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Argento, an eight year old son of AES Olympic stallion Arko III is showing great promise as he develops under the guidance of John Whitaker.

In reality there's no better way to assess a stallion and his progeny than by watching them in the flesh, competing in this country. British breeders and producers are taking full advantage of the British Young Horse championships where classes for our home-grown prospects provide a perfect platform and shop window.

Will welcomes the opportunity to compare our British bred horses to their foreign counterparts.

"The Young Horse championships at Addington are divided into British and non-British bred and this makes it easy to draw a comparison between the two," he explained.

Jumping into the spotlight were Equine Pathway British-bred prospects Strijder IV, Argento and Sultan V, while the AES

approved stallion Billy Congo shone out as sire of four of the top seven British-bred four-year-olds.

The top honours in the four-year-old British bred section were shared by the Brendon Stud and the Pauldary Stud, who are reaping the rewards of their longstanding breeding programmes.

The Brendon's Stud's Sussex Caretino, a daughter of Caretino Glory, stood equal first with the Pauldary Stud's stallion Pauldary's Touch of Tiger.

The Billy Stud's stallion Cevin Z proved consistent in the five-year-old final, as sire of Billy Manhattan, the eventual winner and being responsible for 50 per cent of the final line-up.

Murka's Pall Mall, ridden with considerable British Team success by Peter Charles, is a British Showjumping Elite stallion



Statistics such as these give power to our British breeding programmes and reinforce the fact that these are horses bred to perform with a bright future in the sport.

"It's still going to take a while but there is no doubt that the standard and seriousness of breeding has improved in this country," said AES assessor, Geoff Glazzard of the Beech House Stud, Staffordshire.

"But some people still think it's a lot

better in Europe. We have to convince them with facts and results to be more positive about our home-bred sport horses and to buy British. I know that if our stud was based on the continent we would sell a lot better.

"Young horse classes, gradings and continually recognising the importance of our good mares will help. In addition to this we need more exposure for breeders of competition horses. I believe that if we all work together, British breeding will continue to move forward and become a commercial business.

"We're gradually stepping up to the mark and in doing so our breeders and producers of top-class horses will start to enjoy the fruits of their labours."