

Nonwarmbloods Excel in Dressage

Saddlebreds and Arabians make their marks in the dressage world.

Riders of horses not traditionally bred for dressage are continuing to find their niche in open dressage competitions as well as within their own breed associations. Although warmbloods are typically sought after as dressage horses for competition, other lighter, American-bred horse breeders are starting to say, "Hey, look at us."

Arabians Embrace Dressage

Do Arabians have a place in dressage? "Absolutely!" says **Pam Thompson**, who owns and operates Hy-Hope Stable in Cochranville, Pennsylvania. Thompson has carved out a niche for herself in the Arabian-dressage world by successfully competing Arabians in regional and national competitions. "There has been tremendous growth in the number and quality of Arabians and half-Arabians in the dressage ring," says Thompson. In 1994, the East Coast Arabian Championship Show, which attracts horses and riders from Maine to Florida, could barely fill the dressage classes through Second Level.



Pam Thompson and Jaffar Bram win at the East Coast Championships.

Since then, demand for dressage classes has increased so much that they will offer all dressage levels from Training through Grand Prix.

"Arabian owners like to promote the versatility of their horses, and dressage training can enhance and cross over into any discipline," says Thompson. "Arabians are very smart and don't forget anything, good or bad."

Thompson didn't set out to work with Arabians. "They just found me," she laughs. After earning her Pony Club "A," Thompson worked on numerous horse farms in Chester County

riding foxhunters, eventers, racehorses and studied dressage with Jill Hassler of Hilltop Farm in Coloma, MD. She became involved with Arabians in 1991, and her current partner is Jaffar Bram, an 11-year-old, 16 hand purebred Arabian gelding.

"I hope to keep moving up the levels and head for Louisville, Kentucky, this year in October for the Arabian Nationals," says Thompson. "Over the years, I've grown to love and appreciate Arabians for their beauty and intelligence. They have brought so much to my life and I feel privileged to be a part of theirs."