

# Schumann's tuned to perfection

'Free-moving' — German-bred Schumann's Eragon strides into the history books as the first foreign-bred stallion to take the King George V championship



## NATIONAL SHIRE HORSE SHOW ARENA UK, LINCS 21-22 March

By Tricia Johnson

A two-year-old colt strode into the record books when becoming the first foreign-bred stallion to lift the prestigious King George V championship trophy.

It was very much a red-letter day for the German-bred Schumann's Eragon — for whom it was also a first show on British soil — as he left several past champions and Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) contenders in his wake. In taking the male title, he also won a first HOYS ticket for himself and his owner, heavy horse breeder and long-time enthusiast Doctor Volker Schumann.



**Black magic:** three-year-old Sparkland Hercules takes the gelding title

## HERE TO STAY?

THIS world-famous show, now in its second year at Arena UK, again drew hordes of spectators — locally boosted by BBC TV coverage on regional news programmes the day before. European and even Australian accents were heard among the crowd and the evening performance was voted a big hit. The newly enlarged arena and improved ancillary facilities proved popular with exhibitors too, and several voiced hopes that the show would remain in its new home.

Schumann's Eragon, who was exported to Germany in-utero, is a free-moving, upstanding bay by Metheringham Upton Hamlet — reigning HOYS victor and three-time supreme stallion here.

"I always come to this show, but very seldom with a horse," said Dr Schumann, who has one of the largest collection of Shires and Clydesdales in Europe. "The quality is so much higher here and I always think it would have to be a very good horse to beat the British ones. This one was champion in Germany as a yearling and reserve in Holland last year, so I thought I would give it a try. I sent him to England last October to be produced for this show.

"I thought he was good — but not this good; next to the birth of my children, this is the greatest moment of my life!"

Judge Jonathan Worthington, officiating here with William Bedford, commented: "This horse was in a league of his own; quality through and through. You have to look to the future and he has good breeding, size, bone, scope, action, joints, feet and hair. He ticks all the boxes."

## Kings fulfil ambitions

FOR the second year running, the champion gelding title went to the Cheshire-based King family's Cotebrook team, who ultimately sealed their show with the overall points trophy as leading exhibitors.

Following on from Hillmoor Eden's success last year, the lightly shown, black three-year-old Sparkland Hercules brought home the bacon this time, making a triumphant first appearance at this show.

"We thought he was mega fit, but anything can happen," said Alistair King. "You don't dare hope too much."

Having brought eight



Shires take centre stage in front of a bumper crowd in the newly enlarged arena

horses, the Kings posted no fewer than five wins and in taking the points trophy, became only the second exhibitors — besides the Bedford brothers — to win it more than once in the past 20 years.

Part two of the team's ambition here, to win the progeny trophy for the remarkable stallion Moorfield Edward for the fifth time in six years, was also accomplished. Edward, bred by the late Ray Williams, is now 23 but still working, and he and three of his sons are among only eight super premium sires worldwide. He is also the grandsire of Schumann's Eragon and directly accounted for three winners here.

**Girl power**

FEMALES held centre stage on the second day and what a feast that was, with line-ups showing the strength in depth that is the envy of the world.

Philip Moss and Sarah Ford found their overall champion in Martin Fountain's stunning homebred Moorfield Ted five-year-old, Woodhouse Calendar Girl, posting her fifth successive class win and regaining the trophy she last won two years ago.

Due to have her first foal at the beginning of May, the 2013 HOYS victor looked a picture, prompting

Philip Moss to comment: "This is a big, wealthy mare with beautiful feet, lovely silky hair and flat flinty bone. Her locomotion was unbelievable — she just springs off her hocks."

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Dr Volker Schumann is overwhelmed by Schumann's Eragon's championship win

The junior female title went to another homebred. This was the Wrexham-based Pleavin family's Shordley Olympic Lady, who headed an exceptionally strong three-year-old class.

This strapping daughter of Moorfield Manor Mac had a good season on the show circuit last year, taking the junior title at Nantwich and standing overall champion at Eglwysbach, and she is the family's secret hope for a first HOYS ticket.

Beautifully shown by Ceri Pleavin, 18, who won the young handler award at this show three years ago, she certainly impressed the judges.

"This was an easy junior champion," said Philip Moss. "She is still in a growth stage but is going to be one hell of a mare. She just needs another year before she can compete on equal terms with the senior mares."

Girl power also ruled in the young handler class this time — the title going to 16-year-old Charley Whetton. **H&H**

**A WINNING RIDDEN DEBUT**

EMMA GREEN and Hainton Charlie Girl made a triumphant showing debut to win not only their 12-strong ridden class, but also the overall ridden championship.

Their achievement was all the more remarkable because this lovely 10-year-old former HOYS in-hand victor joined the family only last October and was broken to ride just two months ago.

Husband Richard, who drives the renowned Thwaites Brewery team, also lifted the reserve champion stallion award with the two-year-old Admergill Archie, so this was a good show all round.

"We were looking for a horse to ride and as we knew this mare, I asked for first refusal on her," Richard explained. "To my astonishment, we were offered her within a month and snapped her up."

"She can be a bit of a diva but when we were being presented with our rosette, I could feel her saying 'I'm back,'" added Emma. "I am so hoping that HOYS will have a ridden championship — I would love for her to do the double!"

Judge Jack Cochrane, who won at this show himself with Charles Ross when there was a class for first-cross Shires, also used to produce and show the late Ann Vos' part-bred Shires in hunter ranks, so was the ideal choice as judge.

"The winner went in balance and self-carriage and was true to type," he said.



Winning couple: the 'lovely' Hainton Charlie Girl is crowned overall ridden champion with Emma Green (above), whose husband Richard takes the reserve champion stallion award with the two-year-old Admergill Archie

