



# Equestrian Illustrated



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Photo Courtesy of Fabio Petroni/UJRC

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Photo of Fabio Petroni

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Photo Courtesy of Fabio Petroni/UJRC

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## SADDLE THEM UP

It is with extreme pleasure that we would like to introduce the first issue of Equestrian Illustrated. As a welcome, we start with a selection of illustrious tributes to horses, randomly chosen amongst prestigious personalities both from the past and the present.



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Kirsten Dunst in a still from the film *Melancholia* (2011), by Lars Von Trier (Photo Courtesy of BIM Distribuzione)

“When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk; he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.” (William Shakespeare, *Henry V*)

“He’s of the colour of the nutmeg. And of the heat of the ginger.... he is pure air and fire; and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him, but only in patient stillness while his rider mounts him; he is indeed a horse, and all other jades you may call beasts.” (William Shakespeare, *Henry V*)

“No hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle.” (Winston Churchill)

“Four things greater than all things are - Women and Horses and Power and War.” (Rudyard Kipling, *The Ballad of the King’s Jest*)

“I’d rather have a goddam horse. A horse is at least human, for God’s sake.” (J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*)

“The spirited horse, which will try to win the race of its own accord, will run even faster if encouraged.” (Ovid)

“One of the best pieces of advice I ever got was from a horse master. He told me to go slow to go fast. I think that applies to everything in life. We live as though there aren’t enough hours in the day but if we do each thing calmly and carefully we will get it done quicker and with much less stress.” (Viggo Mortensen)

“No philosophers so thoroughly comprehend us as dogs and horses.” (Herman Melville)

“I grew up in New Mexico, and the older I get, I have less need for contemporary culture and big cities and all the stuff we are bombarded with. I am happier at my ranch in the middle of nowhere watching a bug carry leaves across the grass, listening to silence, riding my horse, and being in open space.” (Tom Ford)

# LORENZO DE LUCA

BY CATERINA VAGNOZZI

From a small equestrian centre on the outskirts of Lecce to the most prestigious stages in international showjumping.



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orenzo De Luca, 29, has been part of the Italian Air Force's Sports Centre since 2015 with the rank of Chosen Airman and he is the Italian horseman who, more than anyone else, has been making headlines in international show jumping. A few weeks ago, he

finally fulfilled his dream: he made the Top 20 in the Longines FEI Ranking List.

Last July, he literally caught the attention of both insiders and equestrian sports enthusiasts with his result in Dublin's historic CSIO: first place with the Italian dream team in four categories at the Nations Cup (along with Piergiorgio Bucci, Emilio Bicocchi and Bruno Chimirri), and a first place in Longines Grand Prix of Ireland, which really gave weight to his performance.

An impressive tally of victories. "Actually – said De Luca – the week of competitions in Dublin felt truly magical. Everything went well: the horses were in perfect shape, I was in higher spirits every day and I knew I could be really competitive. My team mates and staff helped create the ideal atmosphere".

If someone had told an 18-year-old Lorenzo that it would take him just 10 years, although 10 years of hard work, to fulfil his dream of becoming a big name in international show jumping, he would have never believed it.

It was undoubtedly a tough decision for him "I picked up horse riding while on holiday, on the seaside. No one in my family had ever had anything to do with horses. My father is a building contractor and my mother works at the supermarket. My dad was against it, but he bought Saturno, my first horse, in exchange for a little work.

After school I would ride the horses of a small, local merchant and I would groom them too. The problem, or, now that I think of it, the opportunity, came when I graduated from high school. I didn't want to keep working with my dad because I didn't like it. Instead, I was terribly fascinated by the world of horses. There was no other solution: I left without a penny in my pocket. I had nothing but my moped. I took my horse and I went to Sacrofano, on the outskirts of Rome. Simone Coata is a friend of mine, we're the same age, and I was welcomed in his father's stable. I could also count on my first small salary. My mom was the only member of my family I would talk to at that time. My career as a horseman continued in Modena, with Borghi, for four years, it was there

Portrait of Lorenzo De Luca  
(Photo Courtesy of Fabio Petroni/TjRC)

Lorenzo De Luca and Balou de Coeur Joye  
(Photo Courtesy of CSIO Roma/M.Prolì)



Lorenzo De Luca and Eleonora Moroni Ottaviani  
(Photo Courtesy of Fabio Petroni/ITRC)



that I was introduced to Gianni Govoni's stable."

This horseman had a lot of talent, the right character, but, most of all, clear ideas. His professional career was the consequence of a lot of sacrifices, which were finally rewarded in 2015, when he joined Stephan Conter's Stephex Stables, one of the most important stables for the trade of high-level show jumping horses.

"Rori Marzotto helped me enter the international stages, she is an equestrian sports enthusiast and a horse owner, and she offered me the chance to ride her young horses and to move in with Henk Nooren, the Dutch trainer of the French team. The top riders used to train in his stable near Liegi twice a week. It was like going to University."

The definitive transfer to Belgium came in 2012, when Lorenzo, while competing in Arezzo, met Neil Jones, whom he had already met while staying with Nooren, and was asked to work for him. The road to the international stages was open once again.

"Jones really believed in me and he made me train with good horses – said de Luca – I began riding horses owned by important individuals such as Michael Collins and Luck Tilleman. In 2013 I went to Florida for the winter season and that's where I really gained experience. There were some great competitions: three months of races with the best North American horsemen and each one a chance to stand out."

The relationship with Stephan Conter began after the WEG in Normandy in 2014, when Lorenzo was part of his team. "I didn't think about it twice and, in January 2015, I moved to Bruxelles. Stephan's stable is really wonderful and extremely functional. It was recently enlarged with a new wing. We're five horsemen taking care of his horses: Daniel Deusser, he is the best and he is a great point of reference for all of us, the two Swedes, Jonna Ekberg and Petronella Anderson, and the French, Robinson Maupiler. Each one of us takes care of fifteen horses and has a dedicated staff: two grooms and a horseman to move the horses. We're really busy and I

think there may be only two or three weekends a year where we don't compete".

Lorenzo De Luca, besides from being an excellent horseman, is a really lovable and friendly person. "I'm really satisfied with my work and with the confidence that Stephen Conter placed in me. My greatest pride is seeing the passion with which he follows the horses' improvements and their results. This sport is the most important thing to him. The fact that I contributed to the good results that Italy has achieved at this year's Nations Cup were a source of motivation for him as well. The horses are all improving and I'm improving with them".

He has a long road ahead of him, but the indoor competition season has started well for the young horseman from Puglia who has placed fifth in the temporary overall ranking after the first three legs of the Longines FEI World Cup (Oslo, Helsinki and Lyon). In Verona, his fourth participation and a special competition for all the Italian horsemen, De Luca was determined and motivated after the third place in the Grand Prix in Lyon, which was won by his teammate Deusser. Another result to mark his extraordinary professional growth. "2016 has been a special year and being part of the Italian team in many CSIO and in the final of the Furusiyya Fei Nations Cup in Barcellona definitely contributed to my technical improvement and growth. We finally have a competitive Italian team and the high spirits in the team are a great source of motivation".



Lorenzo De Luca and Ensor De Litrange Lxii (Photo Courtesy of CSIO Roma/M.Proli)