

**S**uspend your disbelief for a moment. There are those who actually like Katie Price's horsegear label, KP Equestrian, whose website, featuring diamanté bridles, pink blankets and pink horses' boots, invites customers to "put some glamour and sparkle into your riding". What's more, Price is not the only one with a pink horsebox. Nor is she alone in dousing herself and her horse in crystals and glitter. Among certain horsewomen, little is spared: jackets, browbands, spurs, stocks (silk cravats) and gloves are all peppered in crystal Union Jacks, diamanté and pearls. Patent leather is used liberally on bridles, head collars and bespoke boots costing thousands. Something has happened to the stuffy world of equestrianism: the Wags have arrived.

Maybe that's because you would need a footballer husband to afford the six-figure habit. A top-level, grand prix horse, such as those owned by Toni Terry and Price, can cost six figures. Michael Owen and his wife, Louise, have their own commercial stables. Jenni Raikonen, wife of Kimi, the former Formula One racing driver, owns four horses; Terry owns three. It was Terry who introduced Abbey Clancy to Oldencraig Equestrian Centre, in Lingfield, Surrey, where full-board livery costs more than £8,000 a year, and where Strictly Come Dressage, a competition done to music, is being held next month, with "guaranteed sparkle, glitter and fun".

Bling is the word — and they're not embarrassed to use it. "You can now get some lovely equestrian equipment," Terry says. "Pretty, blingy belts and amazing things to hold, such as crystal bridles." One dressage judge, Sandy Laflin, says sniffily that she has known people to change their jacket to match their horse, and says judges have had to step in when the glitter becomes too much. "It can be a case of 'all the gear and no idea'," says a fellow judge, Sue Piner. "You draw attention to yourself, then you don't do well."

Some dressage riders resent the Wags' flashy arrival when they have been "shovelling it" for years. (At this level, it's 95% women and the rest are gay.) With the serious money has come a more competitive focus on appearance. Others welcome it. "I'm all for the Wags," says the competitor Vicky Hayton, who has a private plate on her horse lorry that ends with "NAG", and whose KP Equestrian crystal browband is "absolutely beautiful". The Wags, she says, bring recognition, publicity and sponsorship — and, she adds, "they emphasise how important it is to look glam".

With a face of clenched determination, Terry is warming up on her finest grand prix horse, the lustrous, dark-chocolate Diamond Fritz. She is about to represent the south of England in the Home International, a British dressage competition between England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Her bespoke Konig boots with patent toecaps are polished to military perfection. Her brunette hair is contained within a crystal-studded hairnet and velvet scrunchie. ("A scrunchie just finishes off the look," trills another competitor.) A bronze rhinestone browband, crystal-studded silk stock and full make-up complete a picture of discreet glamour



# WAGS

DIAMANTE BROWBANDS,  
PATENT-LEATHER BRIDLES,  
CRYSTAL-STUDED JACKETS —  
THE WORLD OF DRESSAGE HAS  
GONE ALL BLING, AND IT'S DOWN  
TO THE FOOTBALLERS' WIVES.  
**FLEUR BRITTEN** REPORTS

# AND THEIR NAGS