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Sonia Zugel and Ungaro Dominate Small Tour at 2013 CDI-W Wellington

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The 2013 CDI-W Wellington at the 2013 Global Dressage Festival drew to a close on Sunday 3 February 2013. The featured class was the Intermediaire I Kur to Music which was won by Irish Sonia Zugel on her Belgian warmblood gelding Ungaro (by Weltmeyer II x Wendekreis). The pair also dominated the Prix St Georges and Intermediaire I.

The Inter I Kur judges were Wojek Markowski (POL) at H, Jennie Loriston-Clarke (GBR) at C, and Anne Gribbons (USA) at B. Zugel received a score of 63.125% at H, a 68.750% at C, a 66.625% at B, for a total of 66.167% and her third victory of the week.

Zugel grew up in Ireland and moved with her family to California when she was 18. Based now in Holmdel, NJ, and Wellington, FL, she trains with Vera Barisone-Kessels (wife of Michael Barisone). In talking about the 16-year-old bay BWP gelding, Zugel said, "We've been together for five years and he has brought me from the Third Level up to this so I'm real proud of him. His strengths are his changes and we are getting better at half passing. I'm learning to ride him better."

Surprisingly, Zugel had only choreographed the routine last week. She admitted, "My timing was a little off. I went through it only once. But I really like the music and the pattern. I think it really works for him. I just have to fine tune it a little bit. I was really happy with it. It was a lot of fun."



Sonia Zugel and Ungaro at the 2013 CDI-W Wellington
Photo © Sue Stickle

Sonia's daughter Ashleigh Conroy-Zugel and Ungaro

Zugel began foxhunting with her family then continued onto eventing, steeplechasing and show jumping. When she decided she was no longer interested in jumping, she decided to try dressage. "I loved dressage from having to perform it in eventing, so I decided to give it a try. I love it. It's now become a family affair as my daughter has begun lessons," she remarked.

With winning all the classes she has entered this week, she was overjoyed. "I am amazed! I'm really happy. I have a big team behind me. I've worked hard, but I have extremely knowledgeable vets,



massage therapists, everyone."

Looking towards the future, Zugel wants to continue with the small tour. "Hopefully, I'll find a Grand Prix horse and move up sometime. Because I'm an Amateur rider, it's difficult to find that nice, fancy, and safe horse. I have some other horses that are coming along so we'll see what happens," Zugel reflected.

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