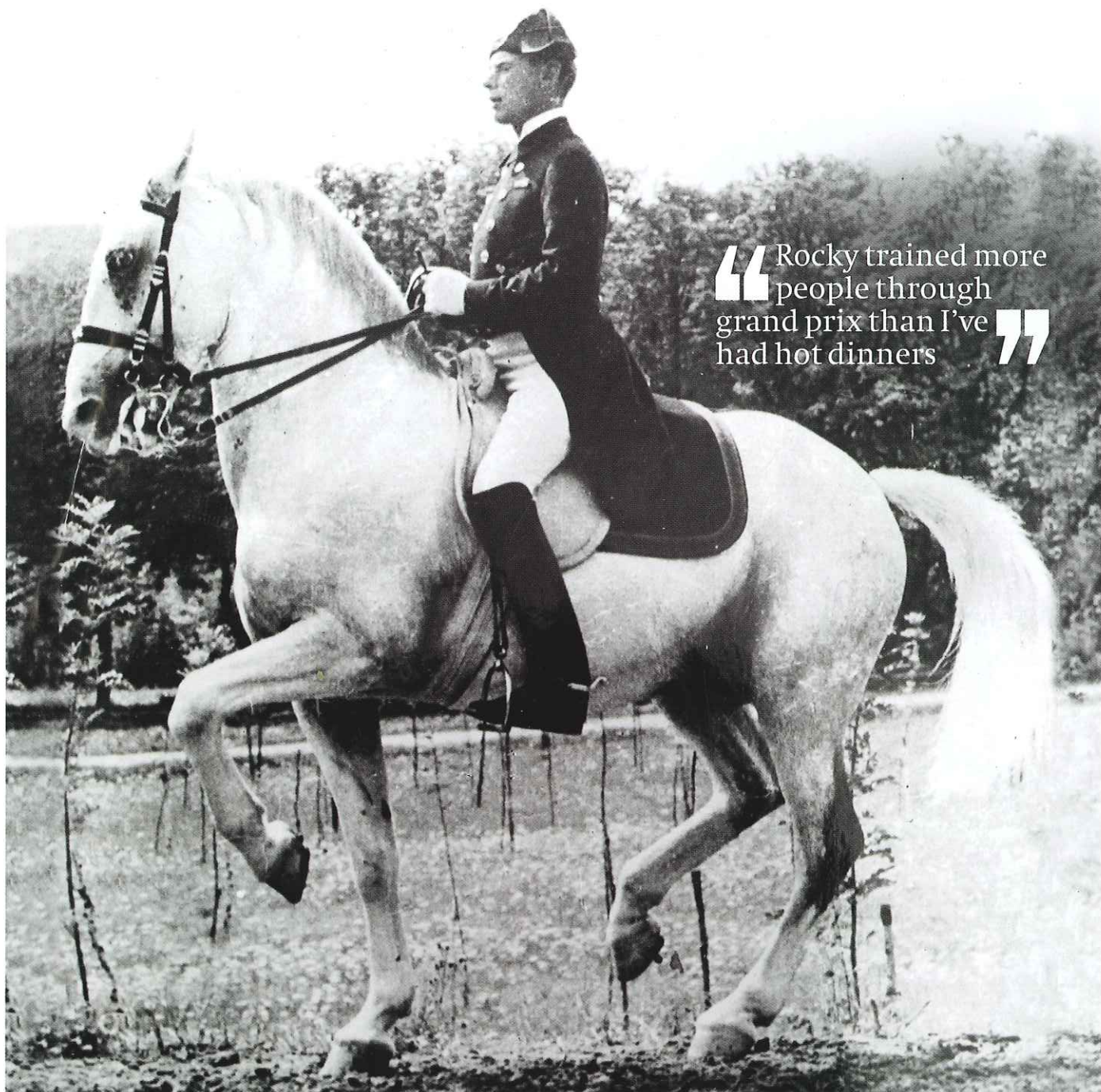


# The moment

“ Rocky trained more people through grand prix than I’ve had hot dinners ”



**Dane Rawlins**

THE moment I was saw this photograph, which is of the great dressage rider and trainer Franz Rochowansky — better known as Rocky — I wanted to compete in dressage.

I'd been riding since I was nine years old, but had never touched dressage. I was studying zoology at Hull University and was president of the sports club. At the time, the great Charles Harris, who had trained at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, was riding at Porlock Vale [a pioneering equestrian centre in Exmoor that closed in 2007]. I invited Charles to

lecture to the riding club, held at York University because they had the space.

Charles brought with him a 16mm film of former Spanish Riding School instructors. When I commented on the quality of the riding, Charles pulled out this photograph of this chap I'd never heard of — Rocky. It's a stunning picture and it stuck in my head. I thought: "If they can do that, I can do that."

Domini Morgan, an international dressage rider and judge with whom I was training, arranged for me to go to Germany for three years to train with the legendary Georg Theodorescu. When I returned, I came to know Sarah

Whitmore, who had competed in the 1976 Olympics. Rocky was based at her yard, so I finally got to meet my hero.

I knew Rocky up to his death in 2001. When he left Sarah, he set up a yard with another Olympian, Vicki Thompson-Winfield, and he was always there at the side of the dressage ring at Hickstead prepared to help. It was during this time that Rocky and Vicki gave me a signed copy of this photograph. He was a top man and trained more people through grand prix than I've had hot dinners. This picture now hangs in my home and it's a treasured possession. **H&H**