

FREESTYLE'S GRACE AND POWER

IT may seem absurd to label Charlotte Dujardin "one to watch", but it's actually Mount St John Freestyle (right) who is stepping into this spotlight.

She aced the young horse PSG class qualifier and the subsequent gala final, both with over 80%.

Freestyle exudes the same power-grace qualities as Valegro, performing with expression, relaxation and magnificent power.

If she continues her current

trajectory, she will be a force to be reckoned with at international grand prix, and Charlotte has the 2018 World Equestrian Games on the radar for Mount St John's



Fidermark x Donnerhall mare.

Charlotte's other ride in the class, the Jazz gelding En Vogue, finished second but carved out his own glory by winning Sunday's Premier League PSG.

age [11] and certainly hasn't seen this kind of atmosphere, so it was quite a big ask for her. This was her first inter I and she felt a bit green and tired after competing two days running in the heat. I had to push a bit, but I don't know her well enough yet to know what I can and can't do.

"She's tricky at home; she's a wimp and spooks at the same things every day; she's sensitive and hates getting things wrong. But she doesn't look at anything at a show — she wants to do the job, which is exciting. She's got the most amazing hindleg, which can push her into the wrong balance at the moment, but she'll strengthen up. I think she's a through-and-through grand prix horse."

Charlotte also won the advanced medium 98 on Carl Hester and Isabel Barber's Ekitof with 74.3%. The eight-year-old Zuccero gelding hasn't competed since Amy Woodhead rode him at

ONE TO WATCH

ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

The little touches create the magic

Richard Davison praises the show's organisation and volunteers' generosity

EVENT director Phillip Cheetham and his team put on another great show this year. It is always a rider-friendly event and any inevitable niggles are sorted out by the multi-tasking Phillip without any fuss. That included hand-delivering supergroom Alan Davies a bottle of wine to thank him for bringing so many horses — including Valegro.

From my involvement of running a number of dressage events I know at first hand just how much work and graft is needed. We riders can be all too quick to complain about things, or question arrangements, without realising the implications on all the many other aspects involved in running an event. It was therefore great to hear that Charlie and Abi Hutton, together with Maria Eilberg and Anne Dunham, all volunteered to help with jobs, including writing for the judges and scoring.

GAINING INSIGHT

HARTPURY had another good team of both national and

Richard Davison is a quadruple Olympian and well-respected trainer as well as active within the FEI.

OPINION

international judges and writing for them is actually an excellent way of learning and gaining insight into the complex task we challenge our hard-working judges with.

That also applies to the duties of official stewards. They have an important supervisory role including, among other things, maintaining horse welfare and keeping things running to time often while interacting with riders and their connections at stressful moments.

Over the years I've noticed that the best stewards get the job done with little fuss and are unobtrusive; they solve problems as opposed to seeking them out. Fortunately, Britain has a number of good stewards who combine these special human skills, and I think Dan Chapman is an impeccable role model for any aspiring steward.

It was great the FEI steward general, Jacques van Dael, was at Hartpury to conduct an FEI stewards course and provide expert guidance.

A POSITIVE STEP

I WAS very pleased with how our two horses went. We're



taking a long-term approach with Bubblingh and allowing his rate of physical development to dictate his show plan and targets.

We're selecting shows with the right amount of atmosphere needed for his mental development. Hartpury's outdoor arena with raised seating area and surrounding shops, together with the buzz during the indoor gala evening, can be a step too far for some horses, but Bubblingh coped well — and with high percentages in both the grand prix and the freestyle, the show did him good.

Gill and Alfranco (Alfie) produced another strong grand prix special test, resulting in a plus-71% and third place behind two British Olympic horses

and they are now showing their competitiveness at the top end of the line-up.

It took some persuasion to get Alfie out of bed for the test (see picture, below), but he was on point when he finally did rouse himself.

With more than 680 tests performed, Hartpury was a busy show and — together with the paras' final selection trials for the European Championships — there was plenty of nail-biting tension created.

It's great to see new kids on the block alongside experienced campaigners and, along with everyone else, I shall be following the forthcoming Europeans in August. **H&H**



NEXT WEEK

Renowned rider and trainer Pammy Hutton