
Book Review

In One Arena: Top Dressage Experts Share their Knowledge through the Levels

By Sharon Biggs

Hardcover, 180 pages, \$32.95. To order, call Half Halt Press at (301) 733-7119. Also available from The Equine Collection by calling (800) 952-5813 or visit the Web site theequinecollection.com.

Reviewed by Reina Abelshauser

Author Sharon Biggs is a former dressage trainer and chairperson of the San Diego Chapter of the California Dressage Society. Now a freelance writer, her book, *In One Arena*, is a compilation of the advice, viewpoints and experiences of 28 well-known riders, trainers,

judges and veterinarians about horses, riders, horse buying, competing, feeding, dressage training and movements.

Divided into four parts, the first focuses on the dressage horse with advice and anecdotes from dressage experts such as Olympic riders Christopher Bartle and Hilda Gurney and USA Equestrian veterinarian Dr. A. Kent Allen and biomechanics researcher Dr. Hilary Clayton.

The second part deals with the rider. But rather than talking about position faults and the correct aids, Biggs' experts discuss general subjects such as the psychology of climbing the levels, a rider's experience in Europe, becoming a professional rider, avoiding frustration and how to gain sponsorship. In her chapter about sport psychology, Timmy Pollock, licensed clinical and sport psychologist, tells how riders can improve mental skills: set goals, visualize, have positive self-talk and concentrate.

"Success can only be defined by the individual," says Pollock. "What is success to you? Does it mean making the Olympic team? Does it mean that you know how to ride and train lots of different horses? Or is it knowing you know how to ride and train one horse to Grand Prix? Or is it knowing you know how to train any horse to Second Level? The inability to succeed comes when you're not clear about your goals," she says, following with advice on how to define goals.

The third section discusses experts' views including FEI "O" judge Axel Steiner and rider, trainer and FEI "C" judge Janet Brown. Brown and Steiner reveal aspects of judging horse and rider—how to avoid losing "stupid" points by not being accurate. They explain what judges expect to see from horse and rider, what things they score particularly high, how a rider can improve her scores and if dressage competition and judging in gen-

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eral are changing.

Professional show groom Katherine Bateson follows with her daily routine at Robert Dover's farm and with tips for grooming at shows. Former tack store owner Annie McCutchen talks about rider turnout, and FEI veterinarian Richard Markell explains how to deal with veterinary inspections.

Part four of *In One Arena* is a well-rounded collection of training tips. Enjoy learning what top dressage riders Guenter Seidel, Anne Gribbons, Jane Weatherwax, Steffen Peters, Gerhard Politz, Charlotte Bredahl-Baker, Jeremy Steinberg and Evi Strasser have to say about topics such as the training scale, collection, extensions, canter-walk transitions, counter canter, shoulder-in and haunches-in, half pass, flying changes, pirouettes and passage. The reader is offered classical how-to advice as well as hints to correct common problems and faults. Then the reader is given a source guide with suggested reading.

In One Arena is a valuable addition to your riding literature, especially for the less experienced rider, giving a broad spectrum of different aspects of the world of dressage and competition. With many color photos throughout, the book is a celebration of the sport of dressage and will provide hours of entertainment as well as advice to be turned to again and again.

FOR MORE ANSWERS TO your training and other dressage-related questions, check out the Web site equisearch.com. You also can submit questions to the site, and we'll have the dressage community's most respected riders, trainers, judges or equine health-care professionals answer them. A partner of

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