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# Carrico: a Stallion for All Rings

Callie Seaman had been looking for a hunter to buy for some time. She and her trainers at Heritage Farm had scouted high and low throughout the United States and Europe to no avail. Discouraged with the search, Seaman decided to turn her sights on a new jumper. While packing for a trip to Europe where she was meeting Andre Dignelli and Brady Mitchell to look at jumper prospects, her phone rang. It was Dignelli on the line. "I am sending you a video that I just received," he said. "I think we may need to change our itinerary."

Seaman and Dignelli met at Ludger Beerbaum's farm in Germany to try a beautiful 16.3 stallion by Catoki out of Kapitale named Carrico. When they arrived at the yard, a vicious storm began to blow in. As Seaman was riding the powerful bay for the first time, the front came through with freezing wind and hail. She jumped a few jumps and was told to trot back to the barn. "Here I was on a stallion in the middle of this terrible storm. The jumps were blowing down around us, and I was told to trot back to the barn. I had no idea how this horse would react," remembers Seaman. In true Carrico form, he took it all in and graciously trotted back to the barn. Although she had only been able to jump a few jumps before heading in, Seaman knew that Carrico was unique. "When I felt his jump, I knew right away. He is special."

Carrico began his hunter career in 2014 at the age of 11 after having a successful career as a 1.60 jumper in Europe. He completed quarantine in the United States in July, just two weeks before the USHJA International Derby Finals. Seaman was traveling to Saugerties, NY with Heritage Farm as the trainers prepared her other horse, Skorekeeper, for Derby Finals. Not wanting to leave her new mount at home, she decided to bring Carrico along and begin his transition from the jumper arena to the hunter ring. She and the staff at Heritage had no expectations of showing the stallion, but wanted him to become accustomed to his new career. Again, in true Carrico style, nothing flustered him. "He was so easy about everything that we decided to show him and see how it went," explained Seaman.

The transition to the hunter ring for Carrico was seamless. He was Champion in the High Performance Working Hunter division with professional Brady Mitchell in his first week of competition in the U.S. and earned good placings in the Amateur Owner division with Seaman. Week two in Saugerties was fabulously successful. Seaman herself rode Carrico to a win in every over fences class in the High Performance division as well as top placings in the Amateur Owner division, garnering a Championship and Reserve Championship respectively. Stunned and thrilled with their immediate success. Dignelli and Seaman evaluated the option of showing Carrico at Derby Finals, the ultimate test for a hunter. "It was the first year that you could supplement your horse into Finals. We talked about whether he could handle the atmosphere and wondered if it would shock him. We knew

**“Carrico is the horse of a lifetime and I am blessed with the chance to ride him.”**

**- Callie Seaman, owner.**



TOP AND MIDDLE PHOTO: WINTER EQUESTRIAN FESTIVAL. PHOTOS © SPORTFOT. BOTTOM: THE DEVON HORSE SHOW. PHOTOS © THE BOOK LLC.

he could handle the jumps!" Given the horse's unflappable attitude, Seaman decided to enter her horse in the Lexington, KY contest.

"And then, reality hit," Seaman laughs. The amateur rider had signed up to jump her brand new mount over the most difficult hunter course in the country. The duo had little time for doubt as they shipped to Lexington soon after Saugerties. To prepare the stallion for Derby Finals, Mitchell again showed him in the High Performance division to Championship honors. Seaman successfully battled her nerves in the first round of the Finals, piloting Carrico to a solid performance. "I was tense, but we had a good, conservative round."

The scores for Round One were good enough to qualify Carrico for the storied Round Two of Derby Finals, held under the lights in Rolex Stadium at the Kentucky Horse Park. Seaman calls her round "the most exciting night of my life. In three weeks, we went from never having jumped a course together to jumping 1.40 oxers. It blew my mind!" Carrico was stellar, jumping in his usual classic style and calm demeanor. The pair finished in 13th place overall and won the high score Amateur Owner award. Cruising on their wave of victories, they travelled to the Hampton Classic in Bridgehampton, NY, where Seaman and Carrico placed second in the International Hunter Derby.

In the fall of 2014, Carrico sustained a significant injury resulting in pastern joint fusion surgery. The prognosis for a return to jumping was not good. The veterinarians at New Bolton Center carefully designed a rehabilitation program for the stallion. After one and a half years away from competition, Carrico made his triumphant return to the show ring in Wellington in 2016 to place fifth in the \$100,000 Peter Wetherill Hunter Spectacular. As significant as the stallion's success is the success of his daughter, Like I Said, who placed second in the same class. Like I Said is the first prominent offspring of Carrico to have a tremendous career in the hunter ring. Owned by Pony Lane Farm, the mare has a string of victories in both the Performance and Amateur rings,

exhibiting the same talent and attitude as her sire.

Carrico's competition future will be determined by his soundness. His most significant role will be as a sire to hunters and jumpers, both of which have an impressive presence in the United States and Europe. Carrico is bred to jump, has the conformation and beauty of a hunter, and a mind suited for any task. He is a true cross-over stallion. ■ BY TPH EDITOR SISSY WICKES

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