

KATRINA WUEST



By Suzy Jarratt

The Sydney CDLite, sponsored by Helgstrand at Turnberry, is delighted to welcome several international judges to this year's event.

One of the 5* judges, Katrina Wuest from Germany, will be making her seventh visit to Australia.

A lifelong dedicated dressage rider she has trained many horses and competed internationally up to Grand Prix level. After having three children she stopped riding at big shows and focused more on judging. She has judged five World Cup finals, several European Championships, officiated at the 2018 WEG and, at last year's Olympic Games, was president of the Ground Jury.

Since 2019 she has been the FEI's Course Director General and gives seminars in many countries helping to improve judges' education. And she is always working on new ideas to modernise the scoring system such as introducing half marks, and collaborating with Daniel Goehlen, from *BlackHorse One*, on a program, now used worldwide, to assess the Degree of Difficulty in Freestyle performances.

When asked if she felt the international dressage landscape had changed in recent years she replied: "I think it has. When I judged in Tokyo there were competitors from twenty-nine countries among the sixty athletes allowed. The 'strong' countries are still getting stronger but new riders have appeared from 'new' countries (such as Chile, Singapore and Mexico) – they made mistakes and some were unlucky but no horse gave the impression that he was – in principle - unable to compete at that level."

And what were her thoughts about the horses now being sourced; there appears to be more Baroque types on the international scene than in the past.

"Breeding has generally improved a lot and so have many of the Lusitanos/PRE horses. However, I think the Danish, Dutch or German warmbloods are the ones most buyers prefer for the top sport. In general, every 'functional' horse with high rideability, who is mentally strong and has three clear paces, is always good to train. There have always been very positive exceptions but, in general, most top horses nowadays are more 'complete' than they were a decade ago."

Katrina's thoughts on Pony Dressage, which is gaining in popularity here, were extremely favourable.

“I love Pony Dressage! I’ve judged five European Championships and really enjoyed each of them, especially in countries with a good pony breeding programme. The children are very successful and, what’s even more important, they learn to handle an animal even when they’re very young or small. They learn feeling for their horse and about discipline in their riding. In general, once they reach Junior level, they ride much more precisely than those who didn’t have an ‘education’ in the saddle of a pony.

“I hope I might see some of these children during my time in Sydney,”

She added that she was delighted to be given an opportunity to return to this event.

“People have always been so friendly and wonderfully hospitable. My three children have all studied in Australia and my whole family is very attached to the beautiful country. I’m so very happy that it’s open again, and am looking forward to the Sydney CDLite and seeing some good, horse-friendly riding.”

Tickets are now on sale, details are on the Sydney CDI website - [click here for information on tickets](#)