

# Escobar dances to victory

**MERRISTWOOD, GUILDFORD, SURREY**  
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By Celia Cadwallader

MARNE MARTIN-TUCKER, a lady with a supercharged smile and a super charger, Escobar, is unlikely to remain "unknown" for long on the premier league circuit.

The combination attacked the final centreline piaffe-passage of the grand prix still operating on full power to claim the 10-strong class with 69.36% (see One to watch, right).

"This is a third year at this level for both of us," said Marne. "There are still things we can improve, but it's the first season he's been strong enough and the first time I've been able to think ahead and get the rhythm of a test where everything comes up so fast."

Kate Smith and the 11-year-old Dimaggio mare Keystone Darling were also in the zone, with plus-68% scores in the prix st

georges and intermediate I qualifiers yielding a first and a second respectively.

Sue Rowlands, judging at the quarterline, commented: "Kate produced confident work. She knows her job and gave the horse every possible assistance with her preparation."

Kate said: "It's a good result for us, although there were some mistakes. Her big trot and lovely rhythm in lateral work are good mark-scorers, but her enthusiasm means she tends to set sail in extensions, so getting her back can be an issue."

"Damian Hallam has been giving me extreme discipline regarding speed control in all three paces, so she learns to wait for me to ask her to go forward, and not make the decision herself."

Jacky Stolper's string of rides and haul of prizes would put useful diesel in a lorry even at today's prices. She and the nine-year-old Diamond Hit son Der Schufro



were intermediate I winners on 69.73%.

"DS' has boundless impulsion and is very expressive, but while some show results have been fab, others have been disappointing," said Jacky. "We have been working hard on basics, keeping things a bit smaller and contained."

"Although he finds the work very easy, I find him complicated to ride as he likes to carry his head high."

Riding Luciano Pavarotti and Don Lumiere, Jacky took first and second in the elementary qualifier on 71.79% and 71.07%.

Judge Wendy Jago commented: "Jacky is a real professional. She kept both her horses sitting and uphill for a test that is all about balance and engagement. She didn't hurry them, but kept a lovely measured tempo with both and earned good marks for her flowing half-circles and simple changes in both trot and canter."

Anne Brunton, judging the advanced medium qualifier, described Martina Ott's 70.59% winning test as "consistently and boldly ridden".

It is Martina's second win in two weeks and a personal best in partnership with her own 17.2hh eight-year-old black stallion Sir England, who is by Sir Oldenburg.

"I'm taking Sir England out more to build his confidence and I

## Marne Martin-Tucker & Escobar



**AMERICAN**  
Marne Martin-Tucker, who works as chief financial officer for an international communications company, moved to the UK in September. She explained: "I have ridden all my life and grew up on cattle ranches in Wyoming. Doing grand prix dressage when I have to travel all over the world is sometimes difficult but I try to ride three times a week."

"I am based with Natalie Allen in Warwickshire. We met in Germany and built up a good relationship. She keeps Escobar fit when I'm away and has super feel, and our riding styles match very well. We both train with Ferdi Eilberg."

"Escobar is a 14-year-old by Ehrentusch out of a showjumping mare and was formerly an approved stallion," she added. "When I got him five years ago, he was learning a single change and didn't do half-passes, but he had three nice paces and a talent for piaffe. My friends told me, 'He's a bit of a risk, but if you make it, he'll be a good one.' We've done eight or nine grands prix now."



Kate Smith's 'extreme discipline' with Keystone Darling is rewarded with a win at prix st georges

Pictures by Celia Cadwallader