

## Michael Bragdell Bio

Michael Bragdell joins us from Hilltop Farm in Colora MD. Hilltop Farm is undisputedly one of the most successful breeding and training facilities in the United States. The influence of Hilltop's breeding program is evident throughout the United States and Internationally. Hilltop stands over a dozen stallions that represent some of the best bloodlines available for sport horses today. Hilltop has enjoyed over 15 years of great success with their breeding and training program. The athletes of Hilltop and their offspring have captured many National and International titles.

Michael Bragdell is originally from Gothenburg, Sweden. While in Sweden, Michael worked several years at a riding school, serving as an instructor and member of the show jumping team. He continued his riding education in England where he trained and showed young horses for Gustavii Stud, one of the top worldwide breeders in show jumping. In 1995, Michael joined the Hilltop Team, where he now holds the position of trainer and professional handler. Michael graduated from the University of Delaware in 2000 with a degree in business. Over the years he has presented numerous stallions and over 500 mares and foals at different breed registry inspections. Michael has handled many horses at breed shows around the country with several horses presented in the championship classes, including handling "Cabana Boy" to his Reserve Grand Championship at Dressage at Devon as a two-year old. In 2003 he received the SSHA Master Handler Award at the Region 3 finals. In 2005, the major task of young horse backing at Hilltop Farm was placed in Michael's competent hands. Throughout the USA, via clinic format, Michael has instructed handling skills to more than 100 individuals.

Michael has a special gift with starting and developing young horses. Michael's youngsters are known for being forward, light and confident. Michael believes in keeping the work interesting for the young horse to ensure they stay fresh and happy throughout their career. If visiting Hilltop Farm you may catch Michael riding his young horses over fences, doing hill work, working on their dressage training or going for a hack, variety is key in his training.

Three of the youngsters that Michael has started at Hilltop have gone on to recent wins in the USEF/Markel Young Horse Championships. "BW-Callista" (Contucci – A Jungle Prince) was the 2006 USEF FEI Four-Year Old National Champion and "Cabana Boy" (Contucci – Bordeaux) was the 2007 USEF FEI Five Year Old National Champion. The third of these talented youngsters, "Rochefort", 2002 Hanoverian Gelding bred by Hilltop Farms now owned by Beth Springer, returned to Michael for showing this summer. The pair qualified for the National Championships with an overall 8.08 and finished 10th overall in the 5 yr. old division. Michael also had the pleasure of bringing Hilltop's Stallion, "Royal Prince", back out into the limelight in 2007 and had several wins at 3rd level and finished the season with the Reserve Championship at the BLM Finals.

"Michael has a great way with young horses. He is patient and builds confidence, while maintaining fair expectations. Michael knows the importance of teaching young horses to go forward in a quiet connected balance. Michael's preparation ensures future success whether the young horse goes on to be a dressage or jumping athlete. It is rare to find someone who has the skills that he has." Chris Hickey