

Imothep

Under Ireland's Darragh Kenny, the Indoctro son Imothep is excelling at the highest level of show jumping. Bred by Robert Hassing, the stallion's career highlights include placing 12th individually at the 2014 World Equestrian Games in Caen and receiving recognized status for KWPN breeding. Imothep is a very important horse to both his breeder and rider, as revealed in the following interview.

TEXT: JENNEKE SMIT • PHOTOS: DIRK CAREMANS ET AL.

Breeder Robert Hassing

KI: How would you describe Imothep's character?

RH: That's difficult to say because I sold him as a foal. In any case, he's a stallion with lots of 'blood,' and he's very nice to ride. He does have character because he takes after his dam and granddam; they were mares with lots of 'blood,' which is something I also see in Imothep. On paper, he perhaps doesn't have that much blood, with Indoctro, Calvados, and Dominard in succession; but 'blood' is firmly rooted in this line.

Breeder Robert Hassing sold Imothep as a foal together with his dam. Pictured is Hassing with a two-year-old colt by Arezzo.

Rider Darragh Kenny

KI: How would you describe Imothep's temperament?

DK: Imothep is an awesome jumper, a real personality. He has a lot of self-confidence and likes to play. He cooperates well with his rider, which I think is a very important trait for a jumper.

KI: What is his best trait under saddle?

DK: Besides the fact that he's careful, has lots of talent, and likes to cooperate with his rider, Imothep has a very big heart. That's his best quality.

KI: Do you have experience with other Indoctro offspring? If so, what similarities do they share?

DK: Yes, I'm currently riding Valencia (Indoctro out of Kitta keur pref by G.Ramiro Z, breeders: R. Abbring of Leeuwarden and J.F. Abbring of Onnen); and two years ago, I rode the Oldenburger Any Given Sunday (ds. Condor). The Indoctros I've had and currently have share many similarities: they want you to be patient with them and they don't like a lot of pressure, but they're very talented. Almost all Indoctros have lots of scope.

KI: How did you get Imothep, and did you immediately 'click' with him?

DK: It was by coincidence that I started riding Imothep. I had ridden other horses for Hyperion



Darragh Kenny: "I had never ridden in a championship before, but this horse took me to the World Championships in Caen."



BREEDING

Breeder Robert Hassing

KI: What traits has he inherited from his dam? Does she have other offspring?

RH: Imothep, or Werner H as we named him, is the first foal out of the Calvados mare Serena H. I sold her after she foaled Imothep. She was a beautiful 'blood' mare, but after Imothep, I couldn't get her in-foal again that season. Because we had plenty of horses, I sold them both. Of course, I shouldn't have, in hindsight! She was purchased for the sport. A while back I tried to find her, but it turned out that she had died in 2007.

KI: Why did you choose Indoctro, and which of his traits has Imothep inherited?

RH: You could say that I'm a real Indoctro fan. He's truly a top stallion, then and still now. You can see that alone by the large number of offspring in the international sport. He always produces beautiful horses and generally ones with an easy temperament. They're marketable horses, and I think that Imothep has inherited a lot of Indoctro's traits. He's a handsome, large stallion with a good sport body, a beautiful head, and a large eye. A tough guy, which he already was as a foal.

KI: When did you sell Imothep and to whom?

RH: We always sell the colts to VDL. That was also the case with Imothep, whom I sold to Wiebe-Yde. At the time, I was building our house, so we needed the money. Besides, we already had enough horses, which is usually the case. He's from the same birth year as Wittinger. Because VDL already had several Indoctro's for the first round viewing that year, they decided to take Imothep to the inspection at Galmbacher in southern Germany. When he was seven, VDL sold him to his current owner, Vicky Castegren.

KI: Was Imothep's talent evident as a foal?

RH: That's a difficult question. Some people say that they can tell if a foal will become a top horse, but I can't. Imothep was a tough, alert foal, and he really stood out - in part because of his two high white socks on his front legs. Of course, it's easy to talk in retrospect, but I could never predicted this.

KI: How has Imothep's success affected you and your breeding business?

RH: I've received a lot of reactions and texts

TRUE HORSEMAN GENES

A member of an avid equestrian family, Robert Hassing launched his breeding business at age 16. Two years later, he purchased the Maykel daughter Furona, Imothep's great-granddam. In his daily life, Hassing works for VDL Stud, where his duties include inseminating and managing mares, as well as going on the road with clients, sporthorses, and stallions. Frozen semen from Imothep will be available through VDL Stud in 2015.

from people, so that makes it really nice. A lot of people know I bred him, in part because I do a lot of inseminations for VDL and I'm on the road. So that definitely strokes the ego! It's also really special to be on record as the breeder of such a horse, and I try to follow him the best I can. I watched him jump in the team competition in Caen and had planned to go back for the individual final. But on the one day that I was working at home, I had an accident with a young horse and ended up in the hospital instead of in the car on the road to Caen. Fortunately, I was still able to follow it!

Another really nice moment was in Aachen: Wiebe-Yde knew that Imothep was going to jump there and immediately said that we had to go watch. It was certainly unforgettable! He jumped 4 and 0 in the team competition and received so much applause from all those people in the stadium.

KI: Do you follow Imothep's achievements closely, and what are your expectations of him for the future?

RH: It's really nice that he's now recognized by the KWPN, and of course, he's already approved by several other studbooks. He doesn't have a lot of offspring, but if it's up to me, he'll have two more in 2016 because I want to breed him this season to my mares by Glasgow van 't Merelnest and Cardento. I have high expectations of Imothep in breeding and certainly for the sport too. Hopefully, he'll have more successes in the sport with Darragh because they're a great combination, and I hope they can go to the Olympics in Rio. That would be awesome. I don't like to fly, but that would be the reason to overcome my fear of flying.

Rider Darragh Kenny

Stud, Imothep's registered party, but Candice King used to ride Imothep. Candice, however, had a bad fall and, as a result, couldn't ride for two months. Then Hyperion Stud asked if I wanted to keep him fit until Candice could ride him again. But after three or four rides, things went so well that they decided to let me keep riding him.

KI: When did you first think that Imothep could become a great horse?

DK: Soon after I started riding Imothep, I knew that he was a very good horse. He showed lots of talent and abundant possibilities. And the longer I rode him, the better he did.

KI: How has Imothep's success benefited you and your show jumping career?

DK: My success with Imothep has greatly influenced my career. It was really something big. I had never ridden in a championship before, but this horse took me to the World Championships in Caen. He took me to the Nations Cup in Dublin, which was a dream for me. He's made a huge difference in my career. He's helped me get to where I'm now with my riding, with my world ranking and everything. Imothep is one of the best horses I've had in my career up to now.

KI: What are your future plans with Imothep?

DK: We're first going to focus on the European Championships and then decide what to do after that. I hope that I have a good chance of being part of the Irish team. I think I do. Imothep was very consistent last year in the Nations Cups. ●

DARRAGH KENNY

Darragh Kenny is a 27-year-old jumper rider of Irish descent, though his home base is in the United States. For many years, he rode for John and Missy Clark, two leading trainers of young riders. "Working for John and Missy was like getting vocational training. I learned so much there," asserts Kenny. Currently, he runs his own stables in America, called Oakland Ventures. He also rides a number of horses for Hyperion Stud, owned by Vicky Castegren. Kenny achieved the highpoint of his career to date with Imothep, placing 12th at the World Equestrian Games in Caen.

Robbert Hassing:
"If the Olympics are in sight for Imothep,
it is a good occasion to overcome my fear of flying."



Robert Hassing: "Imothep was already powerful as a foal, but I never could've predicted this success."