

Shepherd And Triompf Reprise Their Hunter Derby Victory In Texas

At the Fleur de Lis Classic, they prove last year's win was no fluke.

BY ANNE LANG
PHOTOS BY DAVID MULLINIX

Holly Shepherd considers the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby at the Fleur de Lis Classic in Bartonville, Texas, one of the hardest derbies in the country. But you wouldn't know it by looking at her record: On Oct. 28, she topped the event for the second consecutive year aboard Triompf.

"The land is very, very hilly, and it's a challenge coming off some of those hills and riding to the jumps," said Shepherd of the course at the "specialty" show, which offers just four classes.

Shepherd and Triompf won the classic and the handy rounds, amassing a final score of 367 in a field of 21 entries. Tracey Fenney finished second in both rounds and overall (329) aboard Didi MacKenzie's To The Nines.

Shepherd, 42, who operates out of her 60-acre Accolade Farms in Grand Bay, Ala., has campaigned the 8-year-old Dutch Warmblood (Tangelo van de Zuuthoeve—Etriompf, Le Mexico) for mother-daughter owners Loretta and Sarah Patterson of Omaha, Neb., since importing him from the Netherlands in September 2010. The handsome gelding won a national hunter classic less than a week after stepping off the van.

"T" proved himself to be versatile as well, succeeding in both hunter derbies and grand prix—occasionally on the same day. In six international hunter derbies this season, he's thrice finished in the top three, including another clean-sweep win at the Gulf Coast Magnolia Classic IV (Miss.) last

Holly Shepherd and Triompf scored their second consecutive victory in the \$25,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby at the Fleur de Lis Classic.



Julianna Fischer and Lola jumped to a win in the \$10,000 1.25-Meter Jumper Speed Derby at the Fleur de Lis Classic.

February. However, Shepherd knew that course designer Patrick Rodes would present plenty of questions at Fleur de Lis Farm.

"It was pretty trappy and complex, but it was a lovely course," Shepherd said, "very rideable and flowing."

In the classic round, fence 3 caused some trouble. "It was a little bit dark, uphill and a good-sized oxer," said Shepherd. "You had to ride up a big bank and down a couple of hills, then turn on landing, so some horses cross-cantered there. The single fence closest to the cars where a lot of people were tailgating was distracting to some of the horses. And the last line coming home was a little tight; you had to get your horse back and prepare for it."

In the handy round, after the first two fences, "you had to climb a big hill," she explained, "then go over the bank to the trot jump, which was in the trees. To get to fence 8, you had to go up a tiny little hill and jump a fence, then go down into a grob. The second grob after fence 10 was about 13 strides long. I had a hard rub going into it, but I got lucky, and it



didn't fall. Actually, we had a hard rub in each of the rounds, but otherwise, T was pretty amazing."

Shepherd thought she was the only one who jumped the high option at the in-and-out, approached on a downhill track, in both rounds. "In the handy round, I went to the top of the bank and came down for a hard left turn before I jumped that in-and-out," she said. "And after the in-and-out, in both rounds, I took the inside track instead of going

around the big hill. T held all of his leads, which a lot of horses didn't do—and he had some amazing jumps."

T's way of going is one of his best features. "It's enjoyable to watch him go, because he's so soft and light," Shepherd said. "He's so smooth, he never leans on the bridle, and he never makes any major mistakes."

In another repeat of last year, T and Shepherd finished seventh in the \$25,000 Fleur de Lis Grand Prix,

**\$25,000
USHJA INTERNATIONAL HUNTER DERBY
Bartonville, Texas—Oct. 28**

Judges: Panel 1: Mike Moran, Claudia Roland; Panel 2: William Sparks, Claire Pruitt-Gatski

HORSE/RIDER	1ST ROUND		2ND ROUND		TOTAL
	PANEL 1 SCORE/ HEIGHT OPTION	PANEL 2 SCORE/ HEIGHT OPTION	PANEL 1 SCORE/BONUS/ HEIGHT OPTION	PANEL 2 SCORE/BONUS/ HEIGHT OPTION	
1. Triumpf/Holly Shepherd	85/4	84/4	88/7/2	84/7/2	367
2. To The Nines/Tracy Fenney	90/0	86/0	75/3/0	73/2/0	329
3. Cellino/Martien Van Der Hoeven	68/2	69/2	82/6/2	87/6/2	326
4. Amadeo/Bob Brawley	70/0	71/0	77/2/0	88/5/0	313
5. Showtime/Blair Wright	77/0	76/0	72/3/4	75/1/4	312
6. Right On/Ciara Murphy	71/2	68/2	74/1/2	80/0/2	302
7. Coleraine/James Hensen	81/0	83/0	43/0/0	44/1/0	252
8. Usher/Michael Wallace	75/0	70/0	45/0/2	45/1/2	240
9. Copperfield/Erin Jarvis	64/0	75/0	50/1/0	48/0/0	238
10. Priority/Belynda Bond	73/0	72/0	40/0/0	40/2/0	227
11. North Shore/Annie Kartsotis	63.5/0	73/0	30/0/0	35/0/0	201.5
12. Midnight Hour/Wendy Thompson	76/0	71/5	—	—	147.5

15 horses competed.

**\$25,000
FLEUR DE LIS
GRAND PRIX
Bartonville, Texas—Oct. 28**

HORSE/RIDER	FAULTS	TIME	PURSE
1. MTM Centano/ Tracy Fenney	0-0	37.04	7,500
2. NKH Selena/ Christian Heineking	0-0	38.24	5,500
3. MTM Timon/ Tracy Fenney	0-0	38.34	3,250
4. Chakira/ Christian Heineking	0-0	38.63	2,000
5. MTM Genau/ Tracy Fenney	0-0	39.86	1,500
6. Patriot/ Wilton Porter	0-0	40.54	1,250
7. Triumpf/ Holly Shepherd	0-4	39.36	1,000
8. October Hill's Concho/ Erin Davis	0-4	43.77	750
9. South Bound/ Martien Van Der Hoeven	0-8	38.14	750

15 horses competed.



Eugenio Garza captured the \$7,500 Children's/Adult Jumper Classic win for the second consecutive year at the Fleur de Lis Classic, this time aboard Bariano.

contested (as in 2011) just a few hours after the derby. After a clear first round, T dropped a rail at the final fence in the jump-off.

Shepherd said T is pretty much the same horse whether he's galloping around a derby course or a grand prix ring.

"We go from a fat twisted snaffle for the derbies to a white rubber gag in the jumper ring," Shepherd said. "He needs no spurs, and he only sometimes wears a running martingale in the jumpers. I just longe him for 10 minutes before the hunters. I try to keep him engaged in the hunter ring, because sometimes things get a little dull for him during the classic rounds. In the handy rounds, he's a little better because he knows he's on a mission. He's just a lovely horse to ride, very easy. He wants to do the right thing, all the time."

T's energy carries over at home, where his turnout is confined to a couple of hours a day in a smaller paddock, to avoid the risk of injury during his typically rambunctious play time. But Shepherd rarely schools him over fences between shows.

"Once in awhile," she said, "we'll jump a vertical-vertical combination just to stand him up and help keep him round, but mostly I just hack him at home. That keeps him fit enough to be able to do two big classes a day, like the two this weekend."

A normally dormant stubborn streak in T emerges only when he's being hand-grazed. During those times, Shepherd said with a laugh, "you can't get him off the grass. He just plants his feet and won't budge, so if you're going to take him out to graze, you kind of have to take somebody with you."

Mystery Mare Extraordinaire

Julianna Fischer, 20, took a break from her studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas to win against 24 rivals in the \$10,000 1.25-Meter Jumper Speed Derby on her mare, Lola.

Although the Fischers have owned Lola for 10 years, she remains something of an enigma. "No one knows her breed," said Fischer's mother and trainer, Patricia. "When the Dutch people see her, they say she's from Holland. And the French people say she's from France. But she probably came off a cattle truck in South Carolina or something." Lola's age is unknown

as well, although she's estimated to be between 16 and 19.

In 2002, Patricia and Julianna, who are based at their Suncoast Farm in Wellington, Fla., were at a show in Atlanta when Lola's then-owner, Kim Harker, approached them. "[Kim] had seen Juli riding her jumper pony," Patricia recalled, "who was a black version of Lola. She said: 'I have a horse that your daughter can ride. But she's a wild thing; she's hot, she kicks out a lot and she's pretty unorthodox.' I told her I wasn't in the market yet for a horse for Juli [then just 10], but then I saw Lola go in the grand prix, and I was interested.

"I leased her at first," Patricia continued, "but even before we went in our first class, someone tried to buy her from me, so I had to buy her. It turned out to be the best thing we ever did. Lola was a hit right off the bat, and Juli very quickly went into the high juniors on her. Then they started doing the smaller grand prix when Juli was 11."

Julianna and Lola were members of the gold-medal Zone 4 team at the 2008 Adequan/USEF Prix des States championship at the Pennsylvania National. Lola also was Zone 4 junior jumper champion multiple times, and she carried Julianna to 11th place

individually in the young rider show jumping at the 2009 Adequan FEI North American Junior and Young Rider Championships (Ky.).

"Lola would jump through fire," Patricia declared. "She never looks twice at the jumps."

Julianna agreed. "Lola is really smart and very competitive," she said. "You can tell she always wants to win, whether or not you're on board. Having had her for so long, I trust her a lot and she trusts me, so I don't have to do a lot of extra work with her."

However, the "wild" streak that Harker had warned them about is indeed a reality. "She's always kicking out between fences," Julianna admitted, "so you have to just ignore that and trust her to get to the jump, then trust her to listen to you when you do get there."

Physically, the two make a rather unusual pair. "Lola is a very slight, unorthodox horse, which makes it difficult to stay balanced on her because I'm so tall," said the 5'10" Julianna, who as a junior also rode in the national equitation classes under trainer Andre Dignelli. "She's 16 hands, but she's very narrow. It's hard to keep a saddle secure on her because she's shaped like a tooth-paste tube."

Julianna is currently a junior at SMU, working toward double degrees in psychology and anthropology. Aside from her coursework, she's the captain of the SMU Varsity Equestrian Team.

As for her future, Julianna said she'll either pursue a doctorate degree in clinical psychology "or stick with riding." If she chooses the latter, she won't be the first in her family to have a career with horses. Besides Julianna's mother, her older sister, Sandy Van Dyke, is a trainer at Suncoast.

Miracle Match

Shepherd wasn't the only rider to pull off a win in the same class as last year. Eugenio Garza, 16, captured the \$7,500 Children's/Adult Jumper Classic for the second consecutive year. In 2011, he won on his horse Maximus, while this year he scored the victory on Bariano, an 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding (Jet Set D—

Ulderina Van Westleven, Skippy).

In 2010, Garza moved to Hickory Creek, 35 miles northwest of Dallas, from Monterrey, Mexico, with his parents, David and Monica. The Garzas bought a 60-acre farm for their 10 show jumpers. They named the farm El Milagro, meaning "the miracle" in Spanish. Garza, who has been riding for about seven years, attended an American school in Mexico, so he felt right at home at his new private school in Dallas, where he is a sophomore.

El Milagro trainer Guillermo Williams found Bariano through agent Axel Verlooy late last summer. Bariano, previously owned by Sam Polleunis, "felt like the perfect match," Garza said. It turns out he was right.

"Bariano is amazing and has a great, great mind," Garza said. "He's always going to get to the other side of the jump. He's fast, with a big stride, but he has a great mouth, very soft to the bit."

Added Williams: "When Eugenio tried him out, he rode him incredibly. He rode the horse like he knew him. He's an easy and safe horse to ride, never stopped. To me, the most important thing for a 16-year-old who's doing what Eugenio's doing is that he's confident and safe."

The childrens/adult jumper class, with 27 entries, was a testament to Garza's confidence. "It was a really nice course," he said, "with no surprises. I really enjoyed it. The jump-off was fast and tight, which Bariano and I both liked. Guillermo's a really good trainer, and he always sets us up for the shows."

After high school, Garza plans to take a year off. "I'd like to do the Olympic circuit, starting next year, then maybe ride for Mexico in the Olympics one day," he said. 🍎

► Fleur De Lis Classic

Bartonville, Texas—Oct. 27-28.

▲ \$10,000 Jpr. Derby - 1. Lola, J. Fischer; 2. H.J. El Magnifico, E. Braun; 3. Pipa, Five-H Partners. ▲ Child./Adult Jpr. Classic - 1. Bariano, El Milagro; 2. Pippa, Sleep P Ranch LLC; 3. Marbella, El Milagro.