

Wessels. “She always sets the horse up correctly and then produces a sideways movement with so much expression and elasticity. She has the horse so supple around her. Her half-passes on [Olympic, world and European gold medallist] Satchmo often used to earn her 10s.”

Talking about expression, Richard Davison points out that it’s Isabell’s ability to get the very best out of every horse that sets her apart — in every movement.

“All of Isabell’s horses have great mobility and freedom — even the ones that aren’t born superstars,” he says. “She allows them to develop that expression from an early age and then channels it into everything she teaches them.”

Want to see... how to maintain a fast rhythm across country — and make it look effortless? Watch Piggy French

AMONG the top riders in the world there are those who look like they go fast — and do — and those who look like they’re never going fast, but still beat the clock time and time again. Piggy French belongs to the elite latter.

H&H eventing editor Pippa Roome says: “I don’t think making the time will ever be an issue for her, which must be a lovely luxury — to be able to get the time even when you think you are cruising.”

But Andrew Nicholson points out that although Piggy may look like she is motionless, all the time she is generating the necessary contributors to clocking a quick time.



“Every second she’ll be looking for the stride pattern, watching her line, balancing the horse and looking where she’s going next,” he says. “She’s in complete control of every stride without interfering.”

Ian Stark, who has watched Piggy develop as a cross-country rider, adds: “If you watch her horses go, none of them ever look like they’re at their maximum limit — even at the highest level. She sits quietly and makes it easy for them, and that is what allows her to be economical. She keeps her horses in a great balance and in a fantastic rhythm.”