

# THE CHRONICLE of the Horse

BREEDING  
DRESSAGE  
HUNTING  
SPORT WITH HORSE AND HOUND  
SHOWING  
CHASING  
EVENTING

VOL. LXVII, NO. 24

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 2004

\$52.00 Per Year  
\$72.00 Per Year Foreign  
Single Copy: \$2.95

## ► A Fortunate Comeback

Jamie Plank Martin, 45, of Jackson, Miss., was a successful junior rider in the late 1970s, but she hung up her tack after she graduated from Sweet Briar College (Va.) and headed to Vanderbilt (Tenn.) for law school. Then, after 19 years of marriage to E.B. Plank Jr., three children (now ages 9, 11 and 12), and a successful law practice, she returned to the show ring last year.

After a year back in the saddle, she guided Monte Cristo, a horse she purchased just six weeks earlier from Don Stewart Jr., to the non-pro three-foot overall and amateur titles on May 15-16.

"I feel incredibly blessed and thankful to have this opportunity to do it again," she said. "I'm so lucky to have these wonderful horses. It's just a gift."

As a junior, Martin rode with Otis Brown Jr., so it was only natural that she should resume training with his Brass Lantern Farm. "I was actually the first student that 'Brownie' took on all those years ago," she recalled, laughing. "There aren't many people out there who can say they're riding with the same trainer they started with more than 30 years ago. I was the 10-and-under reserve champion in the state of Kentucky that first year."

Throughout the decades, Plank kept in touch with the show circuit and with Brownie.

"For those 20 years that I didn't ride, I still got the *Chronicle*. My husband would tease me each week when it would come and say, 'Why are you still getting this horse magazine?' And I would say, 'I know who did well at this show, who got married, and who had a baby.' I told him, 'One day I'm going to ride again, and I'll know what's going on.'"

Martin started back in the adult hunter and jumper divisions and traveled to HITS Ocala (Fla.) for the winter, where she earned the circuit championships in the adult amateur, 36-45, division with Whitecap and the high adult amateur jumper division with Stainless Steel.

She purchased Monte Cristo, a 9-year-old, Dutch Warmblood gelding, to carry her to the next level, the amateur-owner division. She intended to show in the 3'6" division at Kentucky, but when rain caused sloppy footing, Martin opted for the Legacy Cup indoors. They won the first 50 over 49 starters and

"I was thrilled to win [the first day], but I was so nervous," Martin said. "I didn't know if I could go back in there. And I had to wait so long, that by the time I went I just said, 'Don't let me make a huge mistake!'"

Martin's fully immersed back into the sport and is even building a new facility to house her Providence Hill Farm. She currently owns a 24-stall barn with 15 boarders, where trainer Val Lowe is based. She expects to expand these operations in the future. She also keeps several horses in training with Brownie and meets him at the shows.

Martin, whose daughter, Tinsley, 9, shows in the small pony hunter division, said her daughter actually persuaded her to return to the sport when she started riding last summer.

"So I thought, 'Golly, if she's going to do it, I'm going to do it too,'" said Martin. "And my mother, Jacquie Plank, comes to all the shows again. She was there for me when I was a junior, and now she's there again for us."



Jamie Martin and Monte Cristo partnered to win the three-foot non-pro finals and three-foot non-pro amateur title at the Legacy Cup.

(Gene Gruber Photo)