



Ikast And Braveheart Triumphantly Close The Curtain On Gulf Coast

It's a battle down to the wire for the leading grand prix rider title.

Anne Lang

It's a long haul from Gulfport, Miss. to Mexico City, Mexico—30 mind-numbing hours, to be exact.

But after the final day of the five-week Gulf Coast Winter Circuit, Bjorn Ikast and his crew faced that journey to their home base with renewed energy and spirits in the wake of Ikast's victory in the \$25,000 Budweiser Grand Prix at the Gulf Coast Sunshine Classic V, March 12-16.

"We're all hungry and tired now," Ikast said with a grin after winning on his Braveheart. "But winning will make the trip home a little easier!"

He then grabbed his wife Clara, along with his young son and daughter, for a jubilant family hug.

The affable Danish-born Ikast had good reason to celebrate, having bested 24 rivals in a Michel Vaillancourt-designed course that offered just about every conceivable challenge. "When I walked the course, I thought, 'Maybe four will go clean.' I knew it would be a very difficult class," he said.

"Winning will make the trip home a little easier!"

—Bjorn Ikast

Just seven qualified to jump off, including Ikast on Braveheart and Monte Cristo, and two horses—Happy Z and Chantal—ridden by Wilhelm Genn.

\$25,000 BUDWEISER GRAND PRIX Gulfport, Miss.—Mar. 16

HORSE/RIDER	FAULTS	TIME	PURSE
1. Braveheart/Bjorn Ikast	0-0	39.04	\$7,500
2. Happy Z/Wilhelm Genn	0-0	40.95	5,500
3. Chantal/Wilhelm Genn	0-0	41.79	3,250
4. Leondor/Sulu Rose-Reed	0-0	42.34	2,000
5. Monte Cristo/Bjorn Ikast	0-0	49.52	1,500
6. Life Is Life 15/Denise Wilson	0-4	42.60	1,250
7. Jade Du Vertain/Alexa Wisz	0-8	40.44	1,000

25 horses competed.

Genn and Ikast had traded grand prix wins all circuit and were neck-and-neck for the \$10,000 high-point grand prix rider bonus. Going into the final grand prix, Ikast trailed Genn by 8 points; with two each in the jump-off, the stage was set for a duel.

As the second one to jump-off on Monte Cristo, Ikast laid down a clean but careful trip that would end up being the slowest jump-off time of the day (49.52 seconds). "[Monte Cristo] jumps very big, but he's not very fast. So I said: 'I'll go only for clean.' I knew that wouldn't hold up [to win], but that hopefully it would be a good ribbon and put a little pressure on the rest," Ikast said.



(Flashpoint Photography Photo)

Bjorn Ikast wrapped up the Gulf Coast Winter Circuit with a win in the \$25,000 Budweiser Grand Prix on Braveheart.



Horsepoint Photography Photo

Lucy Rutter took weekends off from her demolition business to ride Gallagher to the amateur-owner hunter, 36 and over, circuit championship at the Gulf Coast Winter Circuit.

Genn ramped up the challenge with a fast and fluid round on Happy Z, stopping the clock with a clear round in 40.95 seconds. After a short school, Genn reappeared on Chantal and duplicated the rapid transit, though the pair left the final top rail rocking in the cups for a breathless few seconds. It stayed up, however, and they posted a final time of 41.79 seconds

"I studied Wilhelm's ride on Happy Z," said Ikast. "I think I was exactly like him, except as I galloped up the field [to No. 4], I looked up at the clock and thought: 'If I can continue like this, I should be right there—just a short turn to the combination and I should be OK.' Also, I had a good distance every time. Sometimes you canter and you have to ask for the distance. But I was lucky that the distances were there, so I could keep going."

Ikast and Braveheart clocked their round in 39.04 seconds, and the crowd erupted in thunderous applause and cheers. The win clinched the leading grand prix rider bonus for Ikast.

As for Braveheart, Ikast said he'd been "a little unlucky with him so far this year, but finally he stepped up and showed his potential and strength. He's very rideable—he has a very good technique. When he needs to be fast, he's fast. And when it's difficult, he just shows a little bit extra."

Braveheart chalked up four grand prix wins and multiple top placings last year.

Ikast isn't afraid to admit he loves the horse that he's owned for four years. "We call him Braveheart or Sweetheart because

he's both of those," he said. "He's sweet, and he has a huge heart. He's a darling in the stable. He likes to play with my old stallion all day, and my wife buys them all kinds of toys so they don't get bored."

"Braveheart turns 12 this year, but he's just now approaching his prime," Ikast said. "We take very good care of him, he's very sound, and he's just now starting to step up. I think he has at least four more years at the top level, if everything goes well."

Extra Practice Pays Off

Lucy Rutter has guided Gallagher down the long road from a green 3-year-old to the amateur-owner, 36 and over, division. The journey paid off with the circuit championship after earning tricolors in two weeks of the circuit.

"He's so easy now that I think a monkey could ride him!"

—Lucy Rutter

Rutter, Virginia Beach, Va., keeps "Gally," a 10-year-old Thoroughbred, at her 50-acre farm and meets her trainers—Pat Dodson and Keith Hastings of Clouds Harbor Farm in Clemmons, N.C.—at the 10 or so shows she attends each year.

For the entire circuit, Rutter, who owns and operates a demolition business, flew into Gulfport every Thursday night and home again every Sunday night. Rutter, 46, said the five straight weeks of

three-day training and showing routines in Mississippi helped her tremendously, since she mostly practices on her own at home, with some assistance from Virginia trainer Chris Wynne.

"It's rare for me to ride with Pat and Keith this consistently, for this long of a show period," explained Rutter. "They're a phenomenal team. Pat helps me more with my grand plan, and Keith helps me more with the finer technicalities."

Dodson said Rutter has "come a long way from the days when she was still doing this horse in the adult amateurs. For instance, Lucy used to be scared to death of oxers, but now she handles them with no problem. She's a real hard worker, and she makes her horse very well-prepared."

Rutter admitted she faced some adjustments when she acquired Gally. "I had to get used to riding a fresh horse!" she said, laughing. "He's definitely all Thoroughbred, so I had to learn to ride quietly enough to not upset him."

Gally, however, quickly evolved into the horse that Rutter described as "my best friend. He jumps great; he trusts me, and I

TIDBITS



- ▶ Hayley Barnhill claimed the large and small junior hunter circuit titles, riding her own Gratuity to the large junior tricolor and Susan Wesley Wilson's Deuce Bigalow to the small junior award.
- ▶ Aleece Jarman rode her own Rico Suavé to the small pony hunter circuit championship and Short Story to the small/medium green pony hunter circuit title. Jarman's Playwright topped the medium pony hunter circuit race with Savannah Talcott aboard.
- ▶ Paige Parker and Palace Guard won four consecutive large pony hunter tricolors and the circuit title, but the week 5 championship went to Alexa Boggio on the catch-ride Hallelujah. "Louie' is great about everything," Boggio, 11, said of Hallelujah. "He's really brave, and he'll jump anything."
- ▶ Boggio trains at most horse shows with Christina Schlusemeyer but also receives instruction from Heather Tinney, who lives at the Boggios' home-based Arbor Hill Farm in Alpharetta, Ga.



(Flashpoint Photography Photo)

Overseas and Mindy Wurzburg emerged victorious from her friendly battle with her sister for the adult amateur, 36-45, circuit title at the Gulf Coast Winter Circuit.

trust him. He's so easy now that I think a monkey could ride him! He leaves from wherever I ask him to, and during these five weeks, he's given me 300 percent."

Rutter gives back to Gally, too, at home, where she lets her gelding enjoy being a true horse with a stall that always offers an open door to a large grass pasture. "He's very spoiled and set in his ways," said Rutter, who keeps a handful of other horses at home. Rutter trains in an outdoor sand ring, and also gets great use out of her latest acquisition—a 100' x 200' indoor arena that she salvaged from a demolition job.

► Family Fun

The race for the adult amateur hunter, 36-45, circuit championship involved a little bit of sibling rivalry. Mindy Wurzburg and her sister, Cheryl Rubenstein, good-naturedly traded tricolor honors for the five weeks, but Wurzburg and Overseas came out on top in the circuit race.

"We have a lot of fun," said Wurzburg, 42, Memphis, Tenn. "Of course, I want to win, but if I can't win, I want it to be Cheryl."

On week 4, when Rubenstein, who lives in Houston, Texas, couldn't attend the show, Wurzburg rode Riesling to a reserve championship—second to champion Overseas. Both women train with Phoebe Sheets of Germantown, Tenn.

Wurzburg, who's an accounting administrator at her family-owned industrial packaging-and-handling supply company and is engaged to be married at the end of the year, has owned "Leo," a 12-year-old Belgian Warmblood, since 2002.

"If I could find 10 more just like my horse, I'd buy them all."

—Mindy Wurzburg

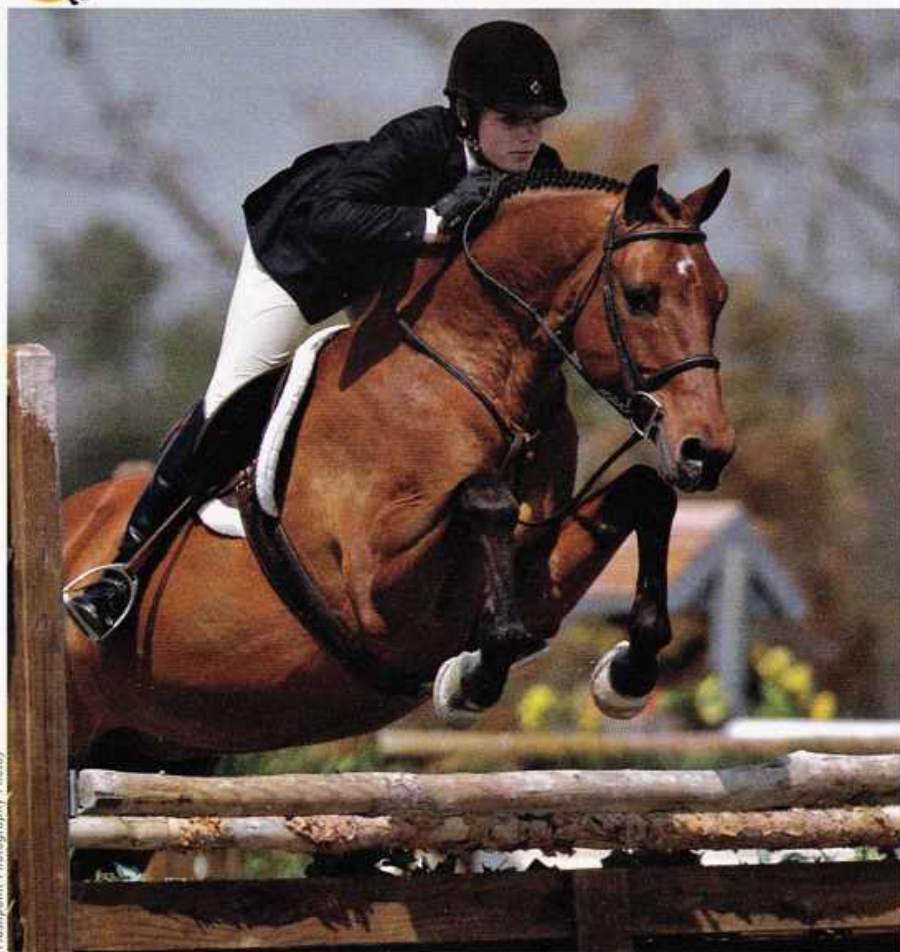
"Leo has a really big stride," Wurzburg said, "and I can always count on him to figure things out and do the right thing. If I could find 10 more just like my horse, I'd buy them all. He takes care of both of us."

Her trainer takes care of them, too, added Wurzburg, who's been riding with Sheets for more than 25 years.

"Phoebe is so great at what she does," Wurzburg said. "She's the most honest person on the planet, and she's very calm—you don't ever get yelled at. All the input from her is very positive. My horse adores her—he thinks Phoebe hung the moon!"

Megan and Lauren Fellows also kept winning all in the family, as Lauren rode Well Spoken to the adult amateur hunter, 46 and over, circuit championship and Megan earned two show championships in weeks 2 and 5 in the small junior hunter, 16-17, division on her Corofino Gold.

Megan also rode Andiamo to the large junior hunter, 16-17, tricolors in weeks 3



Flashpoint Photography Photo

Megan Fellows ended the Gulf Coast Winter Circuit with the show championship in the Sunshine Classic in the small junior, 16-17, division on Corofino Gold.

and 4. Fellows bought Andiamo, who topped the 2007 USEF national second year green standings, this winter.

Megan, 17, is a high school junior from Great Falls, Va., who trains with Jenny Graham of Cedar Creek Farm in Sterling, Va. Megan has owned Corofino Gold, or "Corey," a 13-year-old bay, Holsteiner, for a year. They found him in Florida and though Corey had just started jumping 3'6", Graham and the Fellows family had a feeling the gelding's best years were still ahead of him.

"Corey's very willing, and he's game to do anything you ask him to do," said Megan. "I did have to learn to be consistent, because normally I ride off my eye. But it's all worked out. In the barn, he loves to nibble on you. And he loves to eat glazed donuts!"

Megan credited Graham with making riding "a lot of fun, with a lot of good communication."

"Jenny is a great influence on the kids. She makes them do their own work at the barn, including grooming and tacking up. I think that's wonderful," Lauren said.

GULF COAST CIRCUIT CHAMPIONS

- 1ST YR. GREEN HUNTER CH:** Presley, Barbara Meloy.
- 2ND YR. GREEN HUNTER CH:** Ashbury, Mary Walker.
- ADULT AMATEUR HUNTER, 18-35 CH:** Tradewinds, Ashley Hemdon.
- ADULT AMATEUR HUNTER, 36-45 CH:** Overseas, Mindy Wurzburg.
- ADULT AMATEUR HUNTER, 46 & OVER CH:** Well Spoken, Lauren Fellows.
- AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 18-35 CH:** Tenacious, Christina Gaither.
- AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 36 & OVER CH:** Gallagher, Lucy Rutter.
- BABY GREEN HUNTER CH:** Just My Style, Teri Newcomb.
- CHILDREN'S HUNTER, 14 & UNDER CH:** Cooper, Victoria Efird.
- CHILDREN'S HUNTER, 15-17 CH:** Sante Cavalier, Shelby Sanderford.
- CHILDREN'S/ADULT HUNTER CH:** Bocelli, Elizabeth Tarumianz.
- CHILDREN'S PONY HUNTER CH:** Rikki Tikki Tavi, Catherine Wachtell.
- CONFORMATION HUNTER CH:** Tasty, Showcase Ltd.
- LONG STIRRUP HUNTER CH:** True Religion, Jennifer Blumenthal.
- LARGE GREEN PONY HUNTER CH:** Peterpotamus, Mika La Mare LLC.
- LARGE JR. HUNTER CH:** Gratitude, Hayley Barnhill.
- LARGE PONY HUNTER CH:** Palace Guard, Paige Parker.
- MEDIUM PONY HUNTER CH:** Playwright, Aleece Jarman.
- NON-RESTRICTED CHILDREN'S/ADULT HUNTER CH:** At Last, Sarah Morris.
- NON-RESTRICTED CHILDREN'S PONY HUNTER CH:** Lady Gwyndlen, Phoebe Weseley & River Run Farm.
- PRE-ADULT AMATEUR HUNTER CH:** Salvador, Patricia Powers.
- PRE-CHILDREN'S HUNTER CH:** Catch Me If You Can, Casey Mills.
- PRE-GREEN HUNTER CH:** Casino, Cheryl Rubenstein & Lanes End.

- 3'3" PRE-GREEN HUNTER CH:** Vidalia, Karen Hedrick.
- REGULAR WORKING HUNTER CH:** Renaissance, South Point Farms.
- SHORT STIRRUP HUNTER CH:** America, Britney Jarman.
- SMALL JR. HUNTER CH:** Deuce Bigalow, Susan Wesley Wilson.
- SMALL/MEDIUM GREEN PONY HUNTER CH:** Short Story, Aubrey Hill & Aleece Jarman.
- SMALL PONY HUNTER CH:** Rico Suave, Aleece Jarman.
- ADULT AMATEUR JUMPER CH:** Camaraderie, Lainie Clark.
- CHILDREN'S JUMPER CH:** Mary Poppins, Rebecca Hunter.
- HOPEFUL JUMPER CH:** South Of The Border, Leslie Kramer.
- LOW JR./AMATEUR-OWNER JUMPER CH:** Chapultepec, Denise Wilson.
- HIGH JR./AMATEUR-OWNER JUMPER CH:** Azucar, Martha McNeil.
- LOW CHILDREN'S/ADULT JUMPER CH:** Radio Flyer, Trish Murrell.
- PONY JUMPER CH:** The Waterboy, Cara Dodson.
- YOUNG JUMPER CH:** Vixen, Lee Miller.
- HIGH-POINT GRAND PRIX RIDER CH:** Bjorn Ikast.

Gulf Coast V Sunshine Classic

GULFPORT, MS—MAR. 12-16.

- 1ST YR. GREEN HUNTER CH:** Brown Derby, Mr. & Mrs. David Pelligrini.
- RES:** Presley, Barbara Meloy.
- 2ND YR. GREEN HUNTER CH:** Ashbury, Mary Walker.
- RES:** Finding Neverland, Elizabeth Allen.
- GREEN CONFORMATION HUNTER CH:** Tasty, Showcase Ltd.
- RES:** Cezanne, Lily Hahn.
- REGULAR WORKING HUNTER CH:** Renaissance, South Point Farms.
- RES:** Whitney 224, DS Holdings LLC.
- AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 18-35 CH:** South Paw, Kelley Corrigan.
- RES:** Upper Deck, Kelley Corrigan.
- AMATEUR-OWNER HUNTER, 36 & OVER CH:** Gallagher, Lucy Rutter.
- RES:** Mesquite, David Pellegrini.
- SMALL JR. HUNTER, 15 & UNDER CH:** Callaway, Elaina Plott.
- RES:** Cabana Boy, Leah Curtiss.
- LARGE JR. HUNTER, 15 & UNDER CH:** All In, Allan Palmer.
- RES:** Gratitude, Hayley Barnhill.
- SMALL JR. HUNTER, 16-17 CH:** Corofino Gold, Megan Fellows.
- RES:** Cooper, Victoria Efird.
- LARGE JR. HUNTER, 16-17 CH:** Budweis'czar, Lawson Mayfield.
- RES:** Jetset, Lindsay Strafuss.
- SMALL PONY HUNTER CH:** Clovercroft Love Bunny, Hanaa Khan LLC.
- RES:** Rico Suave, Aleece Jarman.
- MEDIUM PONY HUNTER CH:** Clovercroft Honey Bunny, Rabbit Hill Farm.
- RES:** Highlands Heaven Sent, Jenna Santi.
- LARGE PONY HUNTER CH:** Hallelujah, Caroline Crews.
- RES:** Cherrybrook Skye Blue, David Dowler.
- SMALL GREEN PONY HUNTER CH:** Short Story, Aubrey Hill & Aleece Jarman.
- RES:** Bunny Two Shoes, Rabbit Hill Farm.
- LARGE GREEN PONY HUNTER CH:** So Blink, Iris Harrison.
- RES:** Southern Skye, Alexa Boggio.
- ADULT AMATEUR HUNTER, 18-35 CH:** La Vienna, Steve Hummel.
- RES:** CR Aramis, Amanda Bartling & Misty Lane Hayre.
- ADULT AMATEUR HUNTER, 36-45 CH:** Overseas, Mindy Wurzburg.
- RES:** Monticello, Seraphin Millon.
- ADULT AMATEUR HUNTER, 46 & OVER CH:** Fahrenheit, Jimmy Williams.
- RES:** Well Spoken, Lauren Fellows.
- CHILDREN'S/ADULT HUNTER CH:** Daphne, Meredith Massey.
- RES:** Right To The Point, Elisabeth Bruheim.
- CHILDREN'S HUNTER, 14 & UNDER CH:** Cooper, Victoria Efird.
- RES:** Foreign Exchange, Megan Millon.
- CHILDREN'S HUNTER, 15-17 CH:** Liaison, Cara Milby.
- RES:** High Cotton, Caroline Mescon.
- CHILDREN'S PONY HUNTER CH:** School's Out, Chelsea Huss.
- RES:** French Toast, Holly Labry.
- PRE-GREEN HUNTER CH:** Casino, Cheryl Rubenstein & Lanes End.
- RES:** Seduced, Darcy Cooper.
- 3'3" PRE-GREEN HUNTER CH:** At 1st Glimpse, Natalie Geller.
- RES:** Farenheit, Jimmy Williams.
- BABY GREEN HUNTER CH:** Dolche, Juli Byrd.
- RES:** As You Wish, Genevieve Haas.
- CLASSIC HUNTER CH:** Select, Carrie Quirin.
- RES:** Deja Blue, Shannon Boyd.
- 2'6" SPECIAL HUNTER CH:** As You Wish, Genevieve Haas.
- RES:** Wellington, Meghann Dougherty.
- 2'9" SPECIAL HUNTER CH:** Regalo, Kaylee Beauchamp.