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Married Couple Do the Double on Opening Day of 2022 US Dressage Finals

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Competitors flooded into the Kentucky Horse Park for the **2022 US Dressage Finals** presented by Adequan® for the opening day of the show on Thursday, November 10. The national showcase — which competitors qualify for via Regional Championships in nine USDF regions - offers a wealth of championship titles and over \$120,000 in prize money. Competition runs through Sunday, November 13.

Photo - Anartz Chanca rides the 10-year-old Dazzle to the top of the leaderboard in the Intermediate II Adult Amateur division with 66.765%. (Susan J. Stickle)

It was an extraordinary day for one family in particular, with husband-and-wife duo Anartz Chanca and Marta Renilla both claiming championship titles. Not only did they both win, but they were each riding a horse originally intended for the other.

First of the Titles

The first of the 2022 titles went to Chanca, who rode his own Oldenburg gelding Dazzle to an unassailable 66.765% in the Intermediate II Adult Amateur class. At 10 years old, the son of Danone I out of a Londonderry dam was the youngest horse in the field of nine starters. They scored sevens across the board from the three judges for general impression, which carries a double coefficient.

This is the second time in two years that the pair have come away with a championship win, having topped the Amateur Intermediate I Freestyle in 2021. Chanca's rise from Training Level to Big Tour has been meteoric. His background was in endurance horses in his native Spain – and he had a stint as a jumper – but in 2013, he went down the centerline for the first time and has never looked back.

"I'm feeling very proud of Dazzle," enthused Chanca, who is based with his wife at her family's Woodlands Equestrian Club in Tomball, Texas. "He felt great in the arena. He's only 10, so it's his first year at Inter II and Grand Prix, so I'm very happy with him. This year he qualified for the Developing Grand Prix Horse at Lamplight, but he developed crazy hives which got out of control in a matter of hours, and we had to scratch. I was really worried about him. Just the fact that he qualified for this and that he's here and healthy and going strong — I couldn't be more proud of him."

Watch Anartz Chanca and Dazzle's winning Intermediate II test. Video by [Richard's Equine Video](#).



Dazzle was originally bought for Renilla but was then sold to a junior rider. A few years later Chanca had the opportunity to buy the horse back and jumped at the chance.

"I always thought he was a heck of horse, and now he's not going anywhere. I made that mistake once already," grinned Chanca, who will also contest the AA Grand Prix and Grand Prix Freestyle classes at this year's Finals. "Being here is such a pleasure and a gift. We have such busy lives, with kids, the horses, and my job [he is the president of the American subsidiary of an Italian company that manufactures truck parts]. We love this show; ever since we became U.S. citizens in 2018, we haven't missed it."

Renilla captured the Third Level Open championship riding her family's German-bred Zalando M.R. to 73.25%, chased closely by the reserve champion Martin Kuhn, who was just 0.083% behind. It was only the third show for Renilla and Zalando as the horse had to undergo major surgery.

"My husband bought him in Germany as a project, but then he had to have surgery that took him out of business for a year," she explained. "He had a cyst that we didn't spot in Germany, so we had to put four screws in his hock. I started riding him as a seven-year-old at the beginning of the year, but he felt more like a four-year-old."

Gives 300%

"I slowly developed him on the basics and when he got strong, the movements came effortlessly to him. I waited until just before regionals to qualify, then my second show ever with him was regionals and now here we are at Third and Fourth Level and we're champions," added Renilla, who rates the horse as a phenomenal Grand Prix prospect. "He's a horse that gives you 300% — almost too much sometimes. I was so impressed how he stayed with me through the whole test despite his inexperience. That shows our relationship, and I couldn't be more grateful to have this guy in my life."

Zalando is by Blue Hors Zack out of a Rubinstein dam, and "he combines dad's power and hotness with the rideability of the Rubinstein line," adds Renilla. "He's really a special horse. Even though he was bought mainly for my husband, I stole the ride on him after the surgery, and now he's saying he might steal him back, but I say, 'No!' His horse Dazzle was my horse, but he wasn't my cup of tea."

The couple plan to celebrate their monumental day with an early night — "a real treat" for them given their hectic home lives, full barn, and three children.



Marta Renilla and the Blue Hors Zack son Zalando M.R. are untouchable in the Third Level Open championship, securing the title with 73.25%. (Photo by Susan J. Stickle)

Competition resumes on Friday, November 11, with eight championship titles up for grabs from Training Level to Grand Prix. Follow the action via the [USDF Facebook page](#) and the [US Dressage Finals website](#), plus live online streaming on the [USEF Network](#). To learn more about the US Dressage Finals presented by Adequan®, view results and day sheets, and read daily news releases, visit the official [US Dressage Finals event website](#).