

Vidauban CSI3*, CDI3* and CDIYH show

There were more than 600 horses in Vidauban at the end of March gathered for three successive International shows for Show Jumping and two International Dressage weekends. For those individual riders interested in qualifying for the Olympic Games in 2012 they will need good World Ranking points between 1st March 2011 and 1st March 2012, so there were a lot of riders and some very serious competition from all over the world, including South Africa. In the CSI3* Cara Frew competed, while in the CDI3* both Zilla Pearse and Adriaan Van Wyk rode in the Big Tour.

Zilla took Sarkozy and Hale Bops for the second weekend. The initial intention with Hale Bops was to enter him in the Small Tour, but he was going so well that at the last minute it was decided to give him his first experience in the Big Tour. At this International Show, only 1 horse could be entered in each class, so Hale Bops was entered in the Grand Prix (for Freestyle) and Sarkozy in the Grand Prix (for Grand Prix Special).

On Thursday 24th, there were 21 horses in the Grand Prix (for Freestyle) and both Adriaan on Othello and Zilla on Hale Bops gave very credible performances gaining their initial world ranking points and qualifying for the Consolation Grand Prix on 26th in which they came 2nd and 3rd respectively. Despite some mistakes, Hale Bops shows great promise.

Sarkozy competed on 25th in a field of 29 top International riders and rode a good first test for 62,8% although he didn't show much Passage. In his second competition on the 27th he was placed 6th in a field of 14 with 63,8% Sarkozy had settled down by the second test and gave an impressive performance that showed more of his potential as he Passaged better though had a couple of small mistakes in Transitions.

The experience of this weekend was very positive, as both horses and rider gained a lot of experience in a short period of time as they had the opportunity to compete several times over the four days at International level against a strong field of top riders. Zilla plans to take both horses to their next CDI 3* in Lipica, Slovenia at the end of May, but to look, before then, for a couple of national shows during April to give them more Grand Prix experience.

It was the first time that Zilla and Adriaan had met face to face and it was great to have a fellow South African competitor on at the show, hopefully to be repeated soon.