



# The success story of Zangersheide

For several decades Zangersheide has been one of the most successful showjumping horse breeding stables; and from its stud farm base in Belgium has played a crucial role in the development of showjumping horse breeding world-wide. Not only in the field of selection and breeding techniques, but also and specifically where the suitability and soundness of showjumping horses are concerned. Considerable research and techniques from the agri-business that were first applied by Zangersheide for breeding sport horses have produced spectacular results.

In-depth study of pedigrees has taught us that in showjumping horse breeding the dam's lineages are very dominant - both in a positive and negative sense. In the seventies Zangersheide purchased hundreds of mares of mainly Hanoverian descent. Most of these had a successful sport career behind them or came from proven sport families. After many examinations and thousands of X-rays, 50 mares were selected to breed with, specifically by out-crossing. They were mated to the French-bred Almé Z. The female products from these out-crosses were then combined with another out-cross stallion, the Holstein-bred Ramiro Z. In 1985 Zangersheide was able to lease the legendary progenitor Cor de la Bryère for one season. The Z success soon followed and is demonstrated by the fact that there is not a single studbook in the world that has not used or is not using Zangersheide-bred stallions. Its numerous international showjumping products, such as Ratina Z (Ramiro Z x Almé Z), Artos (Almé Z x Gotthard), Rinnetou Z (Ramiro Z x Winnetou), Cor d'Almé Z (Cor de la Bryère x Ramiro Z x Almé Z), Aerobic Z (Almé Z x Gotthard), Robin I and II Z (Ramiro Z x Almé Z x Gotthard) and Amadeus Z (Almé Z x Graphit) have brought Zangersheide European gold, Olympic silver, World Cup silver, Olympic gold and scores of other victories. The mare Cantate Z (Rodrigo Pessoa) and the stallions Sherry Mury Marais Z (Patrick Mc Entee) and L'Espoir Z (Ludger Beerbaum) are examples of showjumpers bred by successful members of Studbook Zangersheide. The stallion Lux Z, won as twelve year old, on June 17, 2000, in Cannes/France even an amount of USD 1 million in one of the heaviest competitions of the Pulsar Crown series. This is the highest amount ever gained in such a competition by a jumping horse. These showjumpers have given Zangersheide a place among the best German breeders for many years and, ever since its first publication in 1991, it has been a consistent leader of the world ranking for breeders - up to and including last year.

## **Z in practice**

Every year Zangersheide organises the FEI World Breeding Jumping Championships for Young Horses. Breeders following these competitions closely have seen Zangersheide's breeding philosophy confirmed. These world championships also include the jumping competition for licensed stallions called 'Sires of the World', in which breeders can see the future partners of their mares in action. Not to the riders or the owners, but to the breeders of the first three winning horses in the finals of the 5, 6 and 7 year old horses Zangersheide pays a premium of €10.000,- (5.000,-/ 3.000,-/ 2.000,-). By now Zangersheide has granted more than €500.000,- in breeders premiums. The thought behind these premiums is to promote breeding specialized show jumpers.

## **World-wide example**

Zangersheide has also successfully performed extensive research in the field of heredity, fertility and health. Through selection and training of the locomotive system from an early age onwards, the percentage of navicular in Zangersheide horses has been reduced from 50% to 5%. The techniques for artificial insemination, soon followed by the techniques for freezing semen, were developed in Zangersheide laboratories. The required dilutents for fresh and frozen semen, and the partition of semen which allows for the choice of either male or female offspring, are also systems developed and successfully tried out by Zangersheide. The next challenge Zangersheide has taken on is the reduction and possibly the prevention of OCD - one of the most frequently occurring defects in the equine body.

These techniques designed by Zangersheide set giant wheels in motion. Many studies on its various projects have resulted in dissertations at several universities. The examples set by Zangersheide are now being followed on a world-wide scale. The evolution caused by Zangersheide in sport horse breeding all over the world has offered many students and veterinarians a broad basis for their further careers. A number of these people have since grown into reputable specialists in high demand in present sport horse breeding.

The success story of Zangersheide could never have been written without the very expensive accommodation and the ultra-modern infrastructure that offers all the necessary facilities. In its present form, Zangersheide still has the most advanced equipment and techniques for improving showjumping horse breeding in every possible aspect. For this purpose Zangersheide founded its own European, and therefore internationally operating Studbook in 1993. Studbook Zangersheide is the only studbook in the world that records the DNA-pattern of all its registered horses. Maybe this has been one of the reasons why Zangersheide was one of the very first European stud farms to be granted a full licence for international semen dispatch. Every breeding season Zangersheide offers its members, at reduced rates, about 1,000 services from stallions tested and proven in competition sport. Zangersheide is working with a Hamilton-Thorne computer imported from California; a highly advanced system, of which there is only one in Europe, which enables Zangersheide to guarantee the quality of semen.

Z-Magazine is the medium in which Zangersheide propagates its findings to breeders and other interested readers. It is published in four languages and has more than 20,000 regular readers.

### **Sport value**

The competition stables, another branch of Zangersheide's activities, has repeatedly won European gold, both individual and team, silver at World Championships, as well as Olympic gold. Our present star rider, Judy Ann Melchior, is elected to Best Young Rider of the year 2005 by readers of the magazine EquiTime. The competition horses, that are trained and started by four regular riders, pay weekly visits, often in lots of 18 at a time, to various national and international shows. Since 1976 Zangersheide has organised major annual showjumping events, such as 10 times a CHIO. For the last twelve years Zangersheide has also been the stage for the FEI (Fédération Equestre Internationale) World Breeding Jumping Championships for Young Horses, which is subsidised by the Flemish government. At this big event attracting 60,000 to 70,000 visitors every year, a large number of studbooks are represented by the very best showjumping horses from all over the world. These unique circumstances enable the breeders to make 'live' comparisons and a well-considered choice of the right partners for their mares.

### **Economic importance**

Zangersheide has an important economic function. Its annual world championships attracting thousands of visitors is also a meeting point for international business life and many contacts are made during these world games for young horses. All the hotels for miles around are fully booked. The world championships at Zangersheide also hosts an auction for international invitees, where breeders have an opportunity to sell their products at good prices. The Annual Open Day in February and the Z-festival in July are visited by bus loads of people from far across the borders. With all these activities Zangersheide has offered employment to many people for many years and, in its present form, has a staff of more than 50. The number of visitors to the various events, and subcontracting in consequence of its activities, ensures that Zangersheide is playing a crucial role in local employment. Its function is of essential importance to Belgium; Zangersheide has put Lanaken on the map of the world.

The success story of Zangersheide is not least due to the high investments made in research, horse stock, infrastructure, buildings and fees. The realisation of this project has cost more than Euros 25.000.000,-. That is, not counting its investment in nature, in the form of thousands of plants and trees which have turned Domain Zangersheide into one of the finest landscaped gardens in all Belgium.