



**PRESSRELEASE #2**

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**JUMPING VERONA - TAKING ITS PLACE IN ITALIAN HISTORY**

This year the world-famous **Fieracavalli**, a spectacular festival that celebrates horses and a wide range of horse sports, marks its **120th anniversary**. The showjumping World Cup joined the programme of events in 2001 and, in 2012, a special venue was created entirely for international show jumping champions: more than 14,000 sq.m. of competition and warm-up arenas, grandstands with 4,000 seats, five-star stables and exhibition halls displaying top equestrian brands.



Ph. JV/SGrasso

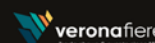
As **Maurizio Danese, President of the Fieracavalli**, says, *“we have created a context of excellence to host the best horses and riders in the world rankings. A challenge that is taken up once more in 2018 with the 18th edition of Jumping Verona, the only Italian stage of the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™”*.

From the outset the Italian round of the series has always attracted the stars of the sport, and nothing changes. Last year it was The Netherland’s Maikel van der Vleuten and his brilliant Verdi who won the major competition

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of the weekend, the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ in which riders earn qualifying points towards the annual final which will take place in Gothenburg, Sweden in April 2019. And there have sometimes been surprises.

One of those was the victory of Egypt's Abdel Said the previous year with Hope van Scherpen Donder and the success of the youngest-ever Verona winner, Ireland's Bertram Allen was only 19 years old when coming out on top with his lovely grey mare, Molly Malone, two years earlier.

Dutchman Albert Zoer is the only two-time winner, and on both occasions he reigned supreme with the characterful Okidoki. World and Olympic champion Rodrigo Pessoa from Brazil was the star of the 2002 fixture with Gandini Lianos, while Olympic, World and European champion Jeroen Dubbeldam from The Netherlands steered BMC Van Grunsven Simon to success in 2010 and Britain's Michael Whitaker joined older brother John on the list of winners in 2009.

Whose name will be carved into the history books and into the Jumping Verona 2018 Roll of Honour? We can't wait to find out!!

### ITALIAN STYLE....

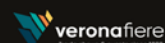
Italy's **Duccio Bartalucci** will be a busy man over the next few days because he has three jobs to do - as Show Director for Jumping Verona and as trainer and manager of the Italian riders. He's done it before, taking on the role of Verona Show Director 10 years ago with great success and he's a popular choice once again. And he does it with such style...



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When he came to Dublin Horse Show some years ago the Irish media were spell-bound by the Italian Chef d'Equipe in jeans and a sharp jacket who looked like he'd just stepped off a yacht in the Mediterranean. He became the photographer's celebrity of the week as they followed him all around the Royal Dublin Society showgrounds.

He'd been there before of course because at the height of his own showjumping career with Grand Duc, he represented Italy at the World Championships in Dublin, where Germany's Norbert Koof and Fire, Britain's Malcolm and Anglezarke and Michel Robert from France claimed gold and silver and bronze. What a field of horses lined out that year - the great Galoubet ridden by Gilles de Balanda for France, the incredible Deister with Germany's Paul Deister and Rockbarton with Capt Gerry Mullins on board were just some of those that have firmly carved their names into the showjumping history books. When Duccio was competing he was in the company of some of the greatest legends of all time.

Another Italian to look out for this week will be **Riccardo Pisani** who has been really making waves in the sport this year.

His debut in the Verona leg of the World Cup has come after a very impressive season for this 37-year-old rider from Lombardy. He was selected to ride for Team Italia and competed in the Hickstead and Gijon Nations Cups this summer and, riding the powerful **Chaclot**, he was one of the leading riders at the Longines FEI Nations Cup™ Final in Barcelona, Spain last month where they produced two wonderful clear rounds.

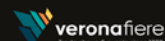
### HONEYMOON FOR SIMONE IN THE CITY OF LOVE!

Just a week after celebrating her marriage to fiancée Hansi Goskowitz, first in traditional Bavarian style and then in a fairytale white dress, newly-crowned showjumping world champion **Simone Blum** from Germany will compete at **Jumping Verona**. And what a reception she is likely to get as she rides into the arena with the wonderful mare DSP Alice whose performances at the **FEI World Equestrian Games in Tryon**, USA last month were nothing less than perfection.

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Ph. FEI/Tony Parkes

Verona is a romantic place at any time, as home to Shakespeare’s timeless love story of Romeo and Juliet. No doubt Simone and Hansi will walk the streets of this beautiful Italian city that welcomes the world all year round, and which will be filled with equestrian fans and athletes over the coming days. The restaurants will be crowded, the shops will be packed and the stadium in **Pavilion 8** will be filled with the sound of noisy spectators roaring encouragement to their favourite horse-and-rider partnership when the action gets underway on Friday.

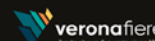
The ease with which DSP Alice tackled the five tough rounds of World Championship competition in Tryon was astounding, but how will the brilliant mare perform in the much tighter confines of indoor competition? If Simone should succeed in winning Sunday’s feature Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ qualifier which is the third leg of the 2018/2019 Wester European League series, then she will be only the second lady rider to do so. The single previous female winner was Switzerland’s Lesley McNaught Maendli who came out on top with Dulf when the Italian leg of the series was staged in Bologna back in 1999.

But Simone is used to making new records. When she soared to success in Tryon she was also only the second lady rider ever to take the world title, following in the footsteps of Canada’s Gail Greenough who clinched victory with Mr T in 1986.

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Simone's new husband, Hansi, was the one who found Alice for her so no wonder she loves this man so much! It was four years ago when he spotted the chestnut horse that first put his wife-to-be on the German map when winning the National Ladies Championship in 2016. And after the pair were invited to compete in the 2017 Mens Championship which they won in fine style they continued to go from strength to strength, finally putting on the most breathtaking exhibition of jumping to take the world title just five short weeks ago.

So it's a big Verona welcome to Simone, Hansi and Alice - wishing them all the best for this weekend and for their exciting future together!

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