




## DUTCH DRESSAGE AUTUMN/ WINTER NEWSLETTER



It's hard to believe it but we are now at the end of Autumn, in fact we are nearly in winter – Autumn is late this year.

As far as the weather is concerned, we are not complaining, although for our horses we are constantly changing rugs – where would we be without the iPhone and digital weather updates. One day it's light rugs, the next it's heavy weight – it's hard to know where we are with alternating warm and cold nights, but we do think that winter is setting in. The warmer month of October certainly made riding a lot more pleasant for everyone.

We've had a lot of improvements and additions to our facilities over the past few months. Firstly, we have put down rubber surfacing on the horse walker. The rubber pieces which arrived on various pallets and looked a bit scary to some of our horses were shaped we thought like a jigsaw puzzle.



In which case you would expect they would fit together easily?!!



As it turned out an easy job it was not – Liewe (Okke's father) and our very helpful neighbour Dan, spent literally days cutting, measuring and I have no doubt cursing in putting this surface down. It proved to be a very difficult and tricky job. The quality and the result however is fantastic and a massive thanks for accomplishing such a difficult task.

The next additions were the arena mirrors. These run the length of the short end of the far side of the arena and are huge and fantastic. The job, once again presented a challenge.

You cannot hang these mirrors completely straight – unbeknown to all if upright, they give a "hall of mirrors" effect which is not good and hardly flattering.


The first stage was to design and build enormous frames - again a massive thanks to Liewe, Dan and Antja who spend hours painting 100 posts, black, to kick the project off.





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If the construction exercise wasn't difficult enough the even trickier bit started. The tilting at the right angle and the adjustments meant walking to the far end of the arena to see whether you could actually see yourself clearly in them – if not, they needed a miniscule tilt, and this was to say the least, very difficult. Eventually however, it all came together and they have been a great success.



Of course, whilst all this was happening horses still needed to be trained and ridden. As you can imagine this caused all types of spooky behaviour and surprisingly not from the horses we expected. Some were just horrified and wouldn't go anywhere near this strange object that had attached itself to one end of their arena. Others seemed very puzzled that a horse appeared to be coming towards them, trotting alongside them and then didn't come out at the other end.

It took some brave riding but after much perseverance they are all now totally non-plused by the whole construction.



The result is we can now see how we are sitting (oh dear, what a revelation), watch whether we are straight or simply admire the horse or in some cases I suspect ourselves. They do however look great and work very well and an unexpected benefit - they have the added addition of providing a wind block.

Our training clinics with Luke Baber-Davies have been going very well. He trains all his pupils very hard (including Okke who to our amazement manages to do more than one lesson). The results are excellent, and we are all inspired so thank you Luke for all your help.

Okke has been working with liveryes and training a variety of horses over the summer months. He has been out competing with great results and additionally we should not forget our livery Jenny Downing who works very hard with her young horse, Farben Frohe – aka Goose who has also been doing well. I think if we take the year as a whole, for everyone at Dutch Dressage we can see massive progress with all our horses and riders with Okke's support and training.



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Talking of training and competing here are our main results. Whilst we have been out competing a lot and have done very well with great scores, our most recent successes which lead to qualifiers were at Sheepgate over Friday 26<sup>th</sup> / Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October.



Jenny Downing and "Goose"

Seagry Asienna (Sienna - owner Marianne Wood) won all her classes with wins of 67% in the Advanced Medium Music and winning with 66% in the Advanced Medium Freestyle. Okke's own horse - Aldsvir Bese (Alfie) came third in the Prix St George Small Tour Qualifier and is through to the championships on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> December at Keysoe. Okke also had a great outing with Gorklintgards Swift (Spike), a young horse owned by Deborah Boreham with a 2<sup>nd</sup> placing in Novice 23 with a score of 68% at Wix on the 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Jenny Downing too had an successful outing at Sheepgate with Farben Frohe over the same weekend with great marks and excellent placings winning the Blue Chip Novice 37a with 65.93%, gaining two second places in the Blue Chip Novice 38 – 67.74% and Novice Freestyle 69.17% and a fourth placing in Elementary 43 with a score of 62.76%. If you are wondering what Farben Frohe means – it means colourful and he is certainly that! Both Seagry Asienna and Farben Frohe have qualified for the Music Regionals and all have qualified for the Sheepgate Tack and Togs Championships.

Looking back, it's been a great year at Dutch Dressage, lots of growth and more horses to train and we hope with 2019 that we will be going on to greater things. In the meantime, we will leave you to wrap up warm and will catch up again with all our readers during the festive period.





