



**BREED**

# The way of the Warlander

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Ask the average person if they know what a Warlander is, and their answer could be anything from a strong cocktail to a Swedish detective. Ask **SUZY JARRATT** however, and she'll tell you it's neither of the above.

**T**he Warlander is a breed of horse well known around the world, except here in Australia, the land of its birth. And the person responsible for its conception in the '90s is Karen Maree Kaye from the Classical Sporthorse Stud in Henley Brook, WA. Back then she was smitten with the Andalusian, also known as the Pure Spanish Horse or PRE (Pura Raza Española): "There weren't that many here except for those which came over with Ray Williams," she explains.

Williams was the founder of El Caballo Blanco in WA, and later in NSW, which featured performances by Spanish dancing horses bred at his Bodeguero Stud (named after his imported stallion).

Karen admired Andalusians not only for their spirit, but because they were also “really neat to ride, and used themselves so well in the back end.”

Another breed which excited her was the Friesian. “At the time I had some Thoroughbred mares on which I’d been competing and I wanted to find a stallion. I looked at Warmbloods and couldn’t find anything and then I found a Friesian, the second one to come into Australia, which had a beautiful front end. I’ve always loved the ones in Renaissance paintings with their long manes and swan necks. So because I was doing classical dressage, I began breeding them.”

As an aside, it’s worth noting that the ‘90s Friesian was in some ways different to today’s Friesians, which have been developed to possess more sport aptitude.

So with a stable of two different breeds, it was then Karen’s aim to develop a type which was light moving and comfortable: “One that had the bone, placid nature, glorious front end and extravagant movement of the Friesian, with the Andalusian’s agility and ability to collect. A horse capable of doing high school dressage and have enough gumption to do airs above the ground,” she says.

It was also important that there were no genetic weaknesses. “Friesian dwarfism had come to light and I worked with top geneticists at Sydney University who assisted in developing a comprehensive standard breeding guide so there was a clear plan for future generations,” she adds.

The Warlander name came from veterinarian Warwick Vale, now National President of the Australian Veterinary Association, who had worked with Karen while developing the breed. What would she have done, I asked her, if Warwick’s name had been Col or Phil? “I really don’t know,” she giggles.

The world’s first Warlander was named CS Dominador, a bay by baroque Friesian Valentino El Domino Classique out of Blackford Allegria. “He was a cracking horse,” Karen recalls, “he had

the hybrid vigour of the two crosses. I knew I was on to something. Clyde, as he was known, grew to 16hh. His Andalusian dam was 15.1hh and his sire wasn’t much bigger. He naturally performed the high school movements and was a very cheeky character. He died only a few months ago. His owner, Kate Dalrymple, buried him on her parents’ property in the Snowy Mountains. He was much loved.”

Karen’s motivation to breed Warlanders thirty decades ago was her love of classical dressage – which she still has. “Training my horses is an art, I do it for myself to build a relationship. I’m presently working with my grey stallion Invictus,” she says. “I don’t compete in dressage. I’m one of the few people in the world who

has learned Baucher’s second manner. There’s me and Rene Bacharach!”

And if you find that a bit bewildering, Francois Baucher was a French riding master in the 1800s whose ‘second manner’ emphasised the importance of teaching the horse to keep his neck upright, carry it himself without the aid of his rider and continually sustain optimal balance and mobility. Rene Bacharach

**LEFT:** Inquieto RAM, a second generation Warlander stallion and son of internationally acclaimed Warlander stallion Hummer (Image by April Visel Photography).

**ABOVE:** Owned and bred by Karen Maree Kaye, Main Studbook Warlander gelding CS Invictus was successful at the Gosnells Breed Show (Image courtesy Classical Sporthorse Stud).





ABOVE: Owned by Morgan Moore, Inquieto RAM is approved for breeding in the USA (Image by April Visel Photography).

was a scholarly equestrian and close friend of Nuno Oliveira, a Portuguese master who approached riding as a true art. Oliveira died in Perth in 1989, Bacharach in Paris in '91.

Whilst she is passionate about the art of classical dressage, Karen does not expect every Warlander rider to feel the same way. "And I certainly don't want owning one of these horses to be an elitist thing," she adds, "they're for everyone. In my case I want to reach 80 and have a horse with brains that's a pleasure to ride. All around the world they're doing anything and everything from trail riding, dressage, and reining, to film work and jousting."

Yet these global achievements are barely recognised in this country. "They're so well-known everywhere else," Karen tells me, "and in America they're into the third generation of breeding. I must admit I don't really like being a promoter, I tend to just stick on my five acres in Western Australia!"


The most famous Warlander is reputed to be an American stallion named Hummer, who ten years ago was crowned World Grand Champion Stallion by the International Friesian Show Horse Association. He has been used in Chevy commercials, was the face of Guerlain's Habit Rouge fragrance, and appeared in *The Lord of the Rings* as well as several music videos.



ABOVE: Kathi Stewart's stunning Warlander gelding The Spanish Knight (Image by Teagen Barrett).

Jodie is especially appreciative of Karen Maree Kaye: "Our connection goes back to when we bought a horse from her sight unseen and trucked it from WA. We were pleased with the condition it was in and with its training and temperament, and ended up buying two more. She has enormous credibility and should

be applauded for all her hard work and research. Thank goodness she created the breed and the Society."

*If you're interested in knowing more, visit [warlanderstudbooksociety.com.au](http://warlanderstudbooksociety.com.au), and if you're thinking of purchasing a Warlander in Australia, ensure the horse is registered here before you buy. *