

Townend rules Osborne

London Capital & Finance Osborne, Isle of Wight

"I CAN'T believe what it's like over here — and how you lot keep it secret," said Oliver Townend after winning two sections at the inaugural Osborne Horse Trials.

Like many, Oliver was making a first visit to the Isle of Wight. Setting up a showcase event at Queen Victoria's seaside retreat has involved four years' work for event director Stuart Buntine's team, alongside English Heritage. Around 5,000 people visited across the two days, slightly over the numbers the organisers hoped would attend.

The event was supported by, but not affiliated to, British Eventing, to allow the freedom to run outside certain rules such as in using a custom-written short dressage test. Hefty prize money was offered to convince leading riders to run top horses round the open intermediate track and Oliver took home £21,000 of the £46,000 prize fund.

He won the top class, the Victoria Bowl, on one-day event specialist Cillinabraden Evo, owned by Sally-Anne Egginton, and took second on the World Equestrian Games (WEG) long-listed Cooley SRS, who belongs to Angela Hislop.

Oliver also claimed top spot in Wednesday's Albert Bowl on 2014 World Equestrian Games ride Black Tie II, an "old professional" who belongs to his right-hand woman Karyn Shuter. "Tonti" has forgotten nothing for not competing for over a year — he is now 17, raced extensively as a young horse and has to be carefully managed, including running only on firmer ground.

"Being a professional rider is meant to be about making a living out of the sport and events like this make it a nicer lifestyle — without money involved, there's a lot of work making a living when the season is over," said Oliver.

"I'm thrilled with the horses — I came here for a non-pressured run. From my point of view, it's very relaxing only having two horses each day — it's like having four horses on holiday!"

Oliver said he was "blown away" by this picturesque venue, but admitted he had expected an easier cross-country. This may have been a showcase, but Adrian Ditcham's course tested horses and riders, using the park's natural undulations. No one

Oliver Townend takes a double at a successful showcase event at a former royal residence on the Isle of Wight



'Old professional' Black Tie II gives Oliver Townend one of a brace of wins, in the Albert Bowl

By PIPPA ROOME

made the 4min 48sec time.

Oliver held his one-two throughout the Victoria Bowl. The showjumping could have been tougher in this section — two-thirds jumped clear over Geoff Quinlan's track. Alex Bragg was unlucky to hit the last fence, the second part of the River Lodge Equestrian double, on Jardy Event

Rider Masters winner Zagreb, having been fifth after dressage.

Andrew Hoy moved up from sixth after dressage to take third on 16-year-old Cheeky Calimbo.

"I wanted to do Event Rider Masters with him this year, but I have a new generation of horses coming through and I'm trying to give them the time they need," he said.

Sam Griffiths took fourth, the last placing in the prize money,

on Paulank Brockagh, who was named on the Australian WEG shortlist the same day.

'MY JAW HIT THE FLOOR'

MATTHEW HEATH was seco to Oliver in the Albert Bowl, riding Hazel Livesey's smart nine-year-old Sportsfield Lord Lives

"You ask him for more and finds it, you set him up and he responds, he's so careful you c keep travelling to the fences," Matthew, who also raved abo Osborne. "It's rare that you a somewhere and your jaw hits floor, but it did."

Alex Bragg was third on another nine-year-old, Sarah Hughes' Barrichello, a big scope horse who will have benefited from the experience of the crowd here, particularly close up in the tight showjumping arena. He will move up to four-star next year.

SVENNERSTÅL ON FORM

SWEDEN'S Ludwig Svennerstål won the Warrior Bowl, named after the heroic island-bred horse who survived World War I.

Ludwig scooped £4,000 for his win and £2,000 for third on Fit For Fun RAA. Winner Fialotta, 10, has been eventing for only a year, after being sent from Sweden to Ludwig by his former owner-breeder Ewa Magnusson-Kroon.



Ludwig Svennerstål and 10-year-old Fialotta, who is only a year into her eventing career, claim the Warrior Bowl