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THE HISTORY OF **L'ANNÉE HIPPIQUE**



In December 1943, two French-speaking Swiss photographers published the equestrian sport yearbook L'Année Hippique Swiss. It became an immediate success. The yearbook's two creators, Oscar Cornaz and Jean Bridel, continued to publish L'Année Hippique until 1969. At that time, the now elderly gentlemen sold their publishing rights to French interests. Those rights were subsequently sold to different publishers in Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany. Then in 2023, the yearbook returned to the Netherlands, where it is now published by Academy Bartels.

The first L'Année Hippique, which was published during the war years – a period of no international equestrian activity – contained a complete survey of Swiss equestrian activity in 1943 and included hundreds of photographs. The captions for the photographs, taken by Cornaz and Bridel, contained an intimate and personal touch, rarely seen today.

In addition to this national survey, the first L'Année Hippique included several feature articles: a review of Swiss international activities in between the two World Wars; a history of Freiburger horse breeding; and a nostalgic report of the first recognized horse show in 1900 in Yverdon, Switzerland, with jumping and dressage. Notably, the winner of this first national jumping competition of 1900, Max de Rham, who had become a well-known graphic artist, designed the cover of the first L'Année Hippique in 1943.

The inaugural yearbook boasted 40 pages of amazing advertisements. On the one side, the pages were filled with companies run by cavalry officers and active competitors, such as Schwarzenbach, Haecy or Müller; on the other side, advertisers included banks, watch-makers and hotels. From mineral water and wine to liquor, one was informed of all kinds of beverages.

Of course, the yearbook included advertising from the major horse dealers. The introduction to the first L'Année Hippique was written by General Henri Guisan, the revered Commander of the Swiss Army in World War II.

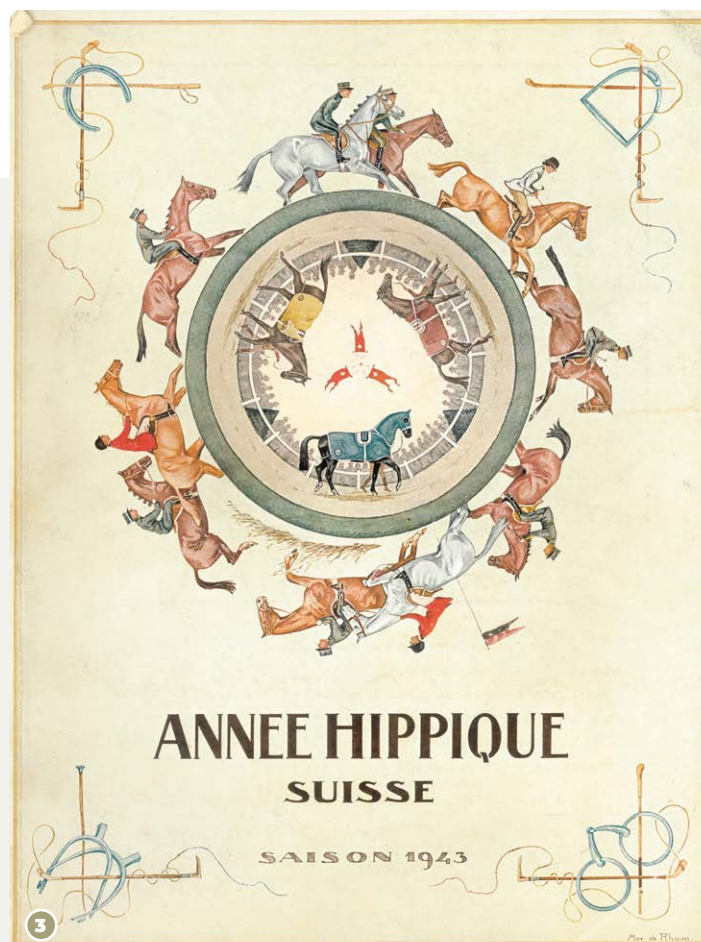
As a national publication, the first L'Année Hippique contained all the ingredients which made it a success for decades: a complete annual survey of activities, with a rich selection of photographs; historical, nostalgic and educational features; a results section; and an introduction by a prominent person.

In 1946, L'Année Hippique became international. Cornaz and Bridel introduced a new photo feature "Petits Ennuis," depicting riders experiencing difficulties in an amusing light, rather than a critical one. By 1960, L'Année Hippique contained 255 pages, including 90 pages of advertising. Among the advertisers were Hermes, Mercedes and the Holland-America Line. At this point, Cornaz and Bridel also began accepting feature texts in German or English, an example of which are several reports of equestrian activities in the United States, written by the author of this text.

By 1969, Cornaz and Bridel, now around 70 years old, sold their publishing rights to French interests. As a result, a Comité de Rédaction – which included Gaston Cavin, Roger-Louis Thomas (publisher and editor of L'Information Hippique), Louis Tissot (the husband of then leading equestrienne Janou Lefèbvre), Cornaz and Bridel – took over L'Année Hippique that year. After Cavin's untimely death, François-Achille Roch, a TV-journalist from Geneva, joined the committee.

An unfortunate decision was made for the 1970 edition of L'Année Hippique: it would not be published – as had been the case since 1943 – for Christmas, but in the spring thereafter. This change would allow the entire equestrian year – from January to December – to be included in the yearbook, unlike in decades past when only events through October were published. As a result, many annual buyers of L'Année Hippique grew angry, especially those who had bought 10, 20 or even more books annually for the purpose of giving them as Christmas gifts.

These angry buyers were also frequent advertisers in L'Année Hippique. The new team published L'Année Hippique again in 1971 and 1972, and then they quit. In the last two publication years, they had introduced translations of all texts and expanded the results section. Although the yearbook's structure had improved, much of its earlier charm had been lost. The 1972 L'Année Hippique, the 30th edition, contained only 40 pages of advertising. The prior year, Cornaz and Bridel had been dropped from the Comité de Rédaction.

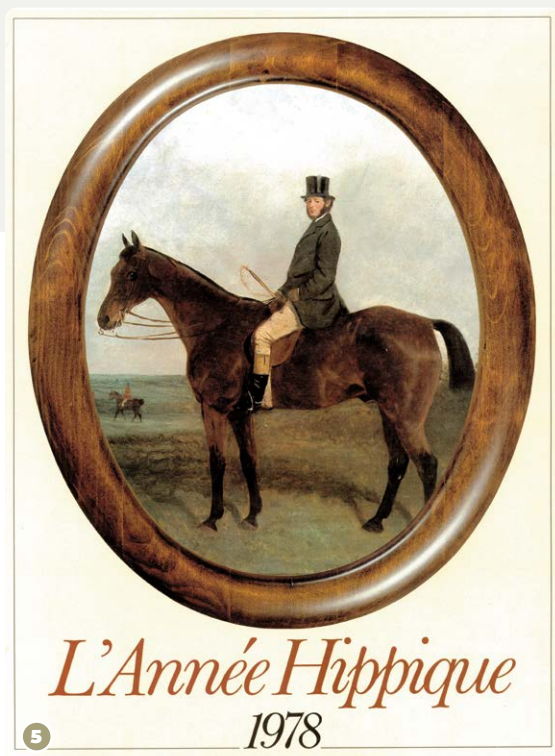


- 1 Jean Bridel and Oscar Cornaz started L'Année Hippique in 1943.
- 2 The new L'Année Hippique team: Hans Hendriks (marketing manager), Joep Bartels (general editor) and Gijs Bartels (publisher). Photo by Dirk Caremans.
- 3 Cover of the first L'Année Hippique in 1943.

Six years later in 1978, L'Année Hippique was published again, this time in Berne, Switzerland. Marc Büchler, owner of a publishing house and Olympic rider of 1956; Max E. Ammann, director of the newly created World Cup for Jumping Riders; and photographer Roland von Siebenthal came together to revive the yearbook. It was published in 1978 and 1979. However, Marc Büchler's untimely death in 1980 ended this venture. A few years later, Max E. Ammann joined forces with BCM (the Dutch company of Joep Bartels and Henk Bruger) which was well established as the publisher of De Hoefslag magazine and organiser of international equestrian events.

The first new L'Année Hippique of 1984 contained the months of October 1982 to October 1983 and became an immediate success, reaching a circulation far surpassing that of the Cornaz-Bridel years.

In 1997, Joep Bartels left BCM; and Max E. Ammann quit his job as chief editor in 1999. L'Année Hippique, now entirely produced in the Netherlands, continued to prosper. In 2016, Henk Bruger and his two sons, Eric and Paul, sold their publishing rights to the German Forum Media Group in Merching, Bavaria. The new publishers did not reverse the editorial policy of the last BCM years of focusing on the annual review of international events and ignoring major feature articles.



In 2021, the German Forum Media Group published its last L'Année Hippique. They then transferred publishing rights to Gijs Bartels, Joep Bartels' son and director of the family's company Academy Bartels in Hooge Mierde, the Netherlands. Supported by his parents, Joep and Tineke, his sister Imke and an editorial team comprised of leading journalists and photographers from several countries, L'Année Hippique resumed publication in November 2023.

- 4 Involved in the restart of L'Année Hippique in 1984 Max E. Ammann, François-Achille Roch and Joep Bartels.
- 5 The cover of L'Année Hippique in 1978.