

# Horse of the Year

## TRAINING LEVEL



## HOT BLACK CHOCOLATE

2007 black 17-hand Oldenburg mare

Sire: Hotline • Dam: Tiamo

Owner/Rider: Anneliese Vogt-Harber, Tucker, Georgia

Breeder: Hugo Schmidgall, Germany

KELLY MCCESNEY

Anneliese Vogt-Harber grew up in the family business, Atlanta's Vogt Riding Academy. She earned USDF gold, silver, and bronze and German silver and bronze rider medals. She developed the Lipizzan Tulipan Neopol (a homebred) and the Hanoverian Advantige (her 1999 Pan Am selection-trials partner) to Grand Prix. And she took the school's reins when her parents retired.

But two years ago, after "going down center line for thirty years straight," Vogt-Harber wasn't enjoying showing as she once had. Still, with "a bunch of kids all fired up about showing with our school horses, I needed to go to shows."

"How about a new horse?" a friend suggested, and Vogt-Harber started looking. Last February, after three fruitless months, she clicked a link to yet another YouTube clip—"and said, 'Whoa!' The mare it showed was compliant, beautiful, doing her job, nice gaits." Vogt-Harber called, expressed interest, and asked that the vetting process begin.

Hot Black Chocolate left Germany for the US on April 11. The veterinarian in Germany, the broker who met the plane, and the vets at the USDA and local quarantines "all said, 'She's such a good girl!'" Vogt-Harber recalls.

When "Choko" reached Vogt-Harber's barn at last, the trailer door opened "and my hands shot over my mouth. She was even more beautiful than I'd thought." The mare stepped off, walked to her stall, "got down, rolled and rolled, then got up and looked at us as if to say, 'Anything to eat?' She *is* such a good girl!"

The next day, Vogt-Harber lunged Choko until "she *crrracked* her back and bucked and bucked and bucked. Then I got on and she was all business, putting her head right in the bridle."

By their first show, Vogt-Harber had ridden the mare nine times. They did fine in the schooling ring. But just before they entered at A for their first-ever Training Level test, "somebody came running down the hill with paper in his hands—and we took off galloping. We got to the judge's stand and I spun Choko around, saying, 'I am so sorry.' Then I told myself, 'Put on your big-girl breeches and go down that center line.' It was a tense ride; she was totally green and behind the vertical. We got a 69 percent."

Before the next day's test, Vogt-Harber decided, "I'm getting her poll up and getting her out there." They scored an 81.6.

"At that point, Horse of the Year never occurred to me. I just wanted to show the best Choko could do and make her breeder proud. [Her sire] Hotline was new on the breeding circuit, so people were going to be looking at him, and at her."

The pair qualified for the Great American/USDF Region 3 Championships at Training Level. But Choko was "coming together so quickly" that Vogt-Harber decided to aim for First Level as well. At the Regionals, they won the First Level title with a score of 77 percent—what Vogt-Harber calls "the best ride I ever had."

For 2013, horse and rider are "already working with some Second Level stuff." Vogt-Harber would "love to have us do some Young Horse work with Scott Hassler."

"Choko is everything I thought she was going to be, and more," Vogt-Harber says. "Judges who've seen me struggle with difficult horses tell me, 'I'm so happy for you.' And ninety percent of my tests say things like 'a pleasure to watch' or 'wonderful basics; I can't wait to watch the progression.'"

"Neither can I. I really want to see where she'll go."

—D. J. Carey Lyons

## TRAINING LEVEL RESULTS

WINNER'S MEDIAN SCORE: 80.045%; NUMBER QUALIFIED: 530

1. HOT BLACK CHOCOLATE (Oldenburg), Anneliese Vogt-Harber, owner/rider; Hotline, sire; Tiamo, dam; Hugo Schmidgall, breeder.....	80.045%
2. SUNAMMI (Hanoverian), Lisa Eckenstein, owner; Heather McCarthy, rider; Sinatra Song, sire; Susanna, dam; Parvin Work, breeder.....	76.042%
3. LOOKS ELEGANT HU (Zweibrucker), Horses Unlimited Inc., owner; Adam Cropper, rider; Leonberg, sire; Ezmerelda La Balladora, dam; Anne Sparks & Horses Unlimited Inc., breeder.....	76.000%
4. ABENDGOLD GF (Zweibrucker), Jan Hutchings-Beale, owner/rider; Win the Gold, sire; Arabella, dam; Gwendolyn Gregorio, breeder.....	75.611%
5. QUIBUS FAN BEABUORREN (Friesian), Catherine Lindbeck, owner; Olivia Chapeski, rider; Jasper 366, sire; Maaikie Fan Beabuorren, dam; Y.P. Witteveen, breeder.....	75.500%
6. BRISHEN S.G. (Hanoverian), Stargate Sport Horses LP, owner; Gail Abele, rider; Bergamon, sire; Ursula SG, dam; Stargate Sport Horses LP, breeder.....	75.268%
7. WINTER ZEST (Hanoverian), Anne McCutcheon, owner; Alyssa Buechler, rider; Winterprinz, sire; Duette, dam; Anne McCutcheon & Dressage Extensions, breeders.....	75.090%
8. ROYAL GEM (Oldenburg), Marcia Young, owner; Missy Fladland, rider; Rubin-Royal, sire; Jasmine, dam; Lloyd Landkamer, breeder.....	75.000%
9. DON FREDERIC HVH (Hanoverian), High Valley Hanoverians, owner; Ashley Marascalco, rider; Don Frederico, sire; Wruffian Q, dam; High Valley Hanoverians, breeder.....	74.984%
10. BOCCACCIO IOF (Hanoverian), Marchella Richardson, owner; Kathryn Stoy & Debbie Hill, riders; Bugatti Hilltop, sire; Roxette, dam; Hilltop Farm Inc., breeder.....	74.822%
11. DONAR'S DIABLO (Half-Welsh), Kimberly Crandell, owner; Kelly Phillips, rider; Donarweiss GGF, sire; Fferm Gwenffrwd Eurion, dam; Stacie Crocetti, breeder.....	74.821%
12. FORTE (Hanoverian), Heather O'Keefe, owner/rider; Farewell III, sire; Gotha, dam; Gail Spencer, breeder.....	74.600%
13. VAUN B (Friesian), Charmaine Brown, owner; Gwen Poulin, rider; Tsjalke 397, sire; Jantsje K., dam; Charmaine Brown, breeder.....	74.583%
14. TYMPANI (Trakehner), Susan Posner, owner/rider; Tigre, sire; Touchee, dam; Susan Posner, breeder.....	74.388%
15. WON CHANCE (Hanoverian), Lisa Weis, owner/rider; Widmark, sire; Delorean, dam; Meg & Ronald Williams, breeders.....	74.288%
16. FREEDANCE (Oldenburg), Jenna Stern, owner/rider; Freestyle, sire; Dalliance, dam; Jenna Stern, breeder.....	74.197%
17. SAN SIRO (Oldenburg), Janice Davis, owner; Morgan Barrows, rider; San Schufro, sire; Desire, dam; Martin Reents, breeder.....	74.150%
18. SANTOS (Hanoverian), Charlotte Bayley-Schindelholz, owner/rider; Santino, sire; De Nirels, dam; Henk Spekenbrink, breeder.....	74.000%
19. ST. LOUIS (Westfalen), Kelly Douglas, owner; Kate Douglas, Kelly Douglas & Katie Hoefs-Martin, riders; Saint Tropez, sire; Apunkt, dam; Christiane Werthmann-Brandt, breeder.....	73.929%
20. MISS ELIZABETH (Canadian Warmblood), Jane McGough, owner; Debbie Fornia-Dewitt, rider; Sir Sinclair, sire; Lana, dam; Christine Snyder, breeder.....	73.700%