



Classical Equitation Masters

Xenophon (427-355 BC): Greek general, the earliest European master with surviving treatises, wrote *On Horsemanship* which advocated the use of sympathetic training of the horse. Despite living over 2000 years ago, his ideas are still widely praised

Federico Grisona (mid-16th century): one of the few to write on horsemanship to that point since Xenophon. Was considered a master of his time; his methods are viewed as harsh and cruel by modern standards

Giovanni Battista Pignatelli (mid- to late-16th century)

Salomon de La Broue (1530–1610)

Antoine de Pluvinet (1555–1620): the first of the French riding masters, author of *L'Instruction du Roy en l'Exercice de Monter a Cheval*, tutor to King Louis XIII, and is the first notable writer to advocate for gentle training since Xenophon

William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle (1592–1676): Master of Horse to Charles II of England

Francois Robichon de La Guérinière (1688–1751): taught the classical position still used today, introduced the flying change, and had great impact on the Spanish Riding School

Francois Baucher (1796–1873): introduced the one-tempi flying change, his method, which is still hotly contested, was based on the fact that the horse's jaw is the source of all resistance; there are two 'manners' by which Baucher is known, the first a more dominant form of riding comparable to the modern folkur, the second more associated with 'lightness' and a lessening of the hands and legs as the horse progresses

Count Antoine Cartier D'Aure (1799-1863)

James Ffills—(1834-1913) was a well-known English-born French riding master. He attended the school of Francois Baucher in France, and introduced his methods to his home country. He taught for 12 years as *Ecuyer en chef* of the St. Petersburg Cavalry Riding School. He then went on to train in a German circus in 1892, during which time he performed for the Grand Duke Nicholas in Russia, and was subsequently offered a position to train the Russian Cavalry.

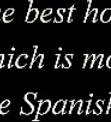
Gustav Steinbrecht (1808–1885)

Maximilian Weyrother director of the Spanish Riding School

Alois Podhalsky (1898–1973): became director of the Spanish Riding School in 1939; his books in English translation form the basis of Classical Dressage today

Nuno Oliveira (see below)

Egon von Neindorff (German method) (1923–2004): author of *The Art of Classical Horsemanship*



"Comparing the best horses, and considering which is most perfect, I would place the Spanish first. I choose him as the most beautiful, the noblest, the most graceful, the bravest, and the one who most deserves to be ridden by a King. And if I compare it with those horses that are also great natural runners, it is always the Spanish horse that gallops with the most precision and art."

~ Saloman de la Broue,
Head Groom of King Henri IV of France, circa 1600



Nuno Oliveira

(1925–1989) NUNO OLIVEIRA was born in Lisbon on June 23, 1925. He studied riding under Joaquim Goncalves de Miranda, in the style of the riding academy of Versailles. A great teacher, he possessed a near-encyclopedic knowledge of equestrian theory that crossed many styles and countries. His principal influences were Francois Robichon de la Guérinière, Gustav Steinbrecht and François Baucher.

Nuno, by his tireless work, study, and belief in the Classical Principles of the art of training horses provided the link with the Great Masters of the 16th, 17th and 19th century in Europe, and the changing and expanding world of the 20th century.

Nuno Oliveira taught and trained all his life, based originally in Lisbon, and later in Avessada, Portugal. He gave numerous performances with his beautifully trained horses throughout Portugal, often for charity. In the 1960's and early 1970's, he travelled to many countries in Europe and the United Kingdom to give demonstrations of all Classical movements. He also travelled to the United States, South America, and also to Australia and Asia giving training clinics and performances.

He was regarded world-wide as the last of the Old Master Trainers, always devoted to the principles of the Classical Trainers of old. All of his life Nuno Oliveira studied and practiced this equestrian art, demanding of himself and his students discipline, calmness and always absolute correctness, in all movements the horse performed. Nuno Oliveira rode like a King, and always his horses carried him like a King. Neither circumstances nor fashion ever deviated him from his beliefs.

His equestrian school/home was located in Avessada, a small village in Portugal, where he trained his own horses as well as visiting students, who came from all corners of the globe to learn from the Master. To quote Nuno Oliveira... "equestrian art is the perfect understanding and harmony between horse and rider". He travelled the world giving clinics and teaching riders who became, not only dedicated students, but good friends. More than a decade after Nuno Oliveira's death, these friendships have developed into a world-wide network (including organizations like the Classical Riding Club) active in promoting Classical Principles in training horses.



Michel Henriquet

Visit the website

Michel Henriquet's passion started more than half a century ago when M. Henriquet was looking for a master of equitation in the classical principles displayed by the School of Versailles in the 18th century. His search led him to Nuno Oliveira in Portugal. It was the beginning of a life-long friendship between both similarly aged men and M. Henriquet trained with him every two months until Oliveira's death in 1989.

Even in the first few minutes one can recognise that M. Henriquet's approach to dressage is quite different from most dressage trainers. For Henriquet the ultimate aim is « lightness » or what the French call « légèreté ». It is the hallmark of the so called « French school » and the word has become modern over the past years, especially, in Germany. What does it mean? To M. Henriquet « lightness » is when a horse is so collected and relaxed that it reacts to the finest of aids, moving with self-carriage which enables the rider to ride on loose or even dropped reins if desired. More articles in French: [Published Articles in Cheval Magazine](#)

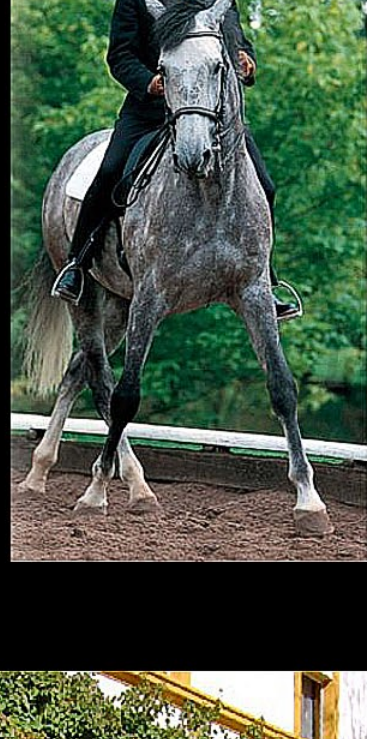
Philippe Karl, French Classical Master

<http://www.philippe-karl.com>

Ecuyer of the Cadre Noir from 1985 to 1998.

The founding principle of the School of Légèreté is the absolute respect of the horse. In this concept, Légèreté (French: lightness) is not a declaration of intent of a poetic or esoteric nature, but a philosophy bringing together clear, effective and measurable equestrian concepts.

The philosophy of Légèreté excludes any use of force or coercive artificial aids (including side reins, draw reins, tightly closed nosebands etc.), but includes all types of horse and takes an interest in all equestrian disciplines. It provides an understandable and reliable training plan with clear principles, efficient methods and procedures that fully respect the nature of the horse. It thus allows any seriously motivated rider access to High School equitation, even with a perfectly ordinary horse.



Don Álvaro Domecq

<http://www.realescuola.org> <http://www.alvarodomecq.com>

When one muses over the spectacular revival of the Spanish Horse & his worldwide recognition as a versatile athlete, one name comes to mind. Don Álvaro Domecq Romero, arguably the breed's most influential advocate, continues his family traditions and ardently preserves the classical roots of his beloved breed.

Don Álvaro Domecq Romero was born into an aristocratic Spanish sherry family in Jerez, de Cádiz, a province of Andalusia in south western Spain. A devout horseman, he founded the [Real Escuela Andaluza Del Arte Equestre](#) (Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art) in Jerez de la Frontera, Spain.

Don Álvaro's pride in and devotion to the Spanish bloodlines is so strong that, not so long ago, he determined to show the world that they could compete at the highest levels. His goal was to introduce the world to the idea that the Spanish horse is an excellent choice for the discipline of dressage. From his stock, he chose some of his finest horses and sent them on to the Olympics as members of the Spanish Olympic Dressage Team. After winning the bronze medal at WEG in Aachen (2002), they appeared in their first Olympic competition. Among their many achievements, the Spanish team, (which included the Domecq bred horse, Invasor II, and rider Rafael Soto) won the silver medal at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games.

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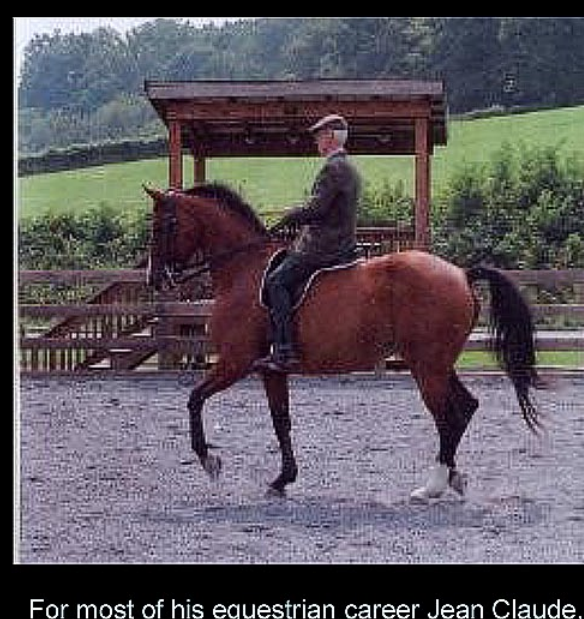
Jean Claude Racinet

June 2, 1929 – April 25, 2009

Jean Claude Racinet was a great proponent of riding in lightness through a method of mobilizing and relaxing the horse's jaw as first practiced by Francois Baucher (1796-1873)

Jean Claude made an important contribution to L'equitation de Legerete (riding in lightness) by translating and preserving the teachings of Francois Baucher's second manner, for which he was honored by the School of Horsemanship in Saumur France with their Lifetime Achievement Award. His lifetime of work was also recognized in Germany when they awarded him the title of Trainer of the Year in 2008.

Jean Claude recognized the genius of Francois Baucher at a time when Baucher was largely ignored or reviled.



For most of his equestrian career Jean Claude, like Baucher before him, was ridiculed for his belief that the jaw was the seat of all resistance in the horse. According to Baucher's method one must therefore release the resistance of the jaw with flexions done with the bit. Then it would be possible to make each part of the horse supple and then bring all the parts together in a posture of collection thus creating self carriage and making possible the movements of Grand Prix. In Baucher's method this posture was to be achieved before riding the horse forward. This was diametrically opposed to the more popular method of dressage in which the horse is ridden forward first and only changed to a more collected posture over years of training.

Modern veterinarian science has born out Baucher's theory showing that the jaw, especially the tongue, because of its leguminous connections to the poll of the horse at the top of his head and down into the horse's shoulder and chest does indeed affect the whole front end of the horse. By releasing the jaw (i.e. the tongue) into a soft chewing motion one can transform most horses very quickly into the classical posture (i.e. poll high, withers raised, hindquarters carrying a greater percentage of the weight). Jean Claude, like Baucher, was able to demonstrate dramatic changes in most horses in a very short time without force or artificial devices.

Jean Claude traveled world wide giving clinics and has left behind many devoted students, however his greatest accomplishment in preserving Francois Baucher's work might be in the books he wrote: Another Horsemanship, Racinet Explains Baucher and Total Horsemanship published in the United States. They have also been translated into French and German. He contributed articles to "L'Information Hippique," "Dressage and CT," "Riding in Lightness" and "Horses for Life" magazines. Mainly through Jean Claude's efforts Baucher's teaching has been made available in the United States.

Among his earlier equestrian accomplishments Jean Claude completed the Superior Equitation Course in the Cavalry School of Saumur (1953-54), became a member of the Jumping Team of the Military School in Paris (1953) and won the title of Champion of Tunisia in open jumping (1956). Besides being a clinician and author Jean Claude was a decorated war hero. He was wounded two times in Korea while fighting with the UN forces (1952-53). He also served as an officer in the French army in Tunisia and Algeria (1954-61), where he was awarded the Croix de Guerre for heroism in battle.

~ Courtesy of Lisa Maxwell, a student of Jean Claude who teaches his methods outside of Ashville, NC.

Lady Sylvia Loch

Founder of the Classical Riding Club in 1995, the first independent Partner of The British Horse Society <http://www.classicalriding.co.uk>

Sylvia Loch has been teaching and training Classical Equitation since the mid 1970's (previous to that she had her own riding school in Scotland). She is also an Author, Columnist, Lecturer and Dressage Judge. She has judged Lusitano and Andalusian horses all over the world including The National Championships for the Lusitano Horse in San Paulo - Brazil.

She is an Accredited Instructor of Portugal - the only British person to be certified by the Portuguese National School of Equestrian Art. She founded the Lusitano Breed Society of Great Britain (1984) and subsequently founded The Classical Riding Club in 1995.

She has written 7 serious books on the subject of the Iberian Horse and Classical Dressage including the highly reviewed *The Royal Horse of Europe (JA Allen) Dressage - The Art of Classical Riding and Dressage in Lightness*. Sylvia and her Portuguese horses are now based in the Scottish Borders where she teaches riders of all levels.



Here is a portion of her CV as it relates to her work with Lusitano horses:

1988-89 Later became director of London office, then opened Portuguese Branch – allowing a return to horses and study of equitation in Iberian Peninsula.

1973-79 As Lady Loch, studied classical dressage with the late Major the Lord Loch (ex cavalry instructor) in Portugal and ran dressage academy at Quinta das Esporas, Loule.

1979 Returned to UK to open The Lusitano Stud & Equitation Centre at Green Farm, Stoke by Clare – my husband's former family home in Suffolk.

1982 Registered The Lusitano Breed Society of Great Britain with MAFF.

1984 LBS of GB with Sylvia as Chairman was officially recognised by APSL, Portugal.

(Remained as Chairman until stepping down in 1992).

1984 Joined Chairman of ILPH on mercy mission to Portugal to discuss with relevant Ministry in Lisbon, the UK's Minimum Values act – to make the exportation of horses for slaughter unviable.

1985 Started own small teaching yard in Sudbury, Suffolk, welcoming students from all over the world to ride Sylvia's Lusitano School Masters.

1986 Worked with Portuguese Embassy & LBS Committee to bring the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art to the British National Dressage Championships at Goodwood.

1986 Presentation of the Portuguese School in the presence of HRH the Prince and Princess of Wales at Osterley Park and celebratory Treaty of Windsor Celebrations.



Bent Branderup

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Academic Art of Riding means to bring the Historical Art of Riding from the past back to life again. The horse must be trained according to it's abilities, concerning both body and mind. Thoughtful gymnastic exercises will keep the horses healthy and long living.

The academic riders see riding as an art form, an art of movement – like ballet. The basis for this kind of riding, however, is good basic training, like the training of a working equitation horse.

Bent's involvement with horses and training is lifelong. He traveled Europe visiting places of historic and hippologic interest and not surprisingly Bent ended up in "Escuela Andaluza del Arte Equestre" in Jerez, Spain, and became acquainted with Don Alvaro Domecq and Don Javier Garcia Romero. The great personalities and equestrian knowledge of these two masters were a great influence to Bent, and in the hands of Don Javier Garcia Romero the Iberian horse and Bent became acquainted. Bent was also a keen student of Nuno Oliveira in Portugal and Egon von Neindorff in Karlsruhe, Germany.

Torste Ljerner