

The American Trakehner Association



Margaret MacGregor/MacMillan Photography

TOP-TIER TRAKEHNERS

Profiles of International Eventing Stars Seacookie TSF and RF Tabasco

By Kim MacMillan

Multiple wins at the top international levels over the last few years have put Seacookie TSF and RF Tabasco on the radar of eventing fans worldwide. Since the 2008 season Seacookie has been ridden by Great Britain's William Fox-Pitt for owner Catherine Witt. More recently, in August 2013, the big news was that U.S. eventing and show jumper rider Marilyn Little, along with a syndicate that she and friend Karen O'Connor put together, had purchased Tabasco.

Both Trakehners were obtained from Ingrid Klimke in Germany. Her eventing and dressage stable in Münster has been the launching point for numerous successful horses over the years including a good number of upper-level Trakehner eventers. In addition to Seacookie TSF and RF Tabasco (formerly Tabasco TSF), Windfall *PG*, a U.S. Olympic team bronze medalist in eventing at the 2004 Athens games, was ridden by Ingrid before being sold to New Spring Farm in the United States.

Seacookie TSF

Trakehner gelding by Helikon xx, out of

Sonnenwende III by Onassis *E*

Foaled 6/2/1999, Bay, 16.3 hands

Bred by Walter Elxnat, Hohenkirchen,

Lower Saxony, Germany

Current Owner – Catherine Witt, Rookery Park Stud,

Worleston, Cheshire, U.K. (Purchased in December

2007 from Ingrid Klimke)

Current Rider – William Fox-Pitt, Fox-Pitt Eventing,

Hinton St Mary, Dorset, U.K.

Highest Level Completed So Far: CCI4*

Top Performances with William Fox-Pitt: won Pau CCI4*, October 2013, France; second at Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event CCI4*, April 2013, U.S.; won Blenheim Palace International Horse Trials CCI3*, September 2012, U.K.; second at Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials CCI4*, September 2010, U.K.; second in Advanced Division at British Festival of Eventing, August 2010; seventh at Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials CCI4*, September 2009, U.K.; second in Advanced Division at British Festival of Eventing, August 2009; sixth at Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event CCI4*, April 2009, U.S.; tenth at Boekelo CCI3*, October 2008, Sweden; third at Barbury International CIC2*, July 2008, U.K.

Seacookie TSF was named Trakehner Horse of the Year by the German Trakehner Verband in October 2013.

Top Earlier Performances with Ingrid Klimke: won Marbach CIC3*, 2007, Germany; third at Kreuth CIC2*, 2007, Germany; seventh at Aachen CIC03*, 2007, Germany; seventh at Luhmühlen CIC2*, 2007, Germany; eighth at Le Lion de Angers, 2006, France. Seacookie also won the Bundeschampionat (German National Young Horse Championships) for eventing in 2004.

Seacookie was foaled at Walter Elxnat's farm in Lower Saxony, Germany, in the late spring of 1999. The Elxnat family has a long history of breeding quality Trakehner horses dating back at least to the 1950s. The mare family of Stelldichein (Mare Family # O 170 A 3, foaled 1959 in Germany) comes from that farm and is the family that produced Seacookie through his dam Sonnenwende, a great great granddaughter of Stelldichein. Stelldichein's dam was the East Prussian mare Schwindlerin (foaled in 1940) who was highly prolific and was cited by breed expert Dr. Fritz Schilke in his book *Trakehner Horses – Then and Now* as being "of great toughness and faithfulness." Schwindlerin's mare line produced at least three approved stallions (Saturn, Sleipnir and Seeadler) and a large number of mares who were known for harmonious body type, hardy constitutions and very good movement.

Top of page: Seacookie TSF (Helikon xx – Onassis *E*) showing his workmanlike trot under William Fox-Pitt's guidance during the dressage phase of the 2013 Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event CCI4*.



On paper, Seacookie looks to be half Thoroughbred through his sire Helikon but closer examination of his pedigree shows he actually has a little over 65 percent Thoroughbred blood. In the Trakehner breed, Thoroughbred blood combined with a strong East Prussian (Trakehner) base

has proven to be the recipe for success in the upper levels of eventing. Most of the rest of the Thoroughbred genes in Seacookie's pedigree come through his dam's sire Onassis *E* (foaled in Germany, but stood for breeding in the U.S. for most of his life) who was by the German Elite Trakehner stallion Consul who was in turn a son of the Thoroughbred stallion Swazi. Even more Thoroughbred genetics come in through Seacookie's dam line with the Thoroughbred stallions Stern (in the fifth generation, Seacookie's granddam Silhouette IV's great grandsire) and Traumgeist (in the sixth generation on his dam's side of the pedigree), as well as a few others further back.

Seacookie went into training at Ingrid Klimke's barn as a four-year-old in 2003 and the next year won the Bundeschampionat (German National Young Horse Championships) in eventing. "With his victory in the 2004 Bundeschampionat 'Cookie' showed that he has all of the prerequisites and the quality for a top event horse. He has good basic gaits, particularly a light-footed canter. His ability, as well as his carefulness in jumping, is something special. He impresses with his courage and willingness to work. On cross-country he always wants to do everything right!" says Ingrid.

In December 2007 Catherine Witt of Rookery Park Stud in Great Britain asked her rider William Fox-Pitt to look for a young promising eventer that was already going well under saddle. "We looked at Seacookie in Ingrid Klimke's barn in Germany when he was an eight-year-old and loved him. He was an elegant, light, athletic horse," recalls Alice Fox-Pitt, William's wife. A deal was struck and Seacookie and William began their competition career together in early 2008.

"Seacookie is a horse of great quality. He is a real 'tryer,' even if things are a little bit tricky. He's a very genuine horse with a huge heart. Although sometimes he tries a little bit too hard. He has wonderful movement for dressage – great range in the trot and canter – fantastic extensions and uphill, light movement. We've always known he was able to do well at the top levels; it was just

a question of putting it all together. Developing Seacookie was all about confidence and him believing he could do it – about developing the partnership," says William.

Alice shares some insight to his personality around the barn, "Cookie is a very trusting horse and incredibly kind. He has a great partnership with a girl in our yard. We train him a lot from the field [rather than keeping him in a box stall] – it helps him mentally and physically. He's also a really, really sound horse."

William took his time getting to know Cookie their first season together in 2008 and they ended the year with a great performance, placing tenth at Boekelo in The Netherlands in the three-star in October. In April 2009 they finished a very respectable sixth in their first four-star at the Rolex event in Kentucky and seventh at Burghley Horse Trials CCI4* in September.



The following year, 2010, started out with disappointment when they put in a wonderful dressage test scoring 42.8 at Badminton only to have to withdraw before cross-country when Cookie suffered a mild muscle injury. "Later that year he had a good run at The Festival of British Eventing in July, where he finished second in the Advanced, and went to Burghley in great order," says William.

"At Burghley, Cookie did one of his best-ever tests. He felt really confident and I was able to be much braver. For the fourth

Above, left: William Fox-Pitt of Great Britain and the Trakehner gelding Seacookie TSF, owned by Catherine Witt, at the final horse inspection before stadium jumping on Sunday at the 2013 Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event CCI4*.

Above, right: The pair sail over the huge ditch and wall at fence number 12, a huge 4'9" high, 9'10" base spread obstacle, at the 2013 Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event CCI4*. They finished the course right on the optimum time and took second in the event the next day.

consecutive time at four-star level he was last to go which meant a rather long and tense wait on Saturday before the cross-country. But he didn't let me down and gave me a great ride across country, just incurring a few time faults. He came out particularly well on Sunday and jumped a lovely clear round that moved him up to second behind Caroline Powell and the great Lenamore. We all had to be incredibly patient following the disappointment of Badminton, but his performance at Burghley certainly made it worth the wait."

After beginning the 2011 season well with two good runs at Intermediate events, Seacookie suffered a setback and missed the rest of the year. In 2012, Cookie had some good early runs, then bad weather caused cancellations of some key events. That year at Badminton in May Cookie wasn't feeling well, so William pulled him up. By September they were in good form and ran at Blenheim. "Having still held an entry for Blenheim and with all his blood tests, etc., showing no abnormalities, I decided to run him in the CCI3*. This proved to be a good decision. Following an excellent test he jumped a fantastic double-clear to clinch the win. Not only was this a great result for Cookie and his owner Catherine Witt, but it was also my fiftieth three-day event win," recalls William, who was the first British rider to achieve the world number-one eventing rider ranking (he has been number one in 2002, 2009 and 2010 so far) and is the only rider worldwide to have won five of the six CCI4* events (Badminton, Burghley, Rolex Kentucky, Luhmühlen, Pau).

2013 was perhaps the pair's best year yet together. They made the long trip "across the pond" to return to Rolex Kentucky in April and it was well worth it. They were first in the order of go this time and it was to their liking. They scored 46.2 in dressage and finished exactly on the optimum time on cross-country, then jumped a flawless stadium jumping round to take second. William reflects on their success, "We headed to Rolex Kentucky CCI4* with absolutely no expectations on Cookie and he surprised us all by producing one of his best performances."

After a tune-up run at the two-star level at Barbury in July, Cookie and William did their fall four-star at Pau in France. "It was fantastic that Seacookie held onto his lead in the show jumping to win Pau and secure a much deserved 4* win. By the time he came to jump he had a fence in hand, which is always a relief. But, he unfortunately used this up at the treble at fence 6, leaving a long and nerve racking second half to his round. However, he jumped very well and coped with the atmosphere and pressure brilliantly. The older he's gotten, the better his gallop has become and the distances are easier. He is more relaxed in his dressage now. We were thrilled with his lead in the dressage at Pau," says William.

"Cookie will have some much deserved time off this winter and then we will decide what events he will do in 2014," says Alice. His fans will be excited to see what's next for the big, expressive bay.

RF Tabasco (formerly Tabasco TSF)

Trakehner gelding by Heraldik xx, out of

Titania III by Heling

Foaled 4/3/2000, Black, 17.3 hands

Bred by Karl-Heinz Schulenburg, Gestüt Griebeler Höh, Kasseedorf, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany

Current Owner – Team Tabasco, U.S.A. (Purchased in August 2013 from Ingrid Klimke and his breeder)

Current Rider – Marilyn Little, Raylyn Farm, Frederick, Maryland, U.S.

Highest Level Completed So Far: CIC3*

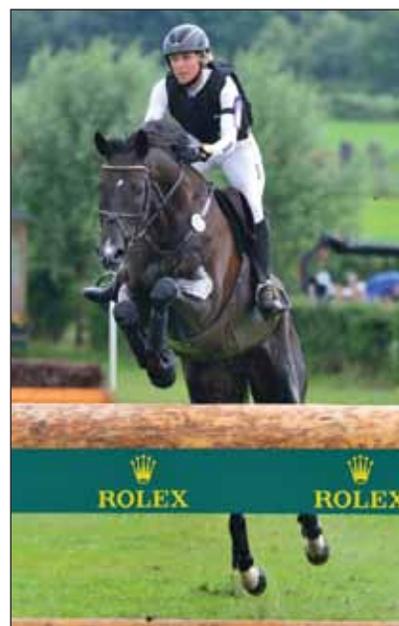
Top Performances with Marilyn Little: won Breda Horse Trials CIC2*, September 2013, The Netherlands; twelfth at Schenefeld CIC3*, September 2013, Germany; third at Blair Castle CCI2*, August 2013, U.K.; sixth at Hambach CIC2*, August 2013, Germany.

Top Performances with Ingrid Klimke: won Sahrendorf CIC2*, July 2013, Germany; won Houghton Hall CIC03*, May 2013, U.K.; won Marbach CIC3*, May 2013, Germany; second at Bredeneek CIC2*, April 2013, Germany; fourth at Boekelo CIC03*, October 2012, The Netherlands; second at Schenefeld CIC3*, September 2012, Germany; won Malmö CIC3*-W, August 2012, Sweden; third at Luhmühlen CIC3*, June 2012, Germany; won Wiesbaden CIC3*, May 2012, Germany; third at Marbach CIC3*, May 2012, Germany; third at Osberton CIC2*, September 2011, U.K.; fourth at Varsseveld CIC2*, September 2011, The Netherlands; won Langenhagen CIC2*, September 2011, Germany.

Tabasco was named Trakehner Horse of the Year by the German Trakehner Verband in October 2012.

The website of RF Tabasco's breeder Karl-Heinz Schulenburg, Gestüt Griebeler Höh, Kasseedorf, Schleswig-Holstein, describes his enthusiasm the day of Tabasco's foaling on April 3, 2000: "What a sleek and leggy foal was there in the straw!"

Tabasco's Trakehner dam Titania III came from a performance-packed mare line (Trakehner Mare Family # T 17 A 1–Tatiana, foaled in Germany in 1958)—a mare family with great jumper genes that trace all the way back to the Main Stud Trakehnen family of the mare Tapete. Titania



Ingrid Klimke on Tabasco in May 2013.

Thomas C



Marilyn Little of the U.S. and the Trakehner gelding RF Tabasco (Heraldik xx – Heling), competing in their first CIC3* together at Schenefeld in Germany in late September 2103.

III's sire was Heling, a German-born son of the international three-day event horse Bukephalos. After standing in Germany for several years, Heling was exported to Canada where he is at stud at Galten Farms in Ontario.

Titania III's dam Tussi (Tabasco's grand dam) was the only mare of 80 competitors of all breeds who scored a 10 in free-jumping at her Mare Performance Test in Traventhal in 1991. She was also the winner of the test group.

Tussi's dam, Tertia III (Tabasco's great grand dam), a German Premium Mare, took first place in the Family Group at the German National Trakehner Show in 1975 and second at the Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft Exhibition (German Agricultural Society Show) in Frankfurt in 1978. Tertia III had a total of eight foals, one of them being the approved stallion Timber. Tussi by Parforce was the last of her foals. Parforce was sired by the international eventer Habicht (also the sire of Olympic eventer Windfall *Pg*) who was in turn sired by the Anglo-Arabian Burnus who also competed as an international eventer.

Tabasco's sire was the Thoroughbred stallion Heraldik, who is also the sire of Ingrid Klimke's Olympic horse Butts Abraxas and

the dam's sire of Michael Jung's Olympic and World Champion La Biosthetique Sam FBW, among others. Tabasco, whose pedigree contains a high percentage Thoroughbred and Arabian blood (73.24 percent), is a product of the same historically successful mix of strong Trakehner genetics combined with "blood horses" to produce the ideal upper-level eventers – the same recipe that has been used in varying degrees for over 200 years by Trakehner breeders.

Karl-Heinz Schulenburg sold Tabasco as a weanling and didn't hear anything more about him until 2009 when Ingrid Klimke contacted the Trakehner Verband looking for Trakehner horses by Heraldik xx. The Verband quickly put her in touch with Karl-Heinz who did an extensive search to find Tabasco again. He and Ingrid formed a partnership to buy back Tabasco and by early that year he was in her barn in Münster, Germany.

"Because of his interesting breeding, I found and bought 'Tabbi' with his breeder at the beginning of 2009," Ingrid says. "From the beginning we got the financial assistance from the Trakehner Förderverein [a special program called Trakehner Sportpferde Förderung, hence the horse was named Tabasco TSF]. Tabbi is a large, high-withered, long-legged horse who is still athletic and agile on the cross-country. In jumping he is careful, very handy, and gives me a very good feeling. His gaits are fluid and smooth, so in the dressage arena he shows a lovely presence."

Ingrid and Tabbi competed successfully in regional events at Advanced level and at the CCI one- and two-star levels from 2009 through 2011. In 2012 and 2013 they made their mark at the CIC3* level, winning or placing in the top four at Wiesbaden (Germany), Malmö (Sweden), Schenefeld (Germany), Boekelo (The Netherlands), Bredeneek (Germany), Marbach (Germany), Houghton Hall (U.K.) and Sahrendorf (Germany).

In August 2013, top U.S. show jumping and event rider Marilyn Little convinced Ingrid to sell Tabbi. Marilyn talks about how she came to first notice Tabasco and ultimately to purchase him. "It's hard not to notice Tabasco. That said, I actually 'noticed' Tabasco two and a half years ago and tried to buy him in the summer of 2011," Marilyn explains. "I was stuck in traffic driving from Belgium en route to Ingrid Klimke's stable in Germany to try him. Unfortunately she had to leave for a training session at the German Federation in Warendorf before I could arrive at her stable to ride him. I was living in Belgium at the time, but my schedule was jam packed and I couldn't wait the five hours until she returned. By the time I was able to find time to get back to her stable the following week, she had changed her mind and I had missed my chance!"

Then Marilyn found out he was possibly for sale again in mid-2013. "Within 24 hours of hearing that Tabasco could be purchased, I was at Ingrid's stable with my boots on," she says. "As luck would have it, almost exactly two years after the first time I attempted to see him, I was once again in traffic at rush hour en route to Ingrid's stable and was once again afraid she wouldn't let me try him if I was late! She must have thought I was a lunatic, because I kept calling to tell her my exact location. Tabasco is a very exciting addition to the RF Eventing Team and I am thrilled to

have the opportunity to develop a partnership with this fabulous horse. My deepest gratitude goes out to the incredible group of people that came together to form 'Team Tabasco,' whose generous support and enthusiasm has made this possible: Suzanne Lacy, Betsy Smith, Maggi Buterbaugh and Kate Conover."

Though Tabbi was his nickname in Ingrid's barn, Tabasco has earned a new moniker within the Team Tabasco group. With his registered name being Tabasco and the many entertaining sides to his personality, syndicate partner Kate Conover dubbed him 'The Sauce.' "The Sauce seems to cover all the bases... 'Sweet Sauce,' 'Dark Sauce,' 'Hot Sauce,' 'Racing Sauce' or 'The Sauce-age' when he's particularly lazy," laughs Marilyn.

Marilyn was already competing in Europe when she purchased RF Tabasco, so they remained there to train and racked up an impressive list of performances in a short time together. In their first outing together in August 2013, they took sixth at the Ham-bach CIC2* in Germany, then traveled a week later to Scotland and placed third at Blair Castle CCI2*. Their next stop was Breda CIC2* in The Netherlands in early September, where they put in a convincing effort to win finishing on their dressage score of 38.8. "We had a fantastic week of eventing at Breda," says Marilyn after Breda. "The partnership with Tabasco is developing by the day and it continues to be a pleasure to get to know him. He is probably one of the smartest horses I have worked with, not to mention one of the most talented. We came into the weekend feeling ready and prepared and he put in three fantastic phases this weekend."

Their final event of the 2013 season was a move-up in level at the Schenefeld CIC3* in Germany in late September where they placed twelfth going clean and within time on cross-country with only one rail in stadium to add to their dressage score. "Each competition with Tabasco has brought us leaps and bounds closer

to being true partners. We have had only four competitions together, and a great deal has gotten accomplished in each phase, but of course there is a long road ahead. Wins along the way are confidence boosters that you're on the right track. Blair Castle was great; Breda was huge. However, with horses and most things in life, the best we can hope for is two steps forward and one step back, and working with this highly intelligent and opinionated horse has been no different. That said, I have no doubt that Tabasco is one of the greatest athletes I have had the privilege of riding. I have no doubt that he will tackle the toughest four-star courses in the years to come, because I believe there's a fight in that horse that will not quit if he really believes in what he is fighting for," says Marilyn after the close of their 2013 competition year.

In early November 2013 Tabasco was released from quarantine in the U.S. and will spend the rest of the fall acclimating and conditioning after the long trip. Marilyn says of Tabasco's planned vacation, "For purposes of relaxation, The Sauce would prefer to be found lounging in a paddock next to his girlfriend Demi [Marilyn's four-star mare RF Demeter]. Thankfully they're not annoyingly attached, but they've definitely had a thing going since the ferry ride to the CCI at Blair Castle in Scotland this August. Then again, he's pretty much always relaxed. It's hard to fluster The Sauce."

Marilyn outlines her plans for RF Tabasco in the early part of 2014, which will include some show jumping in Florida to prepare for his U.S. three-star debut at Red Hills Horse Trials in Tallahassee, Florida, in March. "I really can't wait. I'm crazy about that horse – all 17.3 hands of his stunning, opinionated, talented, territorial and wildly entertaining self. He's going to rock 2014." 🐾

Acronyms Explained

What does the TSF behind a horse's name stand for? TSF stands for "Trakehner Sportpferde Förderung." It is a program of the Trakehner Förderverein, a society of friends of the Trakehner horse in Germany. They use donations to support talented young riders or especially good horses to help them succeed and gain a positive record in sport, thus also promoting the Trakehner breed. Any horse that is sponsored by this Trakehner Förderverein program receives a "TSF" behind its name.

U.S. dressage rider Michelle Gibson received sponsorship money from the TSF program when she and the German-born and ATA-approved Trakehner stallion Peron earned a team bronze medal and a fifth place individual finish at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.

Do we have anything like the TSF in North America? In North America we have a similar, but smaller, grant program through the American Trakehner Foundation to support

promising riders on Trakehner horses and/or owners with talented "up-and-coming" horses. For more information go to www.americantrakehnerfoundation.com.

Other Special Designations: The American Trakehner Association also bestows performance honoraria by adding a suffix behind a horse's name if they achieve a particular level of excellence in most sporting disciplines. The suffixes are: *Pg* for Performance Gold, *Ps* for Performance Silver, and *Pb* for Performance Bronze. There is no cost for this program. Applying for your horse to receive an ATA Performance Award honor is very simple. They also award "Elite" (*E*) status to mares and stallions based on a point system where points are awarded for their own inspection scores and performance results combined with those of their offspring. And the ATA designates stallions who achieve a very high score at their inspection as "Premium" and mares with an inspection score of 56 or greater as "Model" (*M*) mares. For more information on the ATA's recognition program go to: www.americantrakehner.com/library/horserecognitionrules.asp.