

Krack C and Anky  
van Grunsven.

# Krack C

## Expressive Ambassador of Dutch Dressage

- text : GEMMA JANSEN  
- photos : DIRK CAREMANS

**Last October, Krack C won his classes at the CDI's in Oslo and Helsinki. Nevertheless, the stallion was officially retired from the sport at the Stallion Show in Den Bosch. "You have to stop at the high point," said Anky van Grunsven about the 16-year-old stallion. And the stallion has achieved many high points, both in sport and breeding.**

In 1996, Krack C was presented at the Stallion Selection as a four-year-old. While current KWPN policy requires four-year-old stallions to be presented under saddle, back then, they were shown in-hand. Cor Loeffen, Ab Barneveld, and Sjef van Rijswijk were on the Stallion Selection Committee at the time. Loeffen still remembers Krack C from the Selection: "He was a fancy and long-legged stallion from the start. On the hard surface, he showed a sufficient walk and a very good trot. At liberty in the ring, he demonstrated strong movement with lots of leg action and suppleness. In jumping, however, he showed little technique, push, or scope. Although Krack C comes from jumper bloodlines, the Committee was convinced that he could benefit dressage breeding, and it turns out we were right. And that's how specialization got started. When a stallion is used for breeding, it's hard to realize his full potential in the sport. Even so, Krack C did well showing at Grand Prix with Anky van Grunsven. In any case, the stallion has far-exceeded the expectations of the Stallion Selection Committee!"

Krack C currently has nine KWPN approved

## Heritability Data

Krack C ranks well above average with a score of 112 and high reliability of 97% in the 2007 Conformation Index. His offspring generally have long legs but should have more rectangular-shaped bodies. The head-neck connection is conspicuously light, and the neck is long. The neck should show more muscling. The sloping shoulder is striking. The back should be a bit stronger; the hindquarters generally lack muscling. The croup is very sloped. The walk, trot, and canter are very supple with good carriage. The push in these three gaits is average. Krack C has the same breeding value for movement as for conformation: 112.



Jacob Melissen

Carl Hester named the KWPN-stallion Vivaldi the best young horse he has ever ridden. Vivaldi won the Pavo Cup for five year olds in 2007.

sons, one NRPS approved son, and one approved by the Oldenburg Verband, thus surpassing the number of approved sons by his sire Flemmingh. Krack C has proven himself fully in the sport, and now, a number of his offspring are breaking into the Small and Big Tours, such as Trento B, Paso Double, Spargo, and Stradivarius.

## An Ugly Duckling

Krack C, originally named Kevin, was born on April 17, 1992 at Stoeterij 't Centrum in Wijdenes. Petra Vlaar, the daughter of breeder Fred Vlaar, recalls that Krack C slept a lot when he was a young foal: "From the start, he would lie stretched out in his stall or in the pasture, snoring. You could really tell that he enjoyed sunny days; he looked like he was saying, 'I'm glad to be alive!'"

He had a really thick baby coat because he was born so early in the year. He definitely had good conformation, but you had to look through that baby coat."

Krack C was entered in the local foal inspection in Egmond, where he finished ninth. Initially, eight foals were allowed to go to the Central Keuring in Midden-Beemster, but in the end, Krack C was allowed to go, too. He finished third in Midden-Beemster, leaving all his Egmond competition behind. It was the classic ugly duckling-becomes-a-beautiful-swan story because Krack C lost his excess hair over the course of the summer.

Petra Vlaar: "He traded his baby coat for a short, sleek one, and he's kept it ever since. He grew up in a herd at our place. He matured late, yet he was very noble. When

he moved, he would make you look twice. Krack C has a temperament like his dam Gicara II—always friendly, well-behaved, and willing. However, Gicara II has a funny trait: She flaps her lower lip in the stable. She's passed on this trait to several of her offspring, including Krack C. Now I know why a number of his offspring do the exact same thing! Gicara II is now 20 years old and in great health. She's currently in-foal to Briar. Her dam Baccara is 25 now and is spending the rest of her years with us. Gicara II keur preferent prestatie is out of a very good dam-line: Her dam Baccara (s.Ulrich) is also keur preferent prestatie and competed in the national championship for broodmares. Giacara II's granddam Lady Cara (s.Upper-cut xx) is keur preferent. Her dam, Gicara (s.Eratosthenes xx), is kroon



Theo Hanzon is currently showing Tolando very successfully at national level dressage. The pair recently won ZZ-Light Level Champion at the Dutch Equestrian Federation Indoor Championships in Roosendaal.



Terlia (Krack C x Architect, breeders: Visser & De Jong): 2003 National Mare Selection Champion, winner 2003 VSN Trophy, and best mare in the 2004 Pavo Cup, placing third.



Last year, KWPN stallion United and Edward Gal finished sixth in the FEI World Breeding Championship for Young Horses. The combination placed second in the qualifier.



Besides Tuschinski, Yvonne Copal rides the approved Krack C-son Webster. This year, she showed Webster in the Stallion Competition.

preferent and dam of the KWPN approved stallions Kalief (s.Uppercut xx) and Monaco (s.Le Faquin xx). Another three generations of predicate mares follow Gicara. Krack C's sire is Flemmingh keur, who was not well known at the time of his breeding to Gicara II. Vlaar: "My father followed the stallion competition and saw Flemmingh jump in Veendam. What stood out, in particular, was the way he moved between the jumps. My father thought he'd be a good match with Gicara II, and he was right. Krack C means a lot to our family. Of course, it was very special that he competed in the World Equestrian Games in Jerez de la Frontera. My parents were there and greatly enjoyed watching Krack C."

### Ideal Horse

In 1994, Ad Valk, who operates a horse sales business in Gorinchem, coincidentally

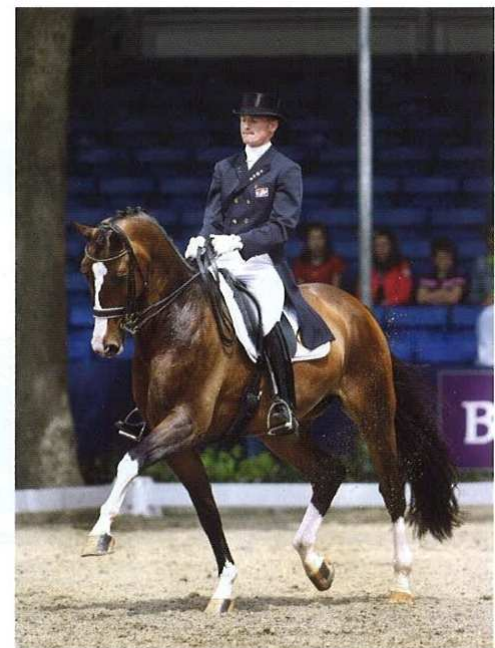
sat next to Fred Vlaar in the stands at Indoor Brabant. The two struck up a conversation about Flemmingh, and Vlaar mentioned that he owned one of his sons. Valk's curiosity was piqued, so one day he took a drive to Midden-Beemster. Valk recalls the first time he saw Krack C: "I saw him in a herd, and his conformation and movement stood out head and shoulders above the rest. It didn't take long to make a decision. I bought a 50% share in him. He came to my place as a two-year-old. The initial plan was to present him at the Stallion Selection as a three-year-old, but he wasn't mature enough, so we waited another year. A working student started him under saddle, which wasn't any trouble at all because he was so easy. Before we took him to Ermelo, the well-known German horseman Maas Hell came by to look at him. He offered a lot of money for the stallion, but we didn't

take it. I've never regretted my decision, although Krack C is the first and last horse that I've kept."

Valk found something special in Krack C: "I was crazy about that horse—his presence, temperament, and of course, those front legs. In my opinion, Krack C comes very close to the ideal horse. Look, we all know what the ideal horse should look like, but we don't have one. Krack C is no wonder horse, but he's one of the few stallions that I know that can sire a very special horse. Just look at Terlia and Stradivarius, who Edward Gal is now riding. I once sold a really special Krack C out of a Dior dam to Vera Kessels-Barisone in the U.S. And of course, there's Spargo. He was selected for the performance test but was sent home (justifiably, in my view too) because he was so incredibly hot during the test. Krack passes on outstanding articulation of the joints; of course,

## Still Not Keur

Krack C has not been awarded the keur predicate despite his high breeding values for conformation and movement as a result of his nine approved sons, outstanding show record, and daughters who excel in the selections. The Stallion Selection Committee may award the keur predicate to horses with a sport breeding value of 140 points with at least 85% reliability. Krack C's most recent dressage breeding value is 128 with 93% reliability, which is a good breeding value in all respects but many people disagree. A further analysis of Krack C's breeding value shows that his offspring excel at the selections for mares and stallions. They also do very well in the EPT and IBOP tests. However, sport performance of Krack C offspring is an issue. The problem is not with their show scores but with the fact that relatively few Krack C offspring are showing at Grand Prix, given the age of the oldest offspring in the sport. Currently, 308 Krack C offspring are actively showing, which is a normal share of his total offspring. Petra Vlaar offers her opinion: "I think this situation happened because many of his offspring are sold abroad when they're three or four years old. There's a high demand for them because of their good temperament and willingness. We, as well as Van de Lageweg, HP Stables, and Ad Valk, ship them all over the world. Egbert Schep warned us by saying: 'That's great for business, but think about it, you're acting against your own best interests.' There are many Krack C offspring showing in the Small and Big Tours. Krack C has already contributed so much to Dutch breeding by producing so many champions and approved stallions that the Studbook should question what more a 'paper' index can add to the stallion. In my view, the KWPN Board should be able to revise the breeding index, if they feel it's necessary. Regardless of where you travel in the world, Krack C is the dressage ambassador of the Netherlands!"



Theo Hanzon is currently getting Spargo (Krack C x Boreas, breeder: Lundanchelo Hoeve) ready for the Big Tour.



*The Performance Champion of fall 2007: Zhivago, ridden by Edward Gal.*



*Hans Peter Minderhoud riding Krack C's approved son Redford at the 2004 Zwolle Stallion Show.*

he has it himself. At the time, I heard a lot of comments about his movement, and I responded to them a bit curtly. The people who complained a lot probably never have had such a horse in their barn. I recognize a horse that really articulates its joints; that's a natural talent, and a horse is either born with it or he's not! As far as I'm concerned, I've always liked Krack C, and I can sell his offspring easily!"

### Extraordinary Movement

The American dressage rider Nick Wagman was working for Ad Valk when Krack C was moved from Midden-Beemster to Gorinchem. The stallion was four years old when Wagman started riding him. He has good memories of Krack C. Wagman: "In all honesty, he's the friendliest horse I've ever known. He was very hot and sensitive to ride but was always well-behaved. He was never cranky and had a huge desire to please. I thought he was perfect. Critics said that he wasn't strong enough behind and that his walk should be bigger, but I really enjoyed riding him. I liked taking him on trail rides, too, because he was also fun outside the arena."

Wagman continues: "Winning the Pavo Cup with him twice were definitely high points. His movement was extraordinary, and the people in the stands went wild over him. But my favorite moments were quietly training at home, just Krack C and me. Then it was pure harmony between the two of us, which made the later negative statements in the press a very bitter pill to swallow indeed. It just became a smear campaign and almost no one wanted to believe that Krack C could move like he did naturally, but he was so incredibly willing. I almost stopped riding him because of all the unfair criticism, but his owners persuaded me to keep going."

"In any case, I'm very thankful for Krack C because riding him allowed me to gain more international recognition as a rider. I owe a lot of my success to him. After a while, I missed my family in the U.S. and thought that I was at a point where I could make it in the horse business over there, so I stopped riding Krack C. That was very emotional for me. I've progressed as a rider in the U.S., and I buy and sell good dressage horses. Of course, I always look for horses by Krack C, and I have two really good ones by him at my barn," explains Wagman.

### Quick but Totally Honest

After Wagman, Anky van Grunsven started riding Krack C. "Ad Valk and Fred Vlaar approached me and asked if I wanted to ride Krack C. I said 'yes,' but I wanted to take him on trial for a month. I soon discovered he was my kind of horse. At first, I just focused on winning his trust and getting him relaxed. He was really an incredible horse—always very enthusiastic and cooperative. What's more, he was consistently very well-behaved and sweet on the ground, and he was very quiet around other horses at shows. In his tests, he often got low scores for his walk, which was unfortunate, because he had a really good walk at home, but he didn't always show it in the hectic show environment," the world renowned rider explains.

Van Grunsven won the requisite shows on Krack C. He reigned in the Freestyle at CHIO Aachen and Jumping Mechelen. The exceptional combination prevailed in Moscow, Oslo, Helsinki, Wiesbaden, and Rotterdam as well as Outdoor Gelderland and 's-Hertogenbosch. Participating in the World Equestrian Games in Jerez de la Frontera was an experience Van Grunsven will never forget: "We went to the Games as

the fourth combination on the Dutch Team, and we didn't have a lot of experience at that level. Krack C moved better and better as the competition went on. The stands were packed full for the final Freestyle, and the atmosphere was very special and warm. I asked Krack C for an extended trot and thought we were coming off the ground. I heard the people in the stands collectively sigh 'ooooohh.' I finished eighth and was very happy with that. At that time, we simply could not have done a better test." Krack C was retired from showing at the Stallion Selection, but he will remain available for breeding. Van Grunsven: "I have a few Krack C offspring in the lessons I teach. What's interesting is that they're not all the same type as their sire, but they all do their best and keep moving. They're also quicker than the average horse, which they definitely get from him, but they stay totally honest. It'll be difficult for me because the previous horses I retired just stayed at my barn, but Krack C will go to Joop van Uytert's stallion station. I know that he'll get great care there, but it's still difficult because he's been here for nine years. It'll definitely be hard to see him leave."



*The Krack C daughter Revanche elite (dam's sire: Bustron, breeder: P.C.M. van Santen) was the 2001 Friesland Central Selection Champion.*