



## Monty Roberts and Annemarie van der Toorn at record breaking “Horse Event” in Holland

Not one spot was available in the tribunes around the large open arena of the “Hippisch Centrum” (Equine Center) in Deurne, Holland, when Monty Roberts rode in with the German Reining Champion horse B.H. IS DUN that Grischa Ludwig from Germany lend him for the upcoming tour in the UK.

But not only the fact that most of the several thousand spectators had never before seen Monty ride seemed to put the entire horse fair into utter silence: **Monty did not ride alone.** On three rides, scheduled as highlights at the end of each Horse Event day, he was accompanied by a world-renowned Dutch dressage or jumping rider on high-class warmbloods: two-times Olympic gold medal winner **Anky van Grunsven**, Olympic dressage rider **Imke Schellekens-Bartels**, and Olympic silver medal winner in jumping **Albert Voorn**.

In an educational as much as an entertaining manner, the four riders demonstrated similarities and differences between Western, Dressage and Jumping horses and riding while openly expressing their shared respect and appreciation. Certainly many spectators were surprised to *discover that the similarities clearly outnumber the differences, and*

*that both riding styles and types of horses impress with mastery of skill and natural beauty when ridden at such a high level of competence.* Onlookers were even more surprised when Monty invited Anky at one point to ride his Quarter Horse, and the dressage champion rider demonstrated a few spins in typical Western style.

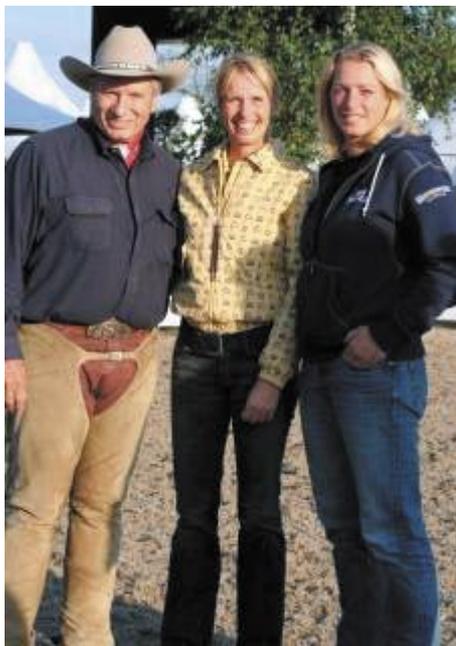


The mind-opening effect of those rides were tangible and more than just icing on the Horse Event and its countless clinics, demonstrations and expert talks that in total more than 30.000 visitors noticeably enjoyed – a new record since the fair started six years ago.

**Annemarie van der Toorn**, Monty's road manager and a Monty Roberts instructor with her own training and teaching facility in the North-West of Holland brought together an outstanding team, including among others Dan Wilson from the UK and Karel... from Holland, both excellent professional horse trainers using also Monty Roberts methods. Aside from participating in panel discussions about the well-being and violent-free training of horses, Annemarie and Monty gave several demonstrations each day, which drew tribune-filling crowds that were eager to learn how specific problems with horses could be solved in a non-abusive, horse-friendly way. As Monty explained during a demonstration: **“ The second priority is that you have fun working with your horse. What's the first priority? That the horse has fun working with you!”**



Monty's point couldn't have been illustrated more clearly than by a demo that stretched over three consecutive days: Annemarie and Dan Wilson turned “Leo”, a healthy pinto scheduled to go to slaughter because nobody could handle or ride him, in just three short sessions into a horse that willingly allowed to be touched, lead, saddled and finally even ridden without any bucking, strain or stress.



Among the other successful demonstrations was a jumper that had quit jumping, a horse that didn't allow to be touched and was scared to death by plastic, and a stallion that would refuse to load and being ridden. All could be helped and improved greatly after only a single 30 min. session. After each demo, impressed viewers streamed in large numbers to Monty's and Annemarie's booth to get educational tools, autographs and questions answered.

It is probably safe to say that this was a world-premiere in bringing non-traditional and traditional riders of such a caliber and influence closer together, vividly represented by Monty and Anky who are important role models for professional and amateur riders and trainers alike. It also might in the future be remembered as the historical starting point of a fundamental shift in how the different fields of riding and horsemanship are being perceived and valued – away from prejudices and misconceptions to mutual appreciation and understanding. To witness that the intention of Monty, Anky, Imke and Albert was to publicly demonstrate mutual respect, trust and harmony by riding and “joining-up” with each other, also gives hope that in the future both traditional and non-traditional trainers and riders will increasingly learn from and help each other to use a more humane, violence-free treatment and training of horses and riders, young and old.

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