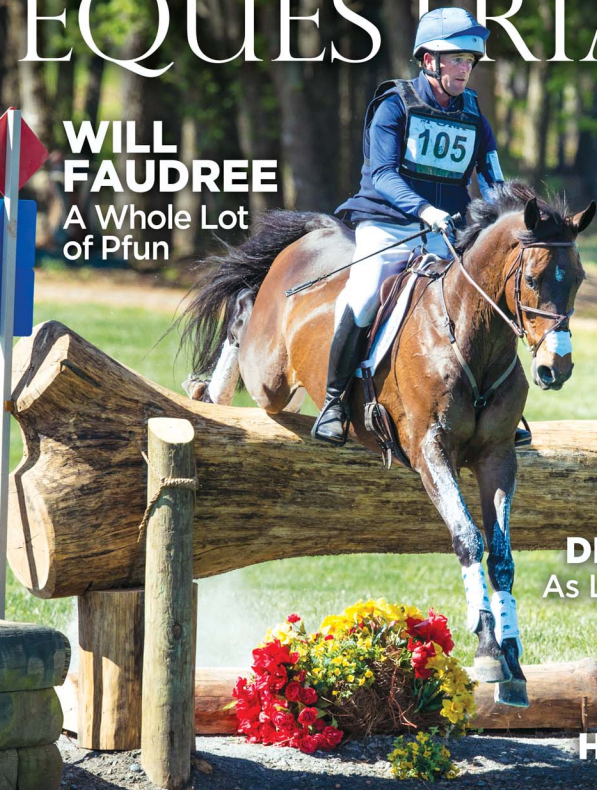


The CAROLINAS EQUESTRIAN[®]

Vol. 3, No. 3
Summer
2016

WILL FAUDREE

A Whole Lot
of Pfun



JOHN ZOPATTI DRESSAGE

As Luck Would
Have It

STEVE HEINECKE

Building a
Legacy with
Sock, Inc.



STEVE HEINECKE:

Building a Legacy with **SOCK INC.**

By Taylor Renner

At top from left: Steve Heinecke and Poetry Man posing with awards after winning both the Medal and ASPCA Maclay classes under trainers Timmy Kees and Jeffrey Welles at the 1984 Devon Horse Show. (Photo courtesy of Steve Heinecke)

Steve Heinecke and Paige Wilson's Dicaprio in the Performance Hunter 3'3" division at the 2016 Winter Equestrian Festival. (Photo by Sportfot)

Growing up in Connecticut, it didn't take long for Steve Heinecke to realize his calling in life. At the early age of six, Heinecke began riding and developed a passion for the sport almost immediately. He still finds that same passion to be true today and owns and operates Sock Inc., based near Charlotte, NC, where his keen insight and eye for detail inspires his students to be competitive riders as well as horsemen.

"I've been riding forever," said Heinecke. "I can't think of a time when I wasn't riding. My mom rode so that's how I got into riding. At our home in Connecticut, my mother bought a pony for \$50 — Daisy. She brought it to the barn for my older sisters to ride, but I was the one who took it to more. I would jump on Daisy bareback and just run around. Then I started taking lessons and took to it very fast. Soon after, people started noticing me and before I knew it I was in Wellington — my first year there was in 1979 showing ponies. I didn't have much of a high school life. I didn't go to prom — I was at Devon. Every big event at school, I was at a horse show. My schedule revolved around horse shows, and I've just kept doing it my whole life."

Throughout his highly successful junior career, Heinecke competed in the junior jumper, hunter and equitation disciplines with trainers Timmy Kees and Jeffrey Welles, as well as Barney and McLain Ward as a young professional. Under their careful guidance, Heinecke went on to claim numerous championship titles at some of the most prestigious horse shows across the country including the 1983 Connecticut Hunt-

er & Jumper Association Junior Medal Final, the 1985 Rolex-Maclay National Equitation Championship at the National Horse Show in Madison Square Garden, the New England Equitation Championships and the Devon Horse Show.

Since then, Heinecke has gone on to establish himself as a highly competitive professional hunter rider, trainer and judge. He has helped develop and produce some of the top junior and adult riders and horses in the nation under his tutelage.

After being the head trainer at HiHopes Farm, LLC, for ten years and working with the Oken family, Heinecke decided to establish his own business to continue to compete, train and judge while spending cherished time with his children, Olive and Charlie, and partner Ken, of which his business is named after (Steve, Olive, Charlie, Ken = Sock Inc.).

"I've been boarding and training with Steve Heinecke for five years and it has been a wonderful experience at all levels," said Sock Inc. client Elizabeth Fry Wilson. "In nearly 50 years of horse ownership, I've never seen care of this caliber. Steve is a true horseman who puts the best interest of the horse and safety of the rider first."

"His experience as a top equitation, hunter/jumper rider and R judge is well documented over several decades and states," continued Wilson. "Steve has trained some of the top horses in the country and has a gift with young ones. But where Steve truly stands out above his peers is teaching. Steve is the most talented teacher I've ever seen in any topic. I'm always impressed with



Steve Heinecke and Dicaprio.
At right: Ken, Charlie, Steve and Olive with pony, Moon Pie
Photos by The Carolinas Equestrian

how he never gives up until he finds the precise way to communicate to the individual; until they completely understand and feel the concept he's trying to convey. He brings the best out of every rider and takes them to the highest level their talent allows. I look forward to much more success and fun with Sock Inc."

So far this year Sock Inc. has had a successful season competing at the Winter Equestrian Festival and Tryon Spring horse shows. This summer the team will head to Lexington for the Kentucky Summer Horse Shows while Heinecke also continues to build his judging resume at Tryon, the Virginia Horse Center and at this year's New England Equitation Finals.

"As a trainer, the fulfillment comes from the development and the progress," said Heinecke. "The learning curve is different for everyone, and I really enjoy teaching."

On a daily basis Heinecke juggles being a dad, businessman and professional rider, trainer and judge. However, his passion and commitment to quality and excellence in all that he does makes everything worth while, and he surely wouldn't have it any other way.

To learn more about Steve Heinecke and Sock Inc. visit www.steveheinecke.com. Like Sock Inc. on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/SockIncEquestrian.

