

= Bonfire (horse) =

Bonfire (March 21 , 1983 ? October 28 , 2013) , full name Gestion Bonfire , was an Oldenburg gelding that competed in dressage with Dutch rider Anky van Grunsven . Between 1991 and 2000 , the pair competed in multiple national and international championships , including three Olympic Games and two World Equestrian Games . They won one gold medal and four silver medals at the Olympics and one gold and three silvers at the World Equestrian Games . Although known for having a hot temperament , Bonfire mellowed as he aged , becoming one of Van Grunsven 's best horses ? until she found his replacement , Salinero , she did not think she would ever find a horse to match Bonfire 's talent . A statue of Bonfire stands in Van Grunsven 's home town of Erp .

= = Early life = =

The brown Oldenburg gelding was born March 21 , 1983 , bred by Karl Bernd Westerholt of Lemwerder , Germany . His sire was Welt As and his dam was Warine (his dam 's sire was Praefectus xx) .

Van Grunsven first met Bonfire when he was two and a half years old , having been under saddle for only a week . He was later purchased by Van Grunsven 's father . At first it appeared that the young horse would be a poor prospect , as his hot temperament led to poor gaits . However , he did well at learning advanced dressage moves such as the piaffe and passage , and so Van Grunsven continued to work with him . He improved , and by the time he was seven years old , he was competing at the Grand Prix level . His temperament continued to lead to difficult rides , and he had a tendency to spook at small items near the ring ; these tendencies decreased as he grew older .

= = Competitive career = =

Bonfire competed with Van Grunsven at his first Olympic Games (her second Games) in 1992 at the Barcelona Games . There , the pair took 4th individually , while helping the Dutch team to a silver medal . At the 1996 Summer Olympics , they repeated the team performance , while improving to take an individual silver medal . In 2000 , at the Sydney Games , the pair won their first (and only) individual gold , while helping the Dutch team to a third silver medal . After the Sydney Games , Van Grunsven replaced Bonfire with Salinero as her Olympic horse . Bonfire and Van Grunsven also competed in two World Equestrian Games . The first , the 1994 The Hague Games , resulted in two medals for the pair ? an individual gold and a team silver . At the second , the 1998 World Equestrian Games in Rome , the pair took home both the individual and team silver . However , Van Grunsven considered the judging at this Games so poor that she said " I thought I would quit dressage . "

In 1991 , Bonfire made his European Dressage Championship debut at Donaueschingen , Germany , where he and Van Grunsven took an individual 5th , while assisting the Dutch team to a bronze medal . At the 1995 Championships in Mondorf , Luxembourg , the pair took the silver medal both individually and with the Dutch team . At the 1999 Championships at Arnhem , the Netherlands Bonfire and Van Grunsven took the title ? gold in the individual ? as well as assisting the Dutch team to another silver medal . He was also a nine @-@ time national dressage champion in the Netherlands .

= = Later life and legacy = =

As he grew older , he retained his famed elasticity but show signed of age in other areas , especially at the walk , which was his weakest skill in the dressage ring . Bonfire was retired from competition after the 2000 Olympic Games . To celebrate his retirement , there was a ceremony in Van Grunsven 's home town and a farewell ride at an international jumping competition in Maastricht , Netherlands . After Bonfire 's retirement , Van Grunsven stated that she never thought she would find another horse as good as he was ; however , his successor Salinero proved to be even more

successful .

In Van Grunsven 's home town of Erp there is a statue of Bonfire . As of 2012 , he lived on Van Grunsven 's farm in the Netherlands .

Bonfire was euthanized following adrenal disease and hoof inflammation on 28 October 2013 , aged 30 .