



SPANISCHE HOFREITSCHULE
LIPIZZANERGESTÜT PIBER

Statement referring the released report of the Austrian Court of Auditors Oct. 2021

1. The currently released "Rechnungshof-Bericht" **covers the period from to 2014-2019**
2. Since the beginning of 2019, with the start of the new general manager Sonja Klima, measures for the welfare of the horses have been intensified and have been institutionalized in the daily schedule of the riding department (riders and grooms at the Riding School in Vienna).
3. While their stay in Vienna in the "Stallburg" (the well-known Lipizzaner stables for more than 200 years) the Lipizzaners complete a training program from 7:00 am to 12:30 pm with their riders - either in the large baroque Winter Riding Hall or in the Summer Riding Hall in the courtyard, as, being covered, it is used throughout the year and not dependent on weather conditions.
4. One of the significant changes is that the audience is now only admitted to the training – "The Morning Training with music" for one hour instead of previously two hours: That means that the horses can be ridden and trained without any pressure providing health and fitness benefits or rest, if required.
(Fortunately, we can see that so far this has not resulted in any loss of audience enjoyment or finances)
5. If some of the 72 school stallions are not training in the two riding halls - they are moved to the horse walker for a 30 to 45 -minute workout. The horse walker is the biggest of its kind having an oval form instead of a round one to help the horses moving straighter and not in a circle. The horses use the horse walker at least twice- sometimes three times every morning, except Mondays.
6. Every day in the morning (except Mondays) and at the weekend with the performances, two to three groups go for a ride in the nearby Burggarten Park from 7:00 am to 9:00. The only exception is when it is freezing or very wet.
7. Between Vienna and the Training Center at Heldenberg the Lipizzaner rotate every six to eight weeks. The rotation has been enforced within shorter periods since 2019 for the horses to spend longer time in the countryside having large paddocks and daily ride outs with their riders in the fields and meadows of Lower Austria.
8. For the well-being and constant observation of the horses, there is not only a permanent vet since 2020 but also a 24/7 vet pool to check that the Lipizzaners are neither too stressed by too much performing and training or suffering from not being moved enough.

9. During the pandemic the training and the rituals described continued daily according to the regime. This meant splitting the groups over the entire day with alternate training and riding sessions from morning to evening in order to have smaller groups and satisfy the requirements of social distancing.

9. The biggest change, perhaps not appreciated by a large number of visitors and fans of the Riding School was to discontinue with the program "Piber meets Vienna" during the summer months, while all of the performing school stallions spend their summer in the Training Center Holiday for the long summer break.

In the normal program "Piber meets Vienna" the highlight was always the foals and their mares storming into the famous riding hall. In the afternoon the foals and mares would then spend an hour in a part of the Burggarten Park for visitors and tourists to be able to watch them.

This had meant that the young foals had to be transferred from the stud farm in Piber – with its lovely meadows and countryside to Vienna and stay in the city stables of the stallions for more than six weeks with their mares, instead of enjoying their paradise-like childhood at the stud farm.

Sonja Klima stopped this program in Vienna, adapting it instead to a performance with the skilled Lipizzaner mares and an interesting variety of classic carriage rides with Lipizzaner etc.

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