met about twenty years ago in the jumping sport. Luc focused his law firm completely on Equestrian Law and he also had a jumping stable with horses that competed at a high level. Jonna, who we now know mainly as a dressage rider, was active in the jumping sport after her training in Deurne. When the jumping business slowed down, the couple bought some dressage stallions, including Toscane (by Krack C) who was ridden by Edward Gal. Jonna was still jumping, but by then was very good at training young horses. "Luc said at one point

that it would be better if I rode dressage. That was my future," she says. "At first I thought that was stupid, because I found jumping much more fun. At some point I thought: maybe he's right. I was pregnant with Micky and Amber at the time, so maybe that was part of it. It was tackled properly right from the start: Jonna took lessons from Nicole Werner and Mendelsohn (by Houston) was the final step. Jonna was riding small tour in no time.

EYE FOR TALENT

In 2006, the Schelstraete family moved to Gemonde, with the idea of creating a simple dressage stable there.



The passion of the schelstraete family (Luc, Jonna, Oskar, Amber and Micky from left to right): practising top-class sport and training talented dressage horses to the absolute top.

"We built the outside arena and had a small stable with six stalls next to the house," says Luc, "We were offered horses by breeders, in which we invested half ourselves. Then it went fast. The horses sold very well. We wanted to expand and from 2010 we started talking to the municipality about new building plans." During that time Jonna started to take lessons from Anky van Grunsven and competed twice at the World Championships Young Horses in Verden; with Alonzo (by Contango) and Chicago (by Vivaldi). Alonzo was sold to the American Katherine Bateson Chandler and is now part of the American A-squad under the name Alcazar.



The empty spot left by these two horses was quickly filled by Carl Hester's Grand Prix horse Lie bling (by Lorentin I), who was purchased so Jonna could ride Grand Prix. Also the top horse Buriël (by Osmium) comes from the stables of Schelstraete Horses.

"When I saw a video of Buriël I said: 'that will be an Olympic horse'", tells Luc passionately. Jonna trained him and he was sold to the Swedish Juliëtte Ramel, who competed with the gelding at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, the WEG in Tryon and the European Championships in Rotterdam and Verden. Also the recently sold Grand Charmeur (by Apache) to Katherine Bateson Chandler is such a pearl. Jonna guided the gelding, who

was jointly owned by Ad Valk, at the age of four and built up a list of honour with many international successes in the Small Tour. After that daughter Micky took over the reins and rode with him very successfully at the Juniors.

MINI-JONNA: MICKY

Micky has always had a passion for equestrian sports. She loves nothing more than riding and her ambition is to take over the stable in the long run. Every day, she trains three to six horses, in addition to her MBO study Communication & Marketing. Fortunately, at school they are cooperative in realizing her top-level sporting ambitions. "I hope to finish school in three years and then I want to focus

fully on training, launching and selling horses", says Micky passionately. "Sportingly I hope to reach the Grand Prix one day. Which is quickly followed by: "Preferably as soon as possible, of course, although I'm only sixteen." To achieve her goals, Micky receives the necessary guidance. Besides the supervision of her mother Jonna, she trains with Emmelie Scholtens, Francis Verbeek and Diederik Wigmans. Not only in terms of coaching Micky gets all the opportunities. She also has plenty of talented horses. Since December, Micky is riding the KWPN stallion Cachet L (by Jazz), which >>

Interview

Joop van Uyttert has been made available. Until now the handsome brown stallion only competed young horses. With Mirelle van Kemenade he went to the World Championships for Young Horses twice. The goal is to start him in the Small Tour this year. With scores above 70 percent in the Juniors and even above 75 percent in the ZZlicht, they are well on their way. Besides Cachet Micky also rides the ten year old Gregwaard (by Florencio), Elcapone and Layla Amanda (by Alexandro P).

The latter became champion of the Gelderlander mares as a three-year old. "Layla is only five years old and always in the mood for everything. She is now running M2 and is learning fast. The planning is to start her at the Juniors beginning of next year." The three year old In Style stallion Night Star is also ridden by Micky. He is jointly owned by Joop van Uyttert and has been under the saddle for about three months now. Luc sees a lot in this beautiful stallion: "He was not selected during the stallion approval, but we are very happy w

whit him. We fell for him when we lunged him. He has a super fine character."

SPRINGS

Although the focus at Schelstraete Horses is mainly on dressage, they are not averse to a trip to Jonna's former love: show jumping. Micky recently started jumping again: "I didn't do it for a couple of years, because my sister Amber was

GREEN HORSE OASIS

Those who enter the Schelstraete Horses premises through the entrance gate can feast their eyes on the horses. What strikes one immediately is the personal attention and love that the horses receive. They are relaxed and shine like a mirror. In a park-like setting on over 2.5 hectares, there are ten meadows, enclosed by wood, divided into four smaller grass paddocks and six larger meadows. In total there are 29 stables, of which 18 are new, spacious stables that were built at the end of April by the horses.

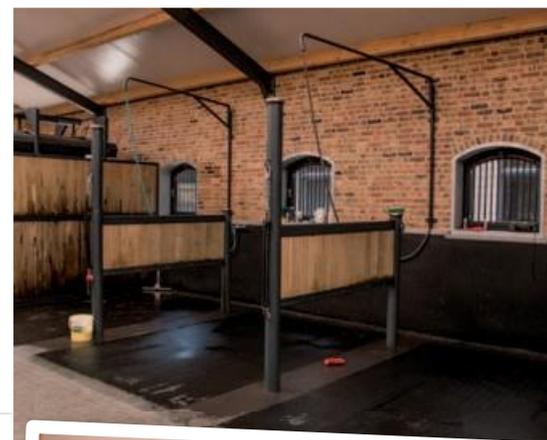
have been put into use. For the training of the horses, there is, in addition to the 20 x 60 outdoor track, a new indoor track built. Furthermore, there is a covered horse walker for six horses with a built-in longeerground and a large shed for the storage of hay, straw, concentrate and the horse trucks.

WORKSHOP

"We wanted a horse complex with a cosy atmosphere, but functional. and everything had to be close together", explains Jonna. Right at the entrance is a centrally located 'work island' with three washing areas, a solarium, a luxurious tack room and a wash room. From here it is only a few steps to the indoor arena, horse walker, outdoor arena and lounge arena. On either side are two stables that can be closed with a sliding door. In this way, clients can wash their horses without having to pass by the stables. Also, this way the stallions can be separated from the mares and geldings and there is a lot of peace and quiet in the stables. In this central area, there is also room for the daily hay, straw and concentrated feed. On a specially made feed wagon hangs a bucket with feed for every horse. "The horses get so many different kinds of feed and supplements that there was no suitable feed cart", says Jonna. "Now, once a day, we prepare each horse's complete ration in their own bucket. Here we then scoop out the feed three times a day."

The front walls of the stables are made of stylish light oak and all the horses can look outside through a hatch. All feed can be given from the outside. There is also an anti-fly system.

and the Grand Charmeur Park; names of horses that have been of great significance for the creation of this beautiful equestrian complex.



The attractive equestrian complex of Schelstraete Horses has been designed with great care. Cosy, functional, with plenty of rest for the horses and a warm atmosphere.

Interview

started jumping on my pony, but since May I'm serious about it again. I have a show jumper in training and I would like to get as high as possible with it. It would also be really cool if I can jump internationally one day."

After her dressage period with the Children, Amber decided to focus on the jumping sport and since a few months she has the experienced 1.50m show jumper Dakota (by Dutch Capitol) at her disposal. The beams in the track have also rekindled Jonna's interest in show jumping. She wants to start again soon with the jumping horses of the girls.

TRAIN TALENT

Jonna is responsible for the daily operations of the stable. She rides five or six horses a day. Three of them are currently competing. With Cupido (by Tuschinski), who she has ridden since he was six years old, she is active in the Grand Prix.

Luc told me at one point that I should start riding dressage.

There was a future there.

"My goal is to get steady 70% there." Jonna rides the seven-year-old chestnut mare Jartoga (by Dream Boy) in the ZZ heavy dressage. She also rides the eight-year-old stallion Ironman (by Ferro). "My favorite horse at the moment is the six year old Ironman (by Ferro).

Desperadoruin Cavallo", tells Jonna. "He is very talented and loves to work. He is now a Z2-level horse. He still gets a bit hot in the changes, but he does the pirouettes very easily. If the

If the changes are relaxed soon, he can go ZZ heavy dressage. And then I hope I can start him in the small tour next year. Luc has high expectations of this horse: "Kavallo could also become a nice U25 horse for Micky, so somewhere we want to keep him."

Does Jonna have any dreams for the future? "Training the horses is something I still enjoy doing. I also enjoy coaching my children in the sport. When I see that Micky can easily get on one of my horses, I enjoy it" Jonna explains

DAILY DISTRIBUTION

The horses come out of their stalls three or four times a day and there are many feeding times. At 6.30am the horses get hay, after which they go in the horse walker for 15 minutes. At 7.30am they get concentrated and at 8am Jonna and Micky start riding. The horses that are not ridden in the morning go out to pasture. Around 11.30 hrs they get hay again, followed by concentrated feed. In the afternoon part of the horses go in the field and another part

Some of them are ridden. At 15.00h the horses get slobber. Some horses go in the horse walker or on the lunge and at 18.00h they all get concentrates again. At the end they get hay again in the evening.



This six year old Kavallo (by Desperado) is Jonna's favourite horse at the moment.

CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY

What is the business philosophy of Schelstraete Horses? "Primarily it is top sport, without that ambition you cannot sell horses", Luc indicates. "The costs for this are so high that a horse has to be sold regularly. Jonna: "Yes, it's a pity, but you have to occasionally." However, quality always comes before quick trade. Luc: "We do not believe in large numbers;

only a few horses are sold each year. You have to build a relationship with your horse, also in handling. Only then will they do something for you in return. So we put a lot of time in it. Another goal is that Micky reaches the highest level, namely breaking through to the Grand Prix."

SUCCESS FORM

When asked how they get their horses to such a high level, Jonna quickly answers: "By very hard work." Micky adds: "Through good >>



Dirk Caremans

The park-like surroundings and the many trees were a requirement for the permit from the municipality.

THE SCHELSTRAETE FAMILY

Jonna (42) didn't have to think twice when, as a nine-year-old girl, she could choose between tennis and horse riding. She was a typical horse girl, looking for ponies to groom on the carriage and spending whole Saturdays cleaning them. In secondary school she saved up for a horse by doing a paper round and at sixteen she went to Deurne. She did apprenticeships at several well-known show jumping stables and started working in the sport: World Championships Young Horses with Alonzo (v. Con-tango) and Chicago (by Vivaldi), KnHs-champion ZZ-Zwaar and many (inter)national Small Tour-successes with Grand Charmeur (by Apache) and Cupido; she rode several horses to Grand Prix. At the moment she is riding international Grand Prix with Cupido (by Tuschinski).

As an eight-year-old boy, **Luc** (61) started riding ponies at De Kleppertjes in Zeeuws Vlaanderen. During his law studies he picked up riding again. When he graduated and became a lawyer, he bought his first horses. Then he started a jumping stable. In 1989 he founded Schelstraete Advocaten, a renowned international law firm with fifteen people primarily involved in equestrian law.

Micky (16) is studying MBO Marketing & Communication and likes to be in the barn all day. Her dream is to take over the horse business in the future. Successes: competed at three European Championships for ponies with Elin's Noncisdador and won team bronze, team silver and an individual fourth place in the FREESTYLE. Won with Grand Charmeur (v. Apache) at the Juniors seven international competitions in one year.

Amber (15) is doing havo (economics & society). At this moment her passion is showjumping and she wants to develop herself further in it. With Burberry (by Lord Loxley) she rode international dressage at the Children. She was reserve at the European Championships 2019.

After the summer, **Oskar** (11) will be attending VWO bilingual school in 's-Hertogenbosch. He would like to develop himself internationally. Oskar has ridden ponies for a number of years, both dressage and jumping. At the moment, however, his passion is football and gaming.

training" Luc adds: "Attention, attention, attention. Jonna: "Yes indeed, we give the horses a lot of attention day in and day out.

way as well. You just try to get the best out of every horse." Together, the family enjoys the horses

SEARCH TRIAL

Luc and Jonna have discovered many top talents in the past. Where do they find these horses? "We think that the KWPN has some very good horses. There are good three and four year old horses out there, if you look good

You don't always have to have the best mover at that age. You look for character and strength. The horse has to have a basic quality, but that alone won't get you there. You have to work hard to get it out.

You shouldn't have the ambition to ride Grand Prix with every horse'.

That is also the strength that makes a horse feel good in his skin." Luc: "We prefer to start with young horses, they are easier to train than the older ones. They have been through a lot. Jonna: "But they sometimes comes your

Luc too, who is primarily involved with his international law firm specializing in equestrian law, also enjoys horses immensely, even though he no longer rides them. "I can really enjoy it when the horses get better and better and the talent that has been spotted is being lived up to."



With the dressage horses, here with Layla Amanda, Cavaletti is also used for variation in the training.



Micky competes the KWPN stallion Cachet L (by Jazz) at the Juniors. She hopes to compete him in the Small Tour later this year.



In the indoor arena there is a lot of light because one long side consists of windows and the other long side is open; a wish of Jonna.



Micky with Gregwaard (by Florencio) on which she competes at ZZ-light level and Junior

The most important thing is to lead and for that I really applaud Jonna. She is very good at teaching appuyements, changes and pirouettes." "Finding a six or seven year old is more difficult, because they have to be well educated from the age of three" Luc continues.

'The training is the most important thing and for that I really applaud Jonna'.

"We are now looking for one for Micky, so that she can continue. People often don't want to get rid of the good horses. This also offers prospects for Micky again, because we believe that if you can train you can earn a living.

SETTING LIMITS

To guard the quality of Schelstraete Horses, the pair of denizens is critically examined. "We continue to select in order to maintain the number limited and sell at the right time"

tells Luc. "The maximum is really twenty to twenty-two horses in the stable. Two professional riders can't ride ten horses a day. Certainly not if you also go to competitions. Furthermore, you shouldn't have the ambition to ride Grand Prix with every horse. Sometimes

you have to say: this is a nice Junior or Small Tour horse. Despite all the love for the horses, the idea is that the stable should be self-supporting. Our law firm has nothing to do with it. Some people think it's my hobby, but it's not. There are times that Jonna does better and there are times that I do better", concludes Luc.

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