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International Dressage Rider and President of USDF, George Williams, Speaks At Sho Clothes “Shop Talk”

Wellington, FL (April 16, 2010) – Dressage fans from across the country had the chance to spend an evening with international dressage star George Williams, the current President of the United States Dressage Federation, when he spoke recently at Sho Clothes dressage boutique’s monthly “Shop Talk”. Sho Clothes sponsors the monthly get together for equestrians in association with the Gold Coast Dressage Association.

Williams has been a successful dressage rider and trainer for many years, but earned international attention with Rocher, the wonderful black Westfalen mare with the floppy ears, owned by Chuck and Joann Smith of Gypsy Woods Farm. Together, the duo set records at Dressage at Devon and internationally, and dressage websites and magazines around the world reported that US and European crowds rose to their feet with tears in their eyes when Williams and Rocher competed. This pair represented the US at the 2003 World Cup in Sweden, placing 5th, and at the Hickstead European Championships, where he placed 10th.

“In addition to being a hard working phenomenal rider, trainer, instructor and competitor, George is known for being actively involved in the dressage community through both the USDF and the USEF,” said Betsy Rebar Sell, who co-owns Sho Clothes with Michele Hundt. “It was wonderful to have George at ‘Shop Talk’ as he sees the dressage world from so many angles. He has so much to offer and is so generous and willing to do so.”

Williams, who grew up in a horse family and began his riding career

on a Shetland Pony, said his passion for horses has never dimmed over the years. He credits such masters as Egon Von Neindorff, Karl Mikolka, Klaus Balkenhol and Kathy Connelly for mentoring him along the way. He followed Karl Mikolka to Tempel Farms, where he worked for 20 years. He then left Tempel to ride for the Smiths and Gypsy Woods Farm where, paired with Rocher, he attained international fame. Williams currently trains several up-and-coming dressage horses for Betsy Juliano of Havensafe Farm, among them being Don Bailey, who has been earning top placings in the small tour. He also runs Williams Dressage LLC with his wife Roberta.

Audience members were given a chance to ask Williams questions, and he always answered with a straightforward and humble attitude. Topics included how to best serve the adult amateur riders, how to create a pipeline to bring along promising developing riders, and how to get more participation at all levels of dressage. George would like everyone involved in dressage to give back to the sport for the betterment of all. He is a great example of just that.

“Listening to George talk is a great experience,” Hundt said.

“Someone asked him to describe himself, and he said he was ‘Committed to the sport, believed in perseverance and had a strong passion and love for horses’ and I think that is a very accurate description of George.”

Next month’s “Shop Talk,” Tuesday, May 4th, will feature six-time Olympic dressage rider Robert Dover. This will be the final ‘Shop Talk’ before the summer break. Shop Talks will resume in November.

“Shop Talk” is held at Sho Clothes, 3220 Fairlane Farms Road in Wellington. Specializing in dressage apparel, Sho Clothes has become the “go to” dressage store for riders from around the world and their mobile boutique is a fixture on the Florida Dressage circuit.

For more information on Sho Clothes or “Shop Talk,” visit their website at www.shoclothes.com or call them at 561-319-2121.



Photo: International dressage rider and trainer George Williams (left), the current USDF President, spoke at a recent “Shop Talk” at Sho Clothes dressage boutique in Wellington. Williams is joined by Sho Clothes co-owners Betsy Rebar Sell (center) and Michele Hundt.