

Paris By Night

Youth certainly has the wind in its sails at the Longines Masters of Paris. This morning Paul Delforge, very much on form since the beginning of the competition, picked up a win in the first class of the day with Terre du Banney. At just 18 the young rider couldn't have wished for a better start to his first participation in the Longines Masters of Paris. After his impressive performances at the beginning of the competition, along with those of the young French riders Camille Condé Ferreira and Damien de Chambord and the 18-year-old Brazilian João Victor Castro, the exception is becoming the rule: this year the Prestige Trophy is looking like a springboard for the Masters of tomorrow, the future six star generation!

Fittingly the Masters followed them in the Prix Salon du Cheval of Paris/CENECA. By the end of the morning the grandstands were already full of spectators come to watch this Grand Prix. And they were right to do so; the line-up was extremely interesting. Some riders came to fine tune horses they will mount in the Longines Grand Prix; others came on young horses to give them a feel for high level competitions and a six star atmosphere. As for Kevin Staut, he chose For Joy van'T Zorgvliet HDC, a horse he admires greatly but with whom he had a fall. The main goal was to restore his confidence. And he clearly achieved that goal since, even erring on the side of caution, the couple won the event ahead of Olympic champion Steve Guerdat.

The amateurs in the Prix Laiterie de Montaigu also offered us a thrilling jump-off in the return match of yesterday's Prix Bang & Olufsen. This time it was the likable Venezuelan Gustavo Mirabal and G&C Leroy 136, in second place yesterday, who secured top honors ahead of yesterday's winner, Benjamin Castaldi, today on Othello Mouche. The winner paid tribute to his horse and course designer, Luc Musette. "He offered us a real international jump-off, the likes of which amateurs like us rarely have a chance to experience," he said.

A little earlier in the afternoon a 'Paris by night' atmosphere had already invaded the arena. The Bluebell Girls came along to add a touch of glamor to the course reconnaissance. The hall was ready for the show. And it was a female rider, the Longines ambassador, who clinched the top spot in the Prix Lido de Paris, with French and Swiss riders grabbing the first five places. And sometimes sport really gets it right!

Philippe Rozier and Olivier Guillon came in second and third respectively. Were they perhaps distracted by the Bluebell Girls? If so then Jane Richard Philips played it to her advantage to beat them in this time trial. She teamed up with her partner Zerkina Z, her former lead mare today aged 15, which she now keeps in reserve for big competitions such as the Prix Lido of de Paris, where their complicity worked wonders and translated into a round so fluid and fast that no other competitor could equal them.

The Bluebell Girls then returned and put on a show in the arena during the prize-giving before heading back to the Village Prestige to perform their cabaret *Paris*



Merveilles staged by Belgium's celebrated Franco Dragone, now based in Ecaussinnes. This combination of sport, spectacle and glamor was evident throughout a long evening offering a wealth of beauty, performances, fun and emotion.

And on the performance side, the Gucci Gold Cup provided a boisterous jump-off which notably included the four members of the French team that won silver at the World Equestrian Games in Normandy in 2014. The public encouraged the Blues with unparalleled fervor, applauding them every step of the way and waving the little tricolor flags the EEM had made available to them. Adding to the suspense, the top three in the provisional rankings were invited to sit in three great armchairs at the edge of the arena - until dislodged by a faster rider. Patrice Delaveau with the young Léontine Ledimar Z HDC, just eight years old and new to this level of competition, got to test the top 'throne' briefly but soon had to give it up to Simon Delestre and an imperial Chesall. "I couldn't have hoped for more from such a young mare. I am delighted," declared the team Jump Five rider. As for Simon Delestre, very much on form too at the moment, he could not praise Casall's son too highly. "He was a little overcome by the atmosphere at the beginning of the first round which perhaps explains his fault," he said. "But during the jump-off he was the horse I know again: respectful and extraordinary He is a bit of a complicated horse but exceptional." The prize-giving offered an intensely emotional moment when, in honor of this great French victory, an *a Capella* Marseillaise rang out from the public.

The same altruism was present in the teams that joined the wonderful initiative behind the Style & Competition for AMADE class – not that it prevented participants from giving free rein to their sense of showmanship. On that front the clear winner was the Laiterie de Montaigu, represented by Julien Epailard and Benjamin Castaldi, who offered us a real sword and sandals spectacle. As for the clock, however, it was the Longines team made up of Jane Richard Philips and Camille Condé Ferreira alias "Mario & Luigi" who left the others standing.

Lights, glitter and performance - this Parisian night will long leave stars in the eyes of those lucky enough to witness it.

INFORMATION

Longines Masters of Paris

DATES : From December 3rd to 6th 2015

WEBSITE : <http://www.mastersgrandslam.com/fr>

TICKETING : Tickets available at <http://www.mastersgrandslam.com/ang/ticketing>

ABOUT EEM

To reinvent Show Jumping! What an ambitious goal EEM CEO and Founder Christophe Ameeuw and his team have set for themselves! For over ten years they have been dedicated to bringing equestrian sports to the international front stage. Inspired by the Grand Slam in tennis and its legendary tournaments, EEM gathers under one roof the best of the sport, entertainment and glamour.

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2009 was a crucial milestone for EEM with the revival of the Jumping de Paris and the creation of the Gucci Paris Masters, as it marked the beginning of their international development. EEM then set off to conquer new continents. An Asian edition took place in Hong Kong in 2013, followed in 2014 by the first American stage of the Longines Masters in Los Angeles. This first edition on the American continent was welcomed by renowned sports channel ESPN with the headline “The Next Big USA Sport”.

In 2015 the intercontinental trilogy becomes the Longines Masters, presented by EEM.

ABOUT THE LONGINES MASTERS

Established in three of the biggest cities - Los Angeles, Paris and Hong Kong - the unique Longines Masters series is recognized by the Fédération Equestre Internationale and is one of the most prestigious equestrian competitions worldwide. Created by EEM, the concept of the Masters was born in 2009 with the first edition of the Gucci Paris Masters, now renamed the Longines Masters of Paris. Inspired by the Grand Slam tournaments in tennis, the circuit rapidly developed abroad, with the Longines Masters of Hong Kong in 2013 and the Longines Masters of Los Angeles in 2014. In 2015, the circuit was renamed the Longines Masters, this term covers all legs of the series.

The world's best riders and horses will compete for one million dollars in prize money at each leg of the series. In addition, any rider who consecutively wins the Longines Masters Grands Prix in Paris, Hong Kong and Los Angeles will be rewarded with one million euros Masters Grand Slam bonus. For two successive victories, the rider will be awarded €500,000, and winners of two non-successive victories within a series of three Longines Masters Grand Prix will receive a €250,000 bonus.

These events are broadcast in more than 120 countries and reach almost 550 million viewers. Every edition of the Longines Masters is must-attend event that brings together sports enthusiasts, amateurs, celebrities and corporate decision-makers from around the world, who come to enjoy a unique experience, boasting exceptional sport, entertainment, glamour, gastronomy and contemporary art.

- . Longines Masters of Los Angeles October 1st to 4th 2015
- . Longines Masters of Paris December 3rd to 6th 2015
- . Longines Masters of Hong Kong February 19th to 21st 2016

ABOUT LONGINES

Longines has been based in Saint-Imier in Switzerland since 1832. Its watchmaking expertise reflects a strong devotion to tradition, elegance and performance. Longines has generations of experience as the official timekeeper of world championships and as a partner of international sporting federations. Over the years, Longines has established solid, long-term relationships with the sporting world. Renowned for the elegance of its timepieces, Longines is a member of the Swatch Group Ltd., the world's leading manufacturer of horological products. Using the winged hourglass as its emblem, the brand has outlets in over 140 countries. www.longines.com
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