



KELLY HOUTAPPELS-BRUDER **EQUESTRIAN OF THE YEAR**



Photo Credit: Melanie Guillamot

Kelly Houtappels-Bruder named Equestrian of the Year

Kelly Houtappels-Bruder has been named the 2022 Equestrian of the Year – The Dr. George Jacobsen Trophy winner. Created in 1995, this award honours the founder of the Canadian Equestrian Federation and is given to an equestrian athlete who has excelled in equestrian competition in the award year while demonstrating exceptional talent, horsemanship, sportsmanship and dedication to equestrian sport, as well as the vision and mission of EC.

Horses have been a part of Houtappels-Bruder’s life for as long as she can remember. With her mother being an avid equestrian, it ensured she was sitting on a pony before she could walk! “The best day of the year as a child was skipping school to go to the Royal Winter Fair. I then chose to go to the University of Guelph, so I could live at home and keep riding,” said Houtappels-Bruder. When it was not financially



feasible to own and compete her own horse, she worked as a groom across Canada and the United States just to stay involved.

In 2008, she travelled to Europe to take a placement as a working student in Belgium and ended up staying on permanently. Houtappels-Bruder, who now resides in Steensel, Netherlands, started her own Gendersteyn Stables in 2011 with her husband Frank. Over the last 12 years, she has built a great team that she recognizes for their role in her success, including her groom and navigator Meike Paridaans, and her coach Camilla Sygall, who has been instrumental in her development as a driver and rider. She also gives credit to her parents, her husband and her son Arthur (along with a number of friends) who are always one hundred percent supportive of her chasing her dreams.

Houtappels-Bruder of course also gives a great deal of credit to her horse Flip (Fidertanz x Carprilli), a 15-year-old Oldenburg gelding she co-owns with her husband, who they bought from their neighbour in 2014.

As the current number one ranked driver in the FEI Driving World Rankings – Singles, Houtappels-Bruder had a very successful year. One of her highlights for 2022 was winning the bronze medal at the World Championships in Le Pin-au-Haras, FRA, and she remains decidedly proud of her world ranking. “I am most proud of that ranking,” Houtappels-Bruder said, “as it shows consistency and high level of performance that we achieved throughout the year.”

She also looked to other achievements past and present. “Winning the silver medal in Pau at the 2020 World Championships was also up there and just last week we achieved a personal best dressage score at the CAI3* in Weteringen, which shows that Flip just keeps getting better and better.”

Houtappels-Bruder’s 2023 show season began with a second place finish at CAI3* Weteringen. “Soon we are heading to the three star at the Royal Windsor Horse Show which is definitely the highlight on the calendar this year,” she said.

The rest of the season for Houtappels-Bruder and Flip will include several more shows across Europe and some national shows with young horses. Her eyes are already set on next year’s goals. “We are keeping our eye on the 2024 World Championships which will be held next year in Le Pin au Haras, France.”