

# Valentijn O wins by a Whisker

**NEW FOREST AND HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, BROCKENHURST**  
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By Annabel Kendal

TIM DAVIES took home £4,000 after winning the two-star International Stairway competition and finishing second in the International Trial with Barrett Watson's Valentijn O.

"This horse jumps a lot of clear rounds and we've finished second a few times recently. He definitely deserves a win," said Tim after Wednesday's International Stairway.

When two from the first four starters in the 24-strong class jumped clear, course-builder Stephen Renouard might have been concerned.

"I think if it had been anyone else I would have been worried, but those two — Valentijn O and Naomi V [Helen Tredwell] — are top horses. That was a proper jumping class and you needed a scoopey horse," said Stephen.

Only Anna Edwards (Unique IX) and Phillip Miller (Caritiar Z) could also manage to come home faultless, with Ryan Prater and Whisker joining them in the second round after collecting one time-fault.

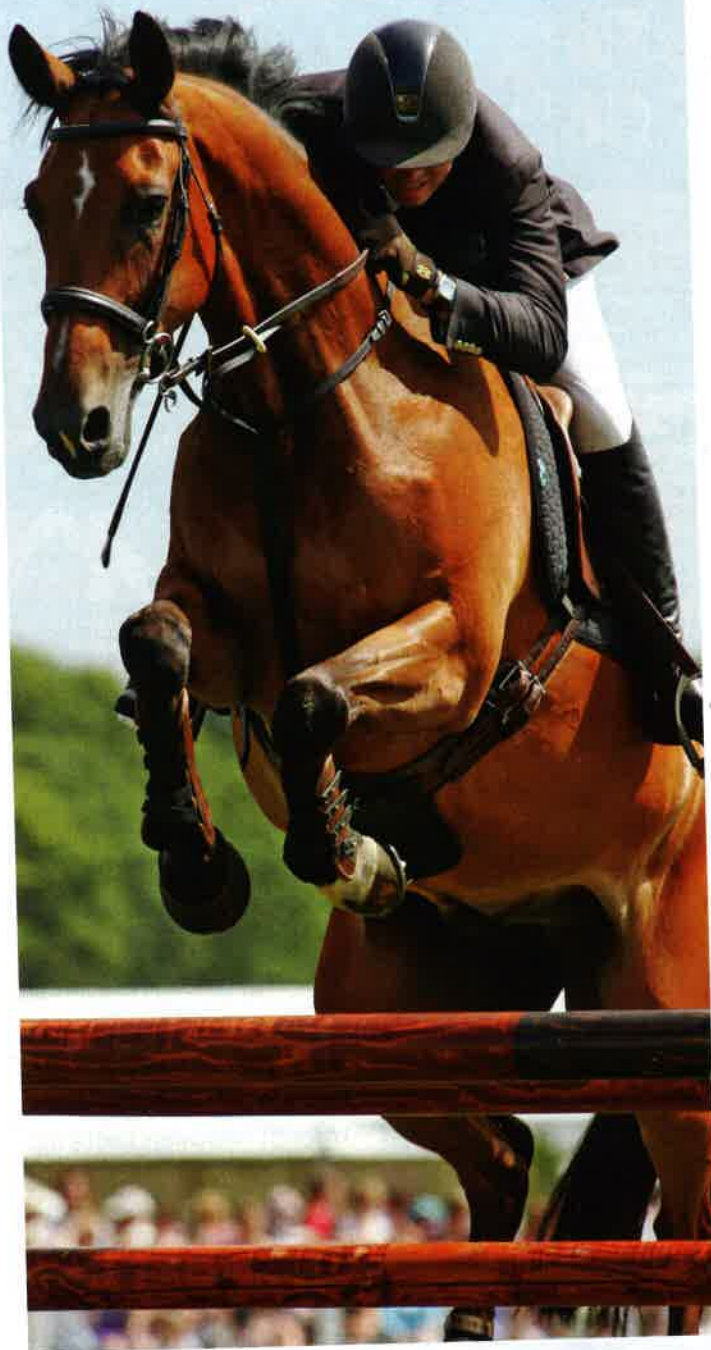
First in, Ryan and his own 11-year-old stallion jumped faultlessly again to claim eventual second place when Naomi V and Helen Tredwell lowered the first and then quickened to clock a good time for third.

Tim Davies and Valentijn O always looked the danger and achieved the only double clear to claim victory when Anna Edwards, shortly before her Queen Elizabeth II Cup triumph at the Royal International, failed to execute an ambitious turn into the second fence on Unique IX for fifth.

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Tim Davies claimed International Stairway victory with the only double clear

'I believe a lot in the horse and he's never fazed by his environment': after plenty of runner-up spots this summer, Tim Davies and Valentijn O land the seventh leg of the International Stairway series



Phillip Miller had the advantage of final draw on Caritiar Z, but, by lowering the second fence, was left in fourth place — despite producing a fast time.

"I was never going to go that fast because you can't afford to be complacent over those fences," said Tim Davies. "But I believe a lot in the horse and he's never fazed by his environment."

**Miller quick over tough course**

PHILLIP MILLER returned with a vengeance to win Thursday's BS International Trial\*\* on Univeau. There were only three initial clear rounds, with two riders on time-faults joining them in the second round.

Univeau won the International Stairway competition at Suffolk County, where Valentijn O came second, and these two horses again vied for the top spot.

"The track was tough enough with a tight first-round time," said Pennie Cornish, owner of Univeau. "And you needed a good vertical jumper."

The nine-year-old came home quicker than Tim and Valentijn O.

"I was fairly confident that we'd beat Tim as ours is naturally quick and he jumped one of the fastest first-round clears," said Pennie of the Numero Uno stallion, who came from Holland as a three-year-old.

"These classes are worth chasing as it would be good to qualify for the week at HOYS [Horse of the Year Show]," said Pennie of the wild card up for grabs to the overall winner of the International Trial and International Stairway series.

Univeau is not standing at stud this year because he is concentrating on his competitive career, but may be available for AI next season.

Tim was not unduly disappointed to be relegated to the runner-up spot on Valentijn O, who was originally imported as a dressage prospect.

"He's a very special horse and has been a superstar from day one," said Tim. "I'm going to enjoy him for as long as I can and hopefully the next step is to go abroad."

Robert Bevis claimed third place on Kate Mustill's Courtney, but Robert had been unlucky not to gain his HOYS grade C ticket with Wizardlea HFS on the opening day.

**INTERNATIONAL STAIRWAY LEADER BOARD**

Position	Name	Horse	Points
1	Helen Tredwell	Opportunity B	33
2	Tim Davies	Valentijn O	24
3	Phillip Miller	Univeau	22
4	Helen Tredwell	Naomi V	21
5eq	Geoff Luckett	Brickfield Boy	19
5eq	Tina Fletcher	Hello Sailor	19
7	Robert Whitaker	Rooney IV	18
8eq	Ryan Prater	Whisker	17
8eq	Anna Edwards	Unique IX	17
10	Vicky Tulloch	Soliegette	16

**Annett goes Loco**

STEPHEN RENOUCARD'S HOYS grade C second-round track produced five clears from a 28-strong entry, but it was a quality quintet.

"I didn't think the course was that difficult, but I did feel the field lacked a huge number of quality horses," said Stephen.

Jane Annett and Coco Loco, who had already qualified for the HOYS grade C final, immediately posted a quick clear in the jump-off.

"I was lucky that I was already through, but I didn't want anyone else to win as it was good prize-money," said Jane. "Mine is lacking a little bit of experience and has just missed out on the Foxhunter and age classes this season."

Jane bought the seven-year-old Coco Loco, by Come On, from Richard Busby 18 months ago.

"He was a little bit sharp and cheeky when I got him, but he's turned into a really nice horse that just needed a bit of work," said Jane.

Robert Bevis was next in on Ruth Tordoff's Wizardlea HFS, who lowered the second part of the double to leave them in fifth place.

Andy Austin looked in touch until the penultimate fence fell for Bagira II, but this was good enough to earn them a HOYS ticket, finishing third.

Andrew Davies then achieved the second double clear on Vijlada MW, filling the runner-up spot when Mark Armstrong and Tennor FM collected four faults at the second, and then sped up to claim the final qualifying ticket.

Roy Edwards bought the eight-year-old Vijlada from Paul Hendrix a year ago in part-exchange for another horse.

"She had been sent back to Paul from America by an amateur rider, but I liked her straightaway because of her attitude and because she was so careful," said Andrew. "She always tries to work with you, not against you."

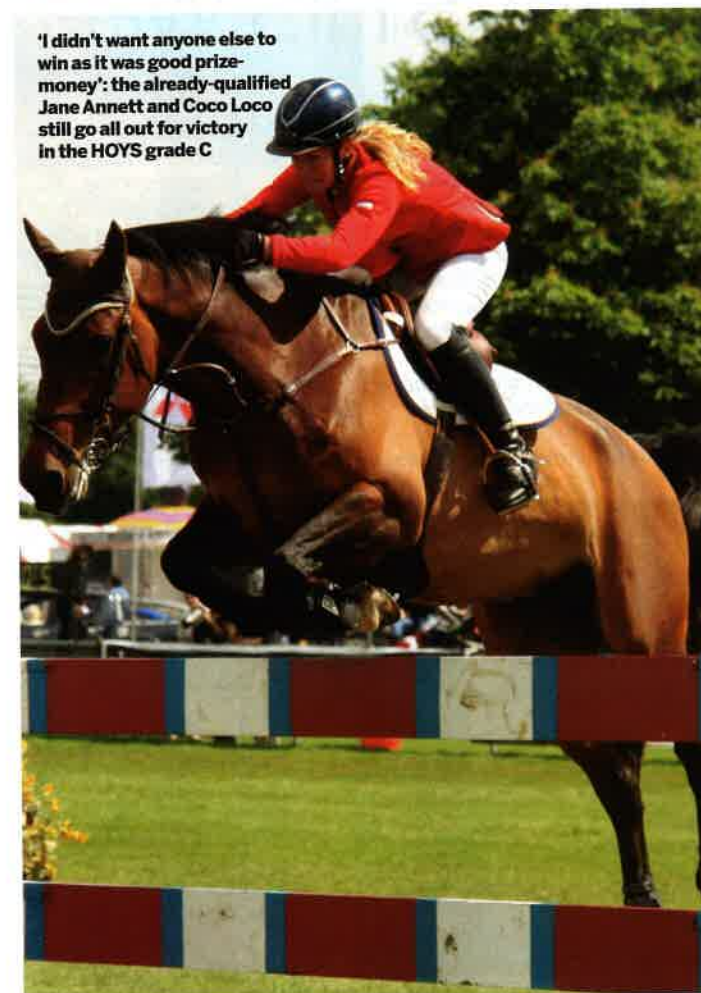
Vijlada will now be aimed at 1.40m classes.

"She jumps bigger fences better than the smaller ones because then she can get a little bit strong and onward-going," said Andrew.

"The course was technical enough, with the best riders coming through, which is right considering what they will be expected to jump at HOYS," said Stephen Renouard. **H&H**



With their eyes on a HOYS wild-card, a determined Phillip Miller and Univeau head the International Trial



'I didn't want anyone else to win as it was good prize-money': the already-qualified Jane Annett and Coco Loco still go all out for victory in the HOYS grade C

**TALKING POINT**  
State of the ground

THE showjumping ring produced superb going as it had been watered for three weeks, but competitors were concerned about the warm-up area, which had obviously been left out of the watering schedule.

Riders for the first day's classes were allowed a practice fence in the bottom part of the ring and latterly the warm-up area was watered with sand take-off and landings, but the going was far from ideal.

**Results**

**Hampshire Stakes 1.35m.**—1, Caleta (M Armstrong); 2, Upperten II (R Bevis); 3, Quentin Tarentino (T Page). **HOYS grade C q.**—1, Coco Loco (J Annett); 2, Vijlada MW (A Davies); 3, Bagira II (A Austin). **Knightwood challenge.**—1, H Webster/K Read; 2, S Bardell/S Molyneux; 3, A Beck/J Cleal. **International Stairway.**—1, Valentijn O (T Davies); 2, Whisker (R Prater); 3, Naomi V (H Tredwell). **accumulator.**—1, Prince Z (M Armstrong); 2, Safari (R Prater); 3, Wizardlea HFS (R Bevis). **1.40m.**—1, Melina VIII (D Neilson); 2&3, Caleta & Renaldo III (M Armstrong). **International Trial\*\*.**—1, Univeau (P Miller); 2, Valentijn O; 3, Courtney VI (R Bevis). **seven-fence challenge.**—1, Very Versace (P Miller); 2, Ellie B (T Davies); 3, Quinten Valentino.

Pictures by David Miller and Trevor Meeks