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HISTORY, TRADITION, INNOVATION AND EXCITEMENT... JUMPING VERONA 2021 HAS IT ALL!

It's just three weeks to **Jumping Verona 2021**, and it's all-systems-go! The cancellation of the 2020 edition of this hugely popular showjumping fixture was inevitable due to the pandemic that brought the world to a grinding halt last year. But that just adds to the excitement and anticipation ahead of this year's event which will celebrate the **20th anniversary** of top-class competition in the beautiful city so closely associated with the story of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.



JV/S.Grasso

The feature class of the show which runs from **Friday 5th to Sunday 7th November** is, of course, the **Longines FEI Jumping World Cup** qualifier in which the stars of the sport will battle it out for qualifying points towards the world Final in Leipzig, Germany next April.

Jumping Verona presents the **third** of the 11 Western European League qualifying legs taking place this season, and although spectator-numbers will be restricted in order to comply with essential Covid-19 regulations the atmosphere is still guaranteed to be intense. Italian showjumping fans love their sport, and don't hold back when supporting the home riders in particular.

*"The entry list will be defined at the end of this week," says **Riccardo Boricchi**, show director for Jumping Verona. "Among those who have already confirmed they are coming there are the three riders who stood on the podium of the last World Cup Final held April 2019, Steve Guerdat, Martin Fuchs and Peder Fredricson. Fredricson is leading the world ranking for the first time in his career, replacing Germany's Daniel Deusser, another rider who will also be coming to Verona."*

STARTED

The story of the Italian leg of the FEI Jumping World Cup series started back in 1983 when it was held in **Milan** for the very first time. The following year it moved to Birago and from 1995 to 2000 it was staged in **Bologna** before **arriving in Verona in 2001**, where it has remained ever since. It takes place within the context of the world-famous horse fair, the **Fieracavalli**, which this year celebrates its **123rd edition**.

Belgian, German and Dutch riders have dominated the World Cup competition at Verona, but the Brazilian, Irish and Egyptian national anthems have also been played during the prize giving ceremony. And, last time around at the **2019** event, it was British Olympian, **Scott Brash**, who won through with Hello M'Lady when pipping Ireland's Darragh Kenny and the aptly-named Romeo in a thrilling 12-horse jump-off against the clock.

Britain's record in the Italian leg of the series is a significant one. The legendary John Whitaker, who continues to compete at top level, claimed victory in Bologna in both 1997 and 2000 and his younger brother, Michael Whitaker, won the 2009 edition in Verona. With British showjumping on the rebound right now, could we have another British winner this time around?

NEW IDEAS

Fresh new ideas are always welcome in any sport, and in a move that marks the forward thinking of Jumping Verona, the 2021 edition will **host a brand new competition**. Designed in partnership between **Fieracavalli** and **Scuderia 1918**, the **Top Team** contest will see representatives from Team Scuderia 1918 take on another team made up of the **world's top riders** in a spectacular speed class in which every jump left standing will add value to the final **total prize money that will all go to charity**.

Amongst those expected to take part are **Giulia Martinengo Marquet** who rides for the Air Force and is one of the mainstays of Italian showjumping, America's **Jessica Springsteen** who is a team silver medallist from the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, French star **Kevin Staut** who won team gold at the Rio 2016 Olympics and Switzerland's **Martin Fuchs**, team gold and individual silver medallist at the Longines FEI Jumping European Championships 2021 staged in Riesenbeck, Germany last month.

The Top Team competition will be the highlight of the afternoon on Saturday 6th November just before the Small Grand Prix. The action gets underway on Friday 5th, and Jumping Verona 2021 promises three days of prime-time sport which will conclude with a new name added to the star-studded Roll of Honour as winner of the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup qualifier. It's going to be great!

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