



## HISTORIC CLASSICAL HORSEMANSHIP *Comes to Virginia!*

On June 9th – 11th, Virginia experienced its first Baroque Equestrian Games & Institute (BEGI) Classical Horsemanship Clinic, instructed by Bruno Gonzalez and Tina Cristiani Veder. Over 40 riders and auditors participated at Oakdale Equestrian Center in Powhatan, Virginia, making apparent the keen level of interest in truly classical and light riding. Many disciplines and breeds were represented: dressage, eventing, pleasure, etc.; Warmblood, QH, Irish Sport, Draft Cross, TB, Lipizzan and Lusitano. Everyone participated in lively discussions and observations throughout each day. Whereas in most clinics the auditors are sidelined and “seen but not heard,” Bruno and Tina encouraged questions and interaction from all.

Mornings began with presentations of principles from the great equestrian Masters, including:

- Collection comes from a shift in balance to the hind legs as the horse steps under the rider
- Contrary to popular thought, this cannot be achieved by “driving the horse more forward”
- From the outset of training the rider should look to bring the horse into better balance with small increments of collection

Through square turns, frequent transitions and basic lateral work, Bruno helped riders find the beginnings of collection, but cautioned not to confuse proper collection with the incorrect shortening of gaits. Discussion included the common misconception that lateral work comes only after achieving advanced collection, instead of understanding that it is the gateway to collection itself. Bruno also addressed the controversial exercise of “long and low,” explaining why, both physiologically and psychologically, it is counter-productive to collection and lightness.

With each horse and rider we repeatedly saw the importance of quiet patience and clarity of aids to achieve results without creating tension or stiffness. With Bruno’s gentle, effective instruction, riders experienced increased relaxation and dramatic improvement in the fluidity and correctness of the movements. Spontaneous applause often erupted from the crowd as a horse and rider connected into this awareness!



### HERE’S WHAT A FEW PARTICIPANTS HAD TO SAY:

*“I got more out of this clinic than any other I have attended. I learned so much about bringing the horse into true balance, getting him to come under in the back and lift in front. I got back on my horse this morning after not riding for weeks, thought of what Bruno was teaching... and had a wonderful first ride back.”*

*“What I found most meaningful was the connection between bend, inside hind and collection, and the realization that riding in lightness does not necessarily mean riding with little or no contact, but rather having engagement and relaxation create the lightness. Bruno and Tina helped so much to put it together for me.”*

*“I was surprised to learn about the softness created by the lateral movements, and how much it helped. Best thing I got was that my cross-country canter has improved fantastically over the past week from body position and not using my hands and legs at the same time.”*

BEGI will be back in Virginia fall 2012 with clinics and a schooling show. For more information, or to host a BEGI event in your state, contact Sharon Madere, [smadere@premier.com](mailto:smadere@premier.com).