

A résumé of his 2017 season (as an 9 years old)

In 2017, Ulyss began his season with two CSIs at Villeneuve-Loubet where he won two classes over 135 and 140 and also won a 2nd place and a 4th. A good competition.

On his return from Belgium, Ulyss went to the CSI at Lier at the end of March, where, for the first time, he competed in a Grand Prix Ranking 145/150 : he had four faults, which has totally reassured us that he has the capacity to rise to the superior level.

Fifteen days later, in April, he confirmed this in the two CSI 3* at Lanaken where he had his first placing at this level : clear in a 145/150 then four faults in the jump off which put him seventh out of the 74 starters.

His next outing was at the end of April/ beginning of May in the CSI 3* at Maubeuge. Ulyss Morinda was clear on the first day on 140, a warm up to prepare him for the bigger classes from the Sunday. After a rest day he set off in the 150 Grand Prix qualifier. He finished with 2 faults (8 pts) which is very honourable for his age. And on the last day, he finished with a double clear (in the first round and then the jump off) in the 145 "Ranking", and he was placed 10th out of 61 competitors (see videos on this page and in the NEWS section).

From there, he went on to the CSI 4* at Bourg en Bresse, and then the CSI 3* at Hardelot where Ulyss took 5th place in the 1.40m. Rik Hemeryck decided to stick to the 1.40m at Hardelot since, BIG NEWS, he has entered our young stallion in his first CSIO in Rotterdam! A great experience for Ulyss in his first 5*.

This 5*, once again has proved Ulyss's mental and physical properties. Far from being overawed by the huge course at Rotterdam he made himself noticeable (for more than just his colour which is unique at this level) for his magnificent style and his honesty. He twice found himself on the brink of being placed, in the 1.50m class on the last day (14th but only 12 ranked). In this event Rik and Ulyss advanced amongst excellent world class partnerships.

The season continued at the beginning of July at the CSI 3* at Knokke, a splendid competition where Ulyss unluckily had 4 faults in the big 1.50m on Sunday. But, due to the difficulty of the course (16 fences) and the fact that he is still only in his first competitions at this level, we were nevertheless very satisfied. Ulyss went through the three combinations perfectly including an impressive triple.

He was noticed by one of the best Canadian equestrian journalists Noelle Floyd, who had made the trip to Europe. She interviewed us for a long time and she then wrote a really good article about Ulyss and Rik (see the section 'News').

The end of July found the partnership of Rik Hemeryck and his faithful accomplice Ulyss at the CSI 3* at Fontainebleau. After a workout on the first day (a clear round) in a 1.35m class, Ulyss and Rik were placed in the 1.50m on the Saturday in the 'Grand Parquet'. Ulyss jumped so well that Rik decided that it should be he who he would ride in the final on the Sunday (the first big Ranking class of his career).

Unfortunately the stallion threw a shoe at the 6th fence, made a first mistake at the 8th and then knocked down the final fence, perhaps because Rik went very fast after the water to try to get into

the second round. Thus he had 8 faults, but everyone was able to note that Ulyss always gives a big margin even over these big fences. He is still progressing.

Ulyss, who had no chance at Fontainebleau (thanks to having lost a shoe whilst jumping the course) took the Lier Grand Prix in Belgium fifteen days later!!! He won very easily and produced his first 1.50m victory. A double clear, and he was the only one of the ten horses in the jump off who managed to go under 34 seconds.

Rik, who described Ulyss as 'courageous' in an interview after this victory, also wrote in his monthly newsletter : "an excellent weekend in Lier! How to describe Ulyss Morinda's victory in the Grand Prix? After the first few days of what could be called rehearsals, Ulyss gave his all to gain this first place. He jumped superbly. I am very happy with his performance. A wonderful victory for the coloured stallion."

After a 4 fault round in the 3* Grand Prix at Bonheiden, Ulyss and Rik took part in the famous "Sires of the World" at Lanaken in September (a 1.50m competition confined to approved stallions). There he again had 4 faults due to a misunderstanding about the line following the water jump. Ulyss made a huge jump over the water (which he nevertheless cleared) but this changed the distance Rik had envisaged for the approach to the oxer which followed. A very big fault, which allowed us to admire Ulyss's mental equilibrium, as he was not even worried, and calmly jumped the triple « Longines » which came next, and then the rest of the course with no problem at all. We were very proud of him!

After a little rest Ulyss and Rik were to be found at the Lier CSI, which is indoors, where Ulyss was placed in the Grand Prix. He easily walked this very technical course.

And he reinforced this at the famous Liege CSI at the beginning of November where he was placed in the 1.40m and then came 8th in the 'Ranking' 1.50m in the company of some of the best riders in the world.

Ulyss and Rik started the last month of the year at the famous LONGINES in Paris. After a beautiful calm clear round on Friday 1st of December where Ulyss absolutely flew over the 1.50m 'Joker', Rik asked his faithful partner to go that bit quicker the following day, Saturday the 2nd, and they snatched a lovely 6th place in the 1.45m 'Ranking'. Rik explained that he could have tried to go faster to win but that he didn't want to hustle Ulyss who is still only a nine year old.

Finally, Ulyss and Rik arrived at the end of December at the famous Mechelen Showjumping (in Belgium). After a first outing in the "Sires of the World" where Ulyss won over the crowd with his spectacular leaps and his magnificent style, three days later on the 30th of December, Ulyss and Rik took part in the Grand Prix. They didn't touch a single pole. They finished clear but were penalised for being 3/10 of a second over the time allocated... And so they were prevented from taking part in the jump off where they would have had every chance of winning! A great pity, above all since there was only a single clear round in the jump off.

Ulyss Morinda finished 2017 with an ISO 150! Bravo to Rik Hemeryck who has patiently brought him on over the last three years! In 2018, after a well earned rest, the adventure will continue!