

= Steffen Peters =

Steffen Peters (born September 18 , 1964) is a German @-@ born equestrian who competes for the United States in dressage . He has participated in three Olympic Games , winning a bronze medal at the 1996 Summer Olympics . Peters has been successful in numerous other international competitions , including winning team bronze at the 2006 World Equestrian Games , two individual bronze medals at the 2010 World Equestrian Games and individual and team gold at the 2011 Pan Am Games . The horse upon which he won many of his titles , Ravel , was retired in 2012 , and Peters is currently working with a new international competition horse , Legolas .

= = Personal life = =

Peters was born in North Rhine @-@ Westphalia , Germany . He began riding at age seven , and competing in weekend dressage shows . By 15 , he was competing outside of Germany , at international competitions in Belgium and Denmark . He received his first horse , Udon , at age 16 as a gift from his father ; this horse would carry him to a bronze medal in the 1996 Summer Olympics . In 1984 , he spent the summer training in San Diego , California , before returning to Germany to perform his army service . In 1985 , he returned to the United States with Udon . In 1991 , he opened his own barn and acquired his first sponsor , Lila Kommerstad , who purchased Udon and as of 2012 owned a portion of Peters ' Arroyo Del Mar training barn . Peters gained his US citizenship in 1992 , saying , " The whole idea of being so patriotic , of feeling so close to one 's country makes a difference . There are not too many other countries where the people are so patriotic . I really enjoy this about America . " Peters continues to live in the San Diego area with his wife , Shannon . Their large dressage barn is home to approximately 65 horses as of 2012 , around half of which the couple trains and the other half of which are in training under other riders . Outside of his competition and training schedule , he teaches in around 30 training seminars each year . His staff call him " a machine " with regard to his training and competition schedule , and in addition to riding , he participates in swimming , cycling and tennis .

= = Competitive career = =

Peters ' show record before the 1992 Summer Olympics made him a hopeful to compete for the US team . However , his citizenship papers were not processed in time to compete in the Olympic trials , and so he did not compete in Barcelona . Peters won his first Olympic medal when he rode with the US dressage team to a bronze medal at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta , together with Robert Dover , Michelle Gibson and Guenter Seidel . Peters , riding Floriano , was an alternate for the US team at the 2004 Summer Olympics , and did not compete . In 2006 , with an aging Floriano , Peters and the US team won bronze at the 2006 World Equestrian Games . Soon after , he began riding TC Ravel , who would become his most successful horse . Despite being gelded while in quarantine after his shipment from the Netherlands and suffering an injury in 2007 that prevented training , Ravel carried Peters to a qualification for the 2008 Summer Olympics . In individual dressage competition at the Games , Peters placed fourth , riding Ravel . The US team finished fourth at the 2008 Games , but was disqualified after team member Courtney King 's horse tested positive for felbinac , a banned substance . In 2009 , Peters and Ravel had the highest scores in all three portions of the prestigious German Aachen World Equestrian Festival Grand Prix competition , leading them to be the first American pair to be named the Aachen Grand Prix Champions .

Ravel and Peters went on to win the 2009 World Cup Final , two bronze medals in individual competition at the 2010 World Equestrian Games , and be twice named the US Grand Prix Dressage Champions . In 2009 , The Chronicle of the Horse named Peters and Ravel Horse and Horseman of the Year , and the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) named Ravel as Horse of the Year . At the time , the Chronicle called him a " natural athlete with a balanced seat and an inherent understanding of the horse . He 's calm under pressure and has a reputation for having ice water in his veins . " In 2011 , riding Weltino 's Magic , he took gold in both the team and

individual dressage events at the 2011 Pan Am Games . At the 2012 Summer Olympics he came 17th in the individual dressage and was part of the US team which came 6th , again riding Ravel . Peters retired Ravel from competition after the 2012 Olympic Games , after over 40 Grand Prix wins , and the same year the horse was inducted into the United States Dressage Federation Hall of Fame . Peters ' new international competition horse is Legolas , currently the world 's top dressage horse , and a prospect for the 2014 FEI World Equestrian Games , to be held in Normandy , France .

Peters is the first person to be awarded the USEF 's Equestrian of the Year Award three times , having won the honor in 2008 , 2009 and 2011 .