



Jacob Melissen

Monaco is a KWPN-approved stallion by Animo. Both Monaco and Animo pass on their traits to their offspring.

On his dam's side, Animo is a grandson of the famous stallion Amor, who was born a Holsteiner with a good dash of Trakehner blood. Most would agree that Amor has greatly advanced Dutch sport horse breeding. His offspring usually had good conformation and a "fighting spirit", and riders who could channel that spirit into positive energy enjoyed an edge in the show ring. Noteworthy is that a good number of Amor offspring competed in the different disciplines at the biggest regional shows. In 1967, Amor was awarded the keur predicate, and a year later, he was declared preferent.

Animo's dam, Irene ster, came out of a classic dam-line. Her dam was the black Gelder mare Omentine kern (s.Karolus van Wittenstein), out of Comentine kroon kern (s.Ridderslag). The Bakker family of Egmond aan den Hoef purchased Omentine as a mature horse and got one foal out of her, Irene. Although many years have passed, Simon Bakker still clearly remembers Irene: "She was a beautiful horse with good gaits. I took her to the inspection as a three-year-old, and she received the ster predicate. I used to ride her, and she especially liked to jump. On the ground, she was honest but willful. For example, if I turned her out in a pasture and she wasn't happy, she'd jump any fence or canal to get out. Back then, I also owned a cattle farm and didn't have time to chase after Irene, so I sold her when she was seven or eight. At the time, I had a nice filly out of her, an Exilio xx daughter named Mirjam. Unfortunately, she got out of her pasture with her foal at her side. Both were hit by a

passing bus and killed instantly, which left me with no horses from that line. That was really unfortunate!"

A Willful Ster Mare

Animo was born May 7, 1982 in the stables of Dutch breeder Peter Simons, who now makes his home in Belgium. A series of somewhat coincidental events led to Simons' purchase of Irene. Simons: "At the time, I was a butcher of beef and pork. One day, I got a phone call from Mario Pompen, who has since passed away. He ran a riding school in Brunssum and had a ster mare by Amor in his barn. She had been in-foal to Pericles xx but lost the foal mid-term in her pregnancy. Mario wanted

to use Irene as a school horse, but she wasn't suited for the job. For instance, if she didn't feel like doing something, she'd rear straight up; and if someone tried to take her on a trail ride, nine times out of ten, she'd come back to the barn without her rider. Clearly, she wasn't meant to be a school horse. Mario asked me if I was interested in her. I bought Irene over the phone without even seeing her. After all, she was a ster mare and experts had deemed her worthy of the predicate, so I thought I could take the risk.

"When she arrived at my barn, I was immediately smitten with her; she was beautiful and long-lined. The first time I bred her I used Heidelberg, which resulted in a nice colt that I later sold as a sport horse. After that, it was hard to get Irene to carry a foal to term. I decided to breed her again in 1981, but I wasn't sure which stallion would be a better choice: Almé or Ramiro. At the time, I was in touch regularly with Frank Kemperman who used to work for the DPN, the now disbanded government equine research center, where Ramiro stood at stud. However, Frank and I thought that Ramiro was probably too burly to be paired with Irene, so we chose Almé who was more refined. That's how Animo was born. He was quite ordinary as a foal; there wasn't anything remarkable about him. Later on, I showed him in the Benelux Open Championship, but he didn't qualify for the final. I thought perhaps he was too



Dirk Catemans

Andiamo was foaled in Morten Aasen's barn. He enjoyed a successful show jumping career under riders including Jos Lansink.

average to be a breeding stallion and lacked that 'special something', but I never doubted for a minute that he'd be a good sport horse.

"When Animo was 14 months old, Henk Voeselek, a horse dealer, came by my place to look at a three-year-old stallion. He happened to see Animo in the pasture and immediately wanted to buy him, too. Through Henk, Animo ended up with Gertjan van Olst, and because he was a big fan of Almé blood, he made sure Animo got every opportunity to succeed.

"After Animo, I tried breeding Irene to Ramiro. In the end, she didn't get pregnant, despite our best efforts. Unfortunately, I ended up with some big bills. Those were the days of natural cover. However, the DPN had started conducting trials with artificial insemination, so I told Frank Kemperman that he could have the mare in exchange for cancelling my bill. He agreed to the deal, and the DPN center became Irene's new home. However, the staff soon got fed up with her antics. She'd constantly jump out of one pasture into another, or she'd jump out of the pasture altogether and run around loose on the property. She would also do the same with Animo at her side, and he would jump along with her. On top of that, Irene was super smart. For example, if I walked out to the pasture with the vet, she'd know right away that something was about to happen, while the other horses were still grazing. From the DPN, she went to Jacques Vriens, and then I lost track of her.

"I bred Animo to my mares several times. The first two, Ever and Forever are out of a trotter mare. The first went on to become the regional champion and was later sold as a sport horse to a Spanish buyer. The second jumped really well in the UTV, the young horse championships, but I lost track of him. Some time later, I happened to see him on TV, showing under the name Bodyguard. He competed in the Brussels Grand Prix under Philip Lejeune and won the qualifier for the Maastricht Grand Prix. After that, he unfortunately got injured and dropped out of sight. I also bred Amira, a Ramiro daughter, to Animo. The match produced Farah, who eventually became an international show jumper. Animo has been a breeding stallion for almost a quarter century, and his influence is just as great in his second and third generations!"

The Road to Barcelona

Stud owner Gertjan van Olst of Den Hout has always had a good eye for potential in young stallions - a talent which he has demonstrated many times. Van Olst: "In March of 1984, I heard through the grapevine that Henk Voeselek had a two-year-old Almé son for sale in Oosteind. Back then, I was very interested in French breeding because great jumpers with good backs and wonderful, new blood (at least for us) were coming out of France. Offspring by the Ibrahim son Almé, in particular, caught my attention. At the time, I had two horses with Almé blood: Zalmeco, who was KWPN-approved, and Zalmé, who was SBS-approved and had competed in the 1988 Olympics as a seven-year-old.

"I went to look at Animo, and the minute I saw him I knew I had to have him. Even though I had my doubts about his small size, I decided to take a gamble on him. I bought him together with Evert Jan van de Brink from Harskamp, and I decided to leave him in pasture over the summer. When I went to pick him up in the fall, I was pleasantly surprised at how good he looked. Then, I registered Animo for the stallion inspection, even though I thought his bloodlines might not be good enough for the judges to select him. Although Almé was certainly good enough, he had classic Amor and Karolus van Wittenstein blood right behind him.

"At the first round viewing in Zuidlaren, Animo came in the ring and looked around like a king in the line-up; that's when my doubts disappeared and I thought: 'Yes, he's ready!' He advanced to the second round viewing in Utrecht, where things almost went wrong. In those days, the respiratory exam was done by tying up a stallion's leg and making him move through a deep sand arena on three legs. When it came Animo's turn, he objected to his leg being tied but then settled down and did quite well. The judges selected him for Ermelo. That year, both he and Aktion, whom I co-owned with Tiek van Uyttert and Rinus de Jong, were approved."

"It was also wonderful that both Animo and Aktion went to the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona; unfortunately, Aktion became dehydrated, so he couldn't compete. Later in life, the two stallions were declared keur. They were a special duo! At the performance test in Ermelo, Aktion did very well.



Robin Hood W, with rider Ben Maher, is second in the WBFSH rankings.

However, Animo finished at the bottom, even though he got good scores for jumping and his canter. But his low placing didn't bother me much because I believed in his jumping talent. Unfortunately, I could only own one stallion, so I decided to sell my share in Aktion. I kept my share in Animo and eventually bought the remaining one. When I was preparing him for the Stallion Show, I realized he was a really wonderful horse. He was very intelligent: I only had to teach him something one time; after that, he knew what I wanted. What's more, he always wanted to work.

"At a certain point, I decided that the development of a talented jumper like Animo was just as important as his breeding career, which is how he became one of the first privately owned stallions available through AI. My decision made it easier for Henk Diks of Vorstenbosch to show Animo in the Stallion Competition as a four- and five-year-old. He did very well and placed every time. When he was six, Animo competed nationally for the first time under Henk.

"After that, I sent Animo to England for further training with Rob Hoekstra. Nowadays, we have a schooling course on almost every corner, but that wasn't the case back then. However, there were

schooling courses in England, and Rob, who's really good with young horses, advanced Animo's training. The following summer he came back home for breeding, and I took over his training and enjoyed riding him every day. I was always surprised at how rideable he was; he was simply a fantastic and easy horse. That summer Rob came by with the horse van and took Animo to the international show in Odense and finished in the ribbons three times. Animo was only seven then.

"But after a while, traveling back and forth to England became difficult, so Peter Bult-huis took over Animo's training. I hauled him to Henk Nooren's place twice a week, where Peter worked at the time. Incidentally, I also took Calypso along, who had the same training and riders as Animo. On the weekend, I would haul the stallions to shows, where Peter would ride them.

"In the next stage of Animo's career, Henk van den Broek, who at the time was successfully showing Andretti, took over the reins. In 1991, Henk rode Animo in his first World Cup competition in Den Bosch, and a few weeks later, he competed him in the World Cup qualifier in Antwerp. That was a great show, and Animo was better with each time in the ring. Back then, the World Cup competitions consisted of two rounds plus a jump-off. Animo finished clear twice. Only five combinations made it to the jump-off, including him and Henk.

The pair went like a rocket and clocked the fastest time. Unfortunately, when Henk made a really tight turn, he hit his foot against the standard and knocked down the last pole. Even though Animo didn't win the Volvo, it was still a great show and a wonderful experience.

"After the qualifier, Henk and Animo became part of the A-team slated for Rome. Around the same time, Morten Aasen was watching the Antwerp show on TV. He was looking for a horse for the Olympic Games. After seeing Animo on TV, he started calling me, wanting to buy him. At first, I wasn't interested, but I changed my mind before Henk and Animo left for Rome. Soon after, Morten and his vet came to look at Animo. We tacked him up, and Morten got on. After the first jump, Henk and I looked at each other, and the same thought crossed both our minds: 'He's sold, so no Rome,' and we were right. The vet examined him, looked at his x-rays, and we sealed the deal.

"Thankfully, Morten was a very good amateur rider and fulfilled our original goal for Animo: competing him in the Barcelona Olympics. The international competition was tough, but Animo jumped and fought for all he was worth and, like always, gave everything he had. In the first round, he picked up one fault, and I believe he finished clear in the second. In any case, he qualified in the top 30 for the individual final

day. The Olympics were a priority for Morten, but afterwards, he let Animo stay at my barn a year for breeding. In between, I rode him, and Morten came by on occasion to ride. I made sure to leave time for showing so that the pair could continue their career together.

Jump Over a Car

"Animo was very important for me and my business. I have many good memories of him, such as in 1990, when we had our annual stallion show in Oud Gastel. I had been thinking about jumping Animo over my car, and I thought it would be a fun thing to do at the stallion show. Of course, I wanted to practice first. So I drove my Mercedes into the arena and put a standard on either side of it. Because Animo was used to lots of things, he just cantered up to it and jumped. However, as we were right above the car, he suddenly realized that he was jumping over a very strange thing. We cleared the car just fine, but he was so shook up by the experience that I had to walk him a half-hour to get his heart rate back to normal. I didn't do the stunt at the stallion show, but I did the other things I had planned."

"Animo is 27-years-old now and enjoys his retirement in England. When I'm in England, I still visit him. He was my favorite from the moment I saw him, and he's still my favorite now because of his incredible personality,



The keur mare Riovanna recently won the speed class in Oslo with Harrie Smolders in the saddle and shows promise for the future.



In the performance test, Regino scored an 8.5 for scope. Currently, the stallion is an international show jumper under Belgian rider Maurice van Roosbroeck.

