



LANE CLARKE

Perseverance Pays Off in the Big Ring

Lane Clark could possibly be one of the most entertaining and energetic young trainers in our sport. In 2003, he won his first Grand Prix at the age of seventeen by winning the \$25,000 Regency Grand Prix at Rancho Mirage. In 2004, he was named the Pacific Coast Horse Show Association Grand Prix Rookie of the Year.

He is precise, detailed, verbose and driven. He is also sympathetic, loyal, sincere and downright hilarious on occasion, however, the most endearing trait in this young man is his complete trust and optimistic view of the world around him. He has persevered and endured through Grand Prix after Grand Prix as his own riding career works its way to the top in the top classes of our sport.

One of those classes was the Blenheim-Orange County Register \$30,000 Grand Prix on the grass in San Juan Capistrano. Visibly emotional, he shook hands with Melissa Braunstein and Robert Ridland as they presented the trophy, then riding a fairly new horse to his list of show rides, Granville's Casseur De Prix, Lane lead the group in the victory gallop, the blue neck sash on the horse billowing in the breeze. Tipping his hat to the spectators on his way around the ring, he gave the big bay horse a pat as he left the ring.

Back at the barn, the champagne flowed in celebration of his victory, the first one in eight years. Lane, in his usual manner, made his way through the people to make sure everyone had their drink or snack. Taking lots of time to laugh and chat with each one, he continually hugged



and thanked his owner, Mary Spicer of Granville Equine. He was having a well deserved grand time!

This class's victory was not a fluke, and it was not necessarily a "lucky" ride. It was the culmination of the consistency and tenacity of this rider and his riding program. "Lucky" means having just a lucky break at a specific time, and he may have had a bit of that. But more likely this win is the result of consistently and methodically working his way to the top, one class at a time. In the eight years since his first Grand Prix win as a Rookie, he has been in the prizes a dozen or more time each year. Consistency can be built on; "luck" just comes along once in a while.

"I actually got excited when I walked

the course and saw that tricky turn as an option that could be so much quicker," said Lane. "I figured I would rather make that tight turn than just running faster going around. I practice those types of rides at home all the time with my horses and students, it keeps the horses careful and the students thinking. On this course on this horse, I am glad it was the ideal track and it worked for me."

"You know," he continued, "it felt nice to win after this length of time. I have had some really good horses, and think I was always knocking on the door, but this horse and I are a pretty ideal match. We are both tall and lanky and we get along well since we are both a bit sensitive, possible he more than me," he says with a laugh.

"When you win you have so many people to thank, I hope I don't forget anyone! The most important factor is the depth of our entire team. A special thanks to the Spicer family who own Casseur, but to all my owners along the way. Of course Mickey Hayden but then the unsung people who get overlooked sometimes. The vets, Dr Bob Betty and Dr. Jennifer Reese, shoe Melvin Reynolds, the grooms of course, and the clients who sit on the rail and encourage me."

"Without the sponsors, in this case the Orange County Register, we wouldn't have these classes so a thanks to them. And finally to Blenheim for putting these shows together and bringing Linda Allen in to set our track," he says as he wraps up. ♦

Opposite Page: Lane Clark and Granville's Casseur De Prix, Photo © Flying Horse Photography.

This Page Left to Right: Lane Clark riding, Bob Drennan, Melissa Braunstein, Mary Spicer, Mickey Hayden and Robert Ridland, Photo © Flying Horse Photography.