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there are only 50 competitors allowed in the Olympics, it's a better chance for more countries to come." She does understand why the stronger countries don't agree with the new three-per-team policy, but with a smaller number on every team, there is a greater chance for more teams overall. "It might be easier for some countries to get three horses than four. Four horses made the strong countries even stronger. I don't want to make them weak, but I think it's a good strategy. It was like that in Moscow and Los Angeles." A traveling reserve pair minimizes the risk of a team not finishing with the required three scores. "It can make it even a bit more exciting in the team competition. All three have to go in and have a good performance. In a way it puts more

pressure on all the riders to do well." What Kyrklund does find hard to understand is the way in which countries of the Americas qualify for the Olympics in the Pan Am Games, which are at Prix St. Georges level. "It is a very odd way of qualifying."

**THAT MATADOR FEELING**

Kyrklund can't actually count the number of horses she has trained to Grand Prix on her own and with her students. A couple of horses do stand out as milestones. Piccolo was Kyrklund's first international horse, taking her to the European Championships in 1979 and the Moscow Olympics in 1980, where she finished fifth. "He took me to Grand Prix from a four year old, so he was very important to me at that stage in

my career." Most of the world remembers Matador for his World Cup victory in Paris in 1991 or his silver WEG medal in Stockholm. For Kyrklund, Matador was much more than a great partner. He has become a "reference point" for all the horses that have followed. "I bought him as a three year old, and I got to the top

*‘With some horses the limits come earlier, with some later. It’s always an adventure when you start with a new one.’*

with him. We really knew each other." Since that time, Kyrklund gets "the Matador feeling" from a lot of horses, and I think that is what I am looking for in all the horses I ride." She says

every rider will naturally prefer a certain type of horse, and for her that type has been like Matador – soft and sensitive. "Even if they don't look the same they do have to have some sort of the same make up. Matador had a lot of energy but you could never be rough with him." Edinburg, the little black stallion that carried her to fifth in Barcelona and third at the 1994 World Cup Finals, was a similarly soft personality. "Edinburg was a fantastic horse, but his problem was that he came after Matador. Everyone was looking at him and saying 'what a little rat you have'." Kyrklund sees a parallel between marriage and the right partnership of a horse and rider. "It's like how two people find each other. There might be another who is a really good person, but there isn't that chemical thing that happens between two people – or between a person and a horse." She cites Jan Brink as an example of what can be achieved when the rider has faith in his horse. "You have to believe in the horse and that it is going to get better. If you don't honestly believe it, you don't put in the same effort." She is always excited when she starts down the path with a new prospect. "You get on and with some horses the limits come earlier, with some later. It's always an adventure when you start with a new one."

**A LITTLE SUGAR**

Whether it's in training at home or exiting the ring in Aachen, Kyrklund

can frequently be seen slipping a sugar cube to Max. She says giving sugar started with a girth-shy student's horse. "He would just buck and go. I started to make him turn

(advert)



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**Matty Marissink Stables**  
www.dressage.nl Holland  
Email: info@dressage.nl  
Ph. +31 522 441004  
Mobile +31 6 54 366 820



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