

Renilla Enriches A Family Legacy At Shoofly Farm CDI

An untimely family death leads her to Texas and a thriving new equestrian career.

BY CHRISTINA KEIM
PHOTOS BY SUSANJSTICKLE.COM



When Marta Renilla arrived in the United States, she'd been a competitive young rider in her native Spain, where she made her Grand Prix debut at the age of 23 and competed in the European Championships. But while enjoying her riding career and attending university, she suffered a huge loss: Her mother, Isabel Delgado, died suddenly in the States, where she'd been living with Renilla's father, Antonio. In 2006 Renilla left her life in Spain behind to be with her father.

"My mother was a horse lover and my best friend," said Renilla. "She shared with me her love of horses. When she passed away, I just wanted to be with my dad."

Upon arriving in the States, Renilla worked in a bank for two years, but she never lost her interest in horses. She eventually decided to return to doing what she loved best—riding and training horses—but now as a formal business. With the help of her father and sister Ana, Renilla purchased a 24-acre farm that would become Woodlands Equestrian Club, just north of Houston.

With the guidance and support of her husband Anartz Chanca, Renilla developed two businesses. Woodlands Equestrian Club focuses on training horses and students for competition, while their companion business, European Dressage Horses, is focused on sales. There are currently 65 horses on the property, with roughly one-third being part of the sales program, focusing on warmbloods and Andalusians.

"My husband was a great support when we started this business," said Renilla. "He gave me strength, because it is hard to start a business from nothing."

Also an equestrian, Chanca transitioned from jumpers to the dressage ring, with Renilla coaching him to the Grand Prix level. For

Marta Renilla won the Intermediaire I and finished second in the Intermediaire freestyle at the Shoofly CDI aboard Rhustler.

several years, he helped with the training, but he's recently returned to more traditional business pursuits.

Renilla and her family live on the farm, along with the family of a fellow trainer, several grooms, nannies and five working students. "There are 18 people who live on the property," said Renilla. "It's like a big village. In the evening, we're all just visiting and walking around like in a park."

Renilla, 35, is on her first horse by 7 a.m., riding and training clients all day, but she's in full tilt "mom" mode to her twin 4-year-old sons Anthony and Lucas by 5 p.m.

"When you have good support and the love of the people around you, you can make it all work," said Renilla.

Her dedication paid off with a win in the Intermediaire I (68.72%) and second place in the freestyle (67.93%) at the Shoofly Farm CDI, held in Katy, Texas, on April 27-29, riding her own 9-year-old Hanoverian Rhustler (Harmony's Rousseau—Rheporter, Royal Prince). She's owned the chestnut gelding, bred by Rolling Stone Farm in Pennsylvania, since he was 3.

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—MARTA RENILLA

SHOOFLY FARM CDI & HOUSTON
DRESSAGE SPRING CLASSIC 1 & 2
Katy, Texas—April 27-29**

► GRAND PRIX

Judges: H: Jane Weatherwax (USA); C: Natacha Waddell (BRA); B: Jeanne McDonald (USA)

HORSE/RIDER	H	C	B	TOTAL
1. Rapport/Christine Calao	64.45	64.45	64.13	64.34
2. Gamarrot Font/Marta Renilla	63.80	63.69	60.54	62.68
3. Wynston/Eva Oldenbroek-Tabor	61.19	64.13	62.06	62.46

► INTERMEDIAIRE II

Judges: H: Waddell; C: McDonald; B: Weatherwax

HORSE/RIDER	H	C	B	TOTAL
1. Rapport/Christine Calao	65.29	67.79	68.08	67.05
2. Gamarrot Font/Marta Renilla	65.58	62.20	65.14	64.31
3. Wynston/Eva Oldenbroek-Tabor	61.32	65.44	59.70	62.15

► INTERMEDIAIRE I

Judges: H: Weatherwax; C: Waddell; B: McDonald

HORSE/RIDER	H	C	B	TOTAL
1. Rhustler/Marta Renilla	69.41	66.61	70.14	68.72
2. Carzanola/Nancy Hinz	70.88	67.79	66.76	68.48
3. Rusty 324/Yvonne Kusserow	67.20	67.05	70.14	68.13
4. McKensy/John Mason	62.79	63.97	63.82	63.52
5. Florence-RA/Savannah Mixon	62.64	64.26	63.08	63.33
6. Freedance/Jenna Stern-Arnold	64.11	61.32	64.26	63.23

Also competed: 7. Sandroletto/B. Winger, 62.99; 8. Roquefort/U. Lange, 61.12; 9. Uffilia DG/M. Bricken, 60.14; 10. Ebony/N. Martin, 56.47; 11. Callente/A. Brune, 53.62.

► INTERMEDIAIRE I FREESTYLE

Judges: H: McDonald; C: Weatherwax; B: Waddell

HORSE/RIDER	H	C	B	TOTAL
1. Carzanola/Nancy Hinz	72.80	71.12	71.50	71.80
2. Rhustler/Marta Renilla	67.67	67.12	69.00	67.93
3. McKensy/John Mason	67.42	65.50	66.12	66.35
4. Sandroletto/Ben Winger	67.05	65.87	65.25	66.05
5. Florence-RA/Savannah Mixon	66.70	66.87	63.37	65.65
6. Freedance/Jenna Stern-Arnold	65.90	66.00	60.87	64.25

Also competed: 7. Uffilia DG/M. Bricken, 63.71.

► PRIX ST. GEORGES

Judges: H: Waddell; C: McDonald; B: Weatherwax

HORSE/RIDER	H	C	B	TOTAL
1. Fifinella GCF/Bonnie Canter	66.91	70.58	68.97	68.82
2. Carzanola/Nancy Hinz	66.61	67.50	69.41	67.84
3. Rhustler/Marta Renilla	68.23	64.85	66.61	66.56
4. Rusty 324/Yvonne Kusserow	65.58	66.91	65.14	65.88
5. Roquefort/Ursula Lange	60.29	65.00	65.14	63.48
6. Sandroletto/Ben Winger	61.76	62.64	65.73	63.38

Also competed: 7. McKensy/J. Mason, 62.89; 8. Florence-RA/S. Mixon, 60.24; 9. Uffilia DG/M. Bricken, 59.80; 10. Callente/A. Brune, 58.62; 11. Freedance/J. Stern-Arnold, 58.08; 12. Ebony/N. Martin, 55.49.

► DRESSAGE

"I have done all of his training," said Renilla. "We started at training level and have shown all the way to Grand Prix."

While Rhustler could perform all of the movements, Renilla felt he wasn't quite ready to show the expression required to be competitive at Grand

Prix. So she returned to the small tour to allow him to develop more strength and maturity.

"He is a very special horse," said Renilla. "My goal is to take him Grand Prix again. We have time. He's young."

Patience and consistency is a

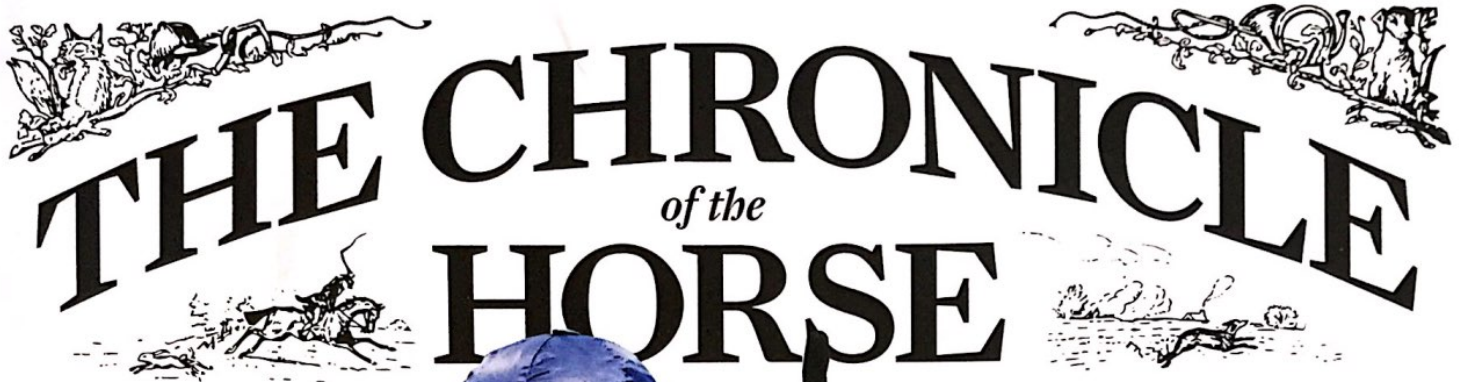
hallmark of Renilla's training philosophy, based upon strict adherence to classical principals. "Classical dressage is about being fair with the horse, feeling the horse, and training their body and brain," said Renilla. "It's a philosophy of kindness. My horses become my friends. They trust me and believe in me."

Renilla trains all of her horses from the beginning of their careers. "I love the process of developing them from scratch," she said. "Then they know me, and we speak the same language."

Since arriving in the United States, Renilla has relied on clinics with Conrad Schumacher to help her stay on track in her training. "My way of training is [Schumacher's] way," said Renilla. "[Rhustler's] training has been easy because there are no holes. He has never had any battles in my training. We are never in a hurry. He will show me when he is ready to do the Grand Prix again."



NATIONAL CHAMPION MARILYN LITTLE RE-IGNITES BLOOD RULE DEBATE p. 40



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