



PRESS RELEASE

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Meet the female trainers who are making the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris their own

A fabulous challenge dating back more than 150 years

The Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris is the greatest challenge in the Jump racing calendar. For more than 150 years, this legendary race has excited racing fans who come to the Auteuil racecourse to watch this 6000m race where horses have to jump 23 imposing obstacles. For more than 7 minutes, horses and jockeys face a race unlike any other, where every stride and jump counts.

There are two obstacles that contribute to the race's legendary status : The water jump (known as the Rivière des Tribunes), which they have to jump twice and where horses have to stretch an incredible 8m to clear it, as well as the famous Rail Ditch and Fence, also known as the Judge of the Peace, as it is often here that the race is decided. It is an unmissable event, packed with intensity and excitement.

Female trainers have been incredibly successful in the last decade

Behind every champion at the start, hides a trainer... and more and more often, a female trainer. These last few years, women have excelled in this exciting race, winning 5 of the last 6 renewals !

And this year, they are even more numerous than ever in the Défi des Haras – Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris, which takes place on Sunday, 18 May at the Auteuil racecourse.

They have made the Grand Steeple their own. Here are their stories.

Stats : 5 of the last 6 Grand Steeple winners were trained by women

	Trainer	Horse	Jockey
2024	Louisa Carberry	Gran Diose	Clément Lefebvre
2023	Daniela Mele	Rosario Baron	Johnny Charron
2021	Louisa Carberry	Docteur de Ballon	Bertrand Lestrade
2020	Louisa Carberry	Docteur de Ballon	Bertrand Lestrade
2019	Isabelle Pacault	Carriacou	Davy Russel

1 - THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY WON BIOGRAPHIES AND QUOTES

- **LOUISA CARBERRY, three-time winner of the Grand Steeple**



(Senonnes – Mayenne) – British Louisa Carberry has (already !) won the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris three times! Her most recent victory was last year thanks to an impressive performance from Gran Diose. She recorded her two other victories with Docteur de Ballon who came first past the post in 2020 and 2021.

Three wins in just five years ! It is simply unprecedented in the history of this race and a true success story. As talented as she is humble, Louisa Carberry runs a remarkably successful yard and the Auteuil crowd absolutely adores her. Last year, Gran Diose actually won on Louisa Carberry's birthday and spectators spontaneously started singing Happy Birthday !

Louisa's history has been closely linked to the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris, as she met her future husband on the day of the 2010 Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris. Indeed, Irish jockey Philip Carberry was riding that day and finished fifth on board Princesse d'Anjou. Today, he works alongside her.

Louisa learned her trade at Chantilly at the yard of renown flat trainer Alain de Royer Dupré, before she obtained her license in 2014 : She chose to remain in France where the training set-up suited her and she quickly started her own yard at Senonnes, in the Mayenne region, where she settled after she was seduced by the quality of the local tracks.

Her champion Gran Diose, winner of the 2024 Grand Steeple, will try to defend his title in 2025.

Louisa Carberry :

« I was a three-day-eventer but always loved racing and racehorses. I would often ride out racehorses in the morning. »

« Training a race horse is very similar to training a three-day-eventer. Yet, there are different aspects when it comes to their mental and physical health, managing their preparation and the development of their skills when jumping. »

« The Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris plays a huge part in the life of my husband and me. He, as well as his father, both rode in the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris and we met on Grand Steeple day ! To win that race three times is definitely a dream come true ! »

▪ DANIELA MELE, from jockey to trainer



(Gavray - La Manche) - Daniela Mele wrote herself in the history books of the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris in 2023 with Rosario Baron, who missed the 2024 renewal but will be at the start of the 2025 Défi de Haras – Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris.

Born in Switzerland to an Italian father, Daniela Mele came to France twenty years ago. Originally, she worked as a jump jockey for trainers such as Thierry Civel and Guy ChereL. The latter quickly promoted her to head lass and she immediately became very involved in running the yard.

Thanks to this invaluable experience, she took out her training license in 2020 and started training with immediate success. In 2022, she won the Grade 3 Prix du Président de la République, one of the most important handicaps at Auteuil, with Road Mix Tavel. A few months later, she won the Grade 3 Grand Prix de Pau 2023 with home bred Youtwo Glass, who carries the silks of her father Giuseppe Mele. Five months later, she won the Grade 1 Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris with Rosario Baron, who had been in her care from a very young age. Rosario Baron will be her main contender in the 2025 Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris.

Daniela Mele has entered three horses in the 2025 event : Rosario Baron, Inaya Jones, Brexit

Daniela Mele :

« I started my career in the racing industry as a jockey. I rode on the flat and over jumps. Flat racing was a bit boring, but jumping had me gripped straight away. To be on a horse that takes off and flies over a jump at full speed is an exhilarating experience ! »

« As a trainer, I appreciate the work that goes into training a jump horse. Preparing a horse for an event is to work out every little detail and to be attentive to your horse's needs. It is a long-term project which starts before the horse even gets to the track and that is developed over many years. A jump horse runs until it is 10 years old and even longer. I love spending time with my horses, in the morning when they train and in the afternoon when they relax in the field.»

▪ ISABELLE PACAULT, the Pioneer

Maisons-Laffitte (Yvelines) – Isabelle Pacault will not saddle a runner in this year's Défi des Haras - Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris, but her name will forever feature prominently in the history books, as she became the first female trainer to lift the event in its 150-year history !

It was thanks to the unforgettable Carriacou that she wrote history in 2019. An emotional moment, a feat that she has always talked about with genuine humility : *« It is not important that I am a woman. Because, before anything else, it was the horse that won the race, supported by the entire team. »*



This unforgettable victory is the highlight of a passionate and patient career. She had already come close in 1994 when Venus de Mirande was the runner-up in the race and again thirteen years later when Lord Carmont also finished second.

Born in the Ardennes region, Isabelle Pacault started her life in the horse racing world in the Channel region at the Haras de Mirande. It was there that her father Jean-Claude Evain chose to train his show-jumpers before thoroughbreds became his main focus. Breeding ? It is Isabelle's second passion. To make her victory even sweeter, Carriacou was bred by her mother Flore Evain and her brothers.

In the Pacault family, passion is passed on from one generation to the next. Her daughter Anne-Sophie, an accomplished amateur rider, is also a trainer who is based at Maisons-Laffitte. Her ambition is to one day have a runner in this legendary race.

2 - THOSE WHO WANT TO MAKE THE LIST

▪ AMANDA ZETTERHOLM on the world stage



(Ailly-Saint-Léonard – Oise)
 – Born in Sweden, Amanda Zetterholm was involved in Equestrianism before she discovered horse racing when she was a student in Melbourne, Australia. She didn't live far from Flemington racecourse, home of the famous Melbourne Cup, the race that stops the nation.

Very quickly, Amanda started to ride horses that were trained at Flemington. She then traveled to Dubai and South Africa. At the same time, she started to ride in amateur races. Upon her return to Europe, she joined the HH Aga Khan team. She remained within that organisation for many years and also sported his colours in amateur races on several occasions.

Following all these different experiences, she then formed a partnership with English trainer Noel George to train at Ailly-Saint-Léonard, just outside Chantilly. For the past two years, they have trained jump horses together and have already recorded more than 100 winners. They lifted the Grade 1 Kauto Star Novices' Chase at Kempton Park, a racecourse just outside London, England, on 26 December 2023 with Il Est Français. The duo haven't won the Grand Steeple yet, but it is one of their targets !

Amanda Zetterholm:

« I come from Sweden where I was involved in show-jumping. The father of my children introduced me to jump racing in France. And I fell in love with the sport! I particularly love the absolutely essential connection between jockey and horse. »

« There is a lot of skill involved in training jump horses. In a race, it is not always the best horse that wins, but the one that still has something left in the tank when coming to the final jump and who can quicken again on the flat! »

« I wanted to evolve in this sport and I was lucky to come across Noel George. We formed a partnership and today train in an area we love very much, just outside Chantilly. »

▪ LUCIE PONTOIR, the globe trotter



(Maisons-Laffitte – Yvelines) - Lucie Pontoir started her career at the Moulin à Vent school, which is an apprentice school for jockeys in the town of Chantilly.

She then got the travel bug and left for Australia, where she worked for five years. She actually got to ride the great and very popular Australian champion Winx in her morning work.

In 2021, she decided to start training in Maisons-Laffitte, where, while juggling her duties as a mum and racehorse trainer, she made her name thanks to the likes of Jazz Manouche, who was very successful in some of the big events at Auteuil. She may not have that many runners, but when they come to Auteuil, it pays to take note. Jazz Manouche will be her first starter in the Défi des Haras - Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris.

Entered in the Grand Steeple : Jazz Manouche

Lucie Pontoir :

« It's actually my horses that brought me into the sport of jump racing ! I only trained flat horses and one day I received two jump horses. Since then, I have been training both, flat and jump horses ! »

« They are not trained the same way. Preparing a horse for a jump race is a much longer process than preparing a horse for a flat race. I love it when my horses are well prepared and well schooled to master those fences.»

« Working with jump horse is very satisfying. And when one of my horses comes first past the winning post at Auteuil, it's an incredible and fabulous feeling that you experience nowhere else! »

▪ MANON SCANDELLA-LACAILLE, the lady from Marseille

(Calas – Bouches-du-Rhône) – Manon Scandella-Lacaille was a professional jockey. In 2012, she was the most successful female jockey in terms of victories.

Five years ago, she started to train at Calas, in the south-east of France, in the Bouches-du-Rhône region, close to Marseille. She is supported in her new career by her husband and former jockey Édouard Lacaille.

Most of her horses are flat horses, but that doesn't stop her from taking an interest in jump racing. In fact, she enjoyed her first major success in jump racing in 2024 when Hasard de Brion lifted the prestigious Grade 3 Prix



du Président. And it is the same Hasard de Brion who is going to be her first starter in the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris.

She will carry the hopes of the entire south of France on her shoulders: the colours of Hasard de Brion's owner Robert Aubaud are blue and white, just like the shirt of the football team Olympique Marseille ! On the day of the Grand Steeple, Manon will have many fans to support her, including her five kids! Each day, she is living proof that you can indeed manage a training career and at the same time raise your children.

Manon Scandella-Lacaille :

« Jump racing is in my DNA. My father trained jump horses in the south of France, which used to be the home of jump horses. Once I came to the end of my career as a jockey, I turned to training racehorses. The region nowadays is more flat orientated, but I still have about 10% of my horses that go jump racing. »

« I carefully select my jump horses. I look after them and enjoy getting them ready for the big events in the season, like the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris.

« You form a jump horse from A to Z with patience and precision. I learn with them and from them every day. You have to take the time to listen to them and to understand them.»





The France Galop Media Department is delighted to provide you with any further information and will also provide photos free of rights.



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Seven exceptional studs join forces for the 2025 Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris

France Galop is delighted to announce a unique partnership for the 2025 Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris. For the first time, seven renowned French studs are joining forces to support and promote the National Hunt sector. All of the studs' stallions are renowned for breeding excellent jump horses.

The seven studs who have come together in support include the Haras de Cercy, d'Étreham, du Hoguenet, de la Hêtraie, du Lion, de Montaigu and du Mesnil. The partnership demonstrates a shared desire to strengthen and promote this iconic discipline.

France Galop welcomes this initiative, which is fully in line with its mission to promote National Hunt racing and support its stakeholders.

Le défi des haras
GRAND STEEPLE-CHASE DE PARIS GR.1

