

**ONE FOR  
THE BOOKS**

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record 24th gr. I race;  
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- BLOODSTOCK & MARKETS/6636
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# T H E **Blood-Horse**

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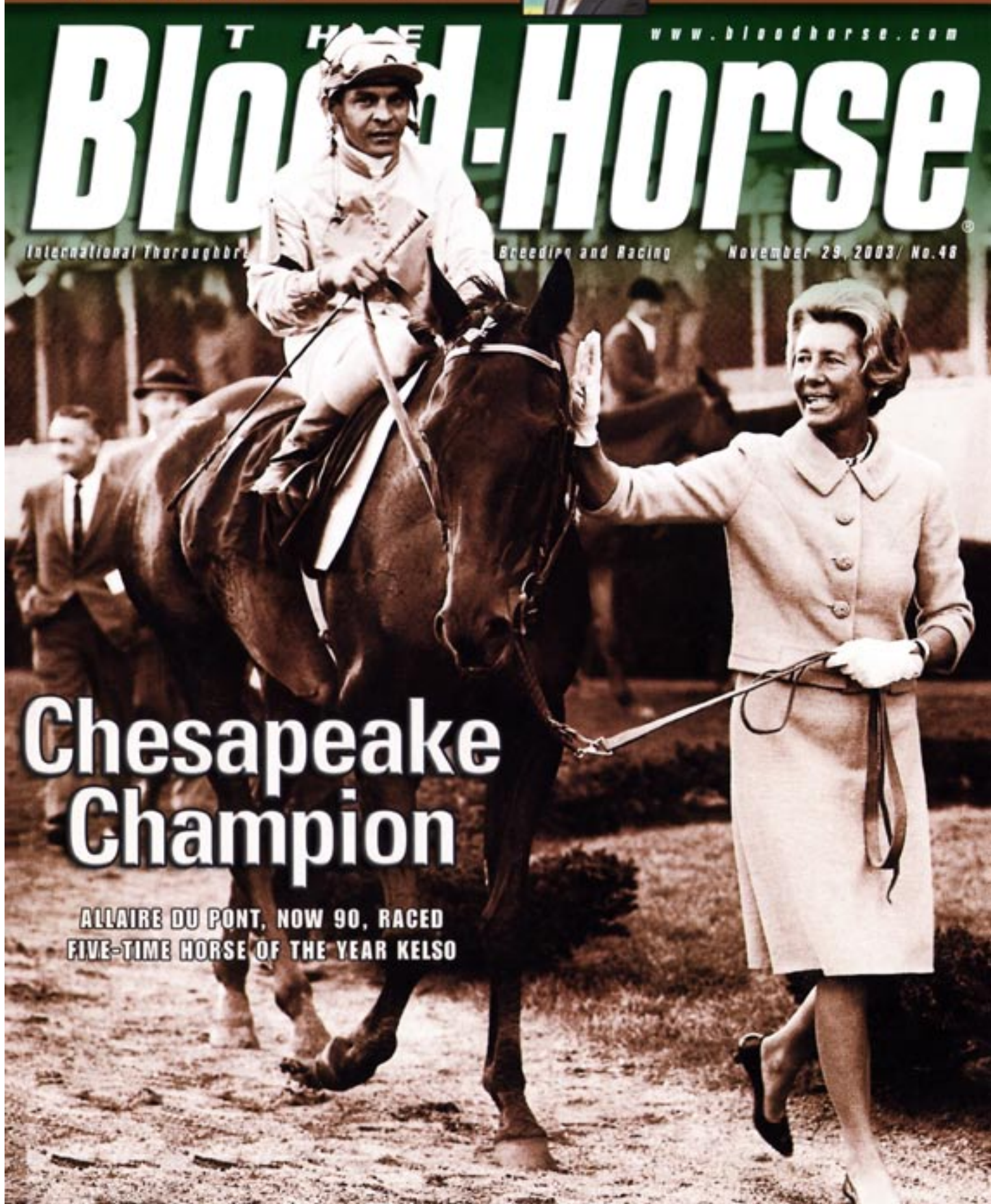
*International Thoroughbred*

*Breeding and Racing*

November 29, 2003/ No. 48

## **Chesapeake Champion**

**ALLAIRE DU PONT, NOW 90, RACED  
FIVE-TIME HORSE OF THE YEAR KELSO**





Students get hands-on experience at the International Equine School in Ocala, Fla.

# Horse Course

BY MELISSA SYKES

## *Florida's International Equine School gives horsemen plenty to study*

**W**hen Dr. Tom Lane retired in 2000 from his position as equine extension agent at the University of Florida, he expected, well, to be retired. Three years later, Lane's International Equine School in Ocala, Fla., will be graduating its charter class in the coming spring.

"When I retired from the university, people said there was a need for a place to learn and go to school without becoming a university student," said Lane. Lane was hired by UF in 1979 as its first equine extension agent. Educating horsemen was nothing new to him.

The International Equine School is a two-year program, with classes held over a long weekend every other month. "Our schedule is tailored for the working person," Lane noted.

The curriculum is in depth and the two months between sessions is best spent studying.

"Each session is fairly independent," said Lane. "It's a system-based curriculum. A lot of my exams are open book-I want them (the students) to read it and to understand the material. I don't want them just to memorize something for a test."

With course descriptions such as equine reproduction, equine psychology and behavior, and equine farm agronomics, there is something for everyone. Lane recognizes each student may have different goals—from taking care of their personal horses to hiring on as a farm manager—and he is dedicated to helping students



**Dr. Tom Lane goes over some X-rays with an IES student**

attain those goals.

“Most of our students already have a college degree,” Lane said. “They’re attending the school because they want to be in the (horse) business, not for a grade.”

Lane has brought together specialists from the community to act as professors, and with the community being Ocala; there is no shortage of knowledgeable horsemen.

“We have farriers, veterinarians, trainers,

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nutritionists—people that are in the business—teaching our students,” said Lane, “We cover all the latest information—90% of our students will know more than the farm managers out there.”

The school’s curriculum delves into detail. Equine Anatomy and Physiology covers a horse’s body systems, including the way the body functions for growth. In Equine Reproduction, students learn about both the mare’s and stallion’s reproductive organs and then are taken all the way from conception to care of the newborn foal.

Equine Psychology and Behavior goes into the history, evolution, and development of the horse. Behavior of the normal and abnormal horse is studied from birth through old age.

The digestive system, along with the effects of proper nutrition at different stages of life, is covered

in the Equine Nutrition and Metabolism session. The course also includes information on ration balancing, group feeding, and the economics of different feeds.

With West Nile virus in the headlines, the session on infectious diseases of the horse is appropriate. Also included in the session is the study of toxic agents such as botulism and those diseases infective to humans.

All horse owners can benefit from the session on Equine Pharmacology and Emergency Care. This covers the use and effects of medications and nutraceuticals in equine therapy. Not only do students learn about individual horse emergencies (i.e., colic, accidents, etc.), but also how to cope with problems such as fire, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

For those seeking complementary treatments, Lane gives a broad overview of

the therapeutic uses of alternative medicine such as acupuncture, chiropractic, and herbal and holistic therapies.

Managing the land on which the horse lives falls under the Farm Agronomics session. Everything from forage crop production to fencing layout and barn design is covered.

Billed as Applied Equine Appointments, experts explain the complete range of equipment and tack used in various disciplines. Students also explore the utilization of the horse both historically and currently around the world.

In the Conformation and Locomotion session, students are exposed to the biodynamics, biomechanics, and biophysics of exercise. For instance, during this course students visited the Thoroughbred Retirement Farm.

“They were able to view the horse, watch it travel,



Fees at IES are \$350 a session or \$1,800 for a year

and then look at the X-rays," Lane said. "We had a good sampling of front-end lameness including knee problems and also some rear lameness."

As the courses become more detailed, topics such as hoof anatomy and physiology are separated from both the sessions on conformation and anatomy. Students also learn what it takes to turn their hobby into a business. "We stress insurance and employee relations (in Equine Business Management)," Lane said.

Students come from all walks of life and are interest-ed in all breeds of horses.

"We have medical doctors, stockbrokers, investment bankers, registered nurses, and current farm managers," Lane said. "They are interested in all different kinds of horses-Arabians, Paso Finos, Thoroughbreds. It's quite a variety."

***"We've had two students hired on as farm managers since beginning the school," said Lane. "They're putting their knowledge to work."***

Joseph Bayer is an executive recruiter. He bought his first horse almost 10 years ago. He and Lane met at a polo match.

"I like learning," Bayer said. "I go to everything I can find. Dr. Lane showed me a brochure on IES. I went and never looked back."

Bayer currently breeds Egyptian Arabians. He has 13 head and plans to begin showing in the near future.

"It's (IES) an excellent school," Bayer said. "The courses are filled with information. It covers anatomy, physiology-it's an excellent source if anyone wants to learn what's really going on with the horses. I think there might be people out there with preconceived notions-they don't realize how in depth the courses are."

Class size is small-currently there are 16 students

in the program. But Lane is selective about the dynamics of each class.

"There have been some that couldn't cut the mustard," he said. "They didn't have the necessary desire to study and learn." For those, Lane asks them to leave-he doesn't want to hold back the serious students. And serious students abound.

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"They're putting their knowledge to work."

As with any horsemen, get a group together and you'll get differing opinions.

"We get into some real arguments at times," Bayer said. But in the end, everyone learns something.

Given the exposure a student receives to each subject, tuition appears to be much below that of a university. Fees are \$350 per session or \$1,300 for one year if paid prior to the first session.

Those students who complete the two years can come back for any of the sessions, at no additional cost, for a refresher.

Those attending IES for the full two-year program-and passing each course, receive a Certificate of Learning in Equine Care and Technology.

Although the certificate is not currently recognized by UF, Central Florida Community College does allow those graduating from IES to take an exam for a grade without having to attend its course.

"The community college has recognized the need for these types of courses," said Lane. "As a result of our school (IES), we now have an equine course at the community college."

As Bayer said, "There's a fair amount of homework-and you get out of it what you put into it."

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*For more information on the International Equine School, visit its Web site at [www.equineschool.com](http://www.equineschool.com). Melissa Sykes is a freelance writer and Thoroughbred breeder based in Central Florida.*