

FESTIVAL FOCUS

◆ A CAVALCADE OF THRILLS IN THE HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES

Words: **Sylvia Edwards Davis**



The *Nuit des Créations* show combines horse artistry and performance, to stunning effect

Equestria, Festival de la Création Équestre

THE CITY OF Tarbes, in south-western France's stunning Hautes-Pyrénées *département*, boasts a time-hallowed equestrian tradition. This devotion reaches fever pitch for a few days every summer, during the *Equestria* festival. A far cry from an elitist affair solely reserved for expert equites, this galloping jamboree is a fun, accessible and family-friendly celebration of the horse universe in all its forms that's attended by over 50,000 visitors each year.

The top virtuosos of the equestrian world congregate for this quintessential equine summit at the Haras Nationale de Tarbes, the stud that's the cradle of the Anglo-Arab breed. The show *Nuit des Créations* transcends traditional performance, reaching new heights in the unique complicity between horse and rider, and throughout the festival over 300 horses and almost 500 experts and artists take part in a number of exhibitions and parallel events in the bespoke 'Equestrian World Village'.

The 21st edition of *Equestria* guarantees a memorable experience at every turn, with renowned luminaries of horse artistry and world-class athletes showcasing their exceptional mastery. This year's event brings the youth and humour of the world famous Royal Andalusian School of

Equestrian Art, and also features the extraordinary performance group Compagnie Zarkam de Gilles Fortier, who are set to carry audiences on fantastic flights of fancy with their new show, *Storm*, an ode to pure aesthetics that aims to awaken all the senses.

The line-up also includes Pierre Fleury, Laurent Galinier de la Compagnie Andjaï, Pieric, Alicia Dosogne, les Centaures du Temps, Amandine Pérez and Honoré Alest, all accompanied by actors, dancers and 30 drummers from the Compagnie Tolon Kan, with

scenery by Benjamin Aillaud of the International Horse Academy.

Entrance to the Equestrian World Village is very affordable and includes many events and displays plus the Maison du Cheval. What's more, Village access is free after 7pm. ■

TIP: While you're visiting Tarbes, don't miss the amazing Musée Massey, which is dedicated to the legendary Hussar cavalry.

Equestria, Festival de la
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July 28 – August 2

3 cours Gambetta, 65000 Tarbes

€3 (village access) & €32

(*Nuit des Créations* show)

+33 5 62 51 30 31

www.festivalequestria.com