



# FROM THE **HANDS** OF AN ARCHITECT

**COURSE DESIGNER: FRANK ROTHENBERGER**

At the risk of being too succinct, Frank Rothenberger is simply put one of the most requested course designers in the world. He is to equestrian course design what the slide rule is to the draftsman; the very springboard from which creative venture leaps, and yet the guide by which the diligent precision required to complete the task at hand relies upon.

Frank Rothenberger has called attention to his name time and again with his impressive course designs. In fact, he has either designed or delivered the jumps to some of the biggest horseshows in the world; World Equestrian Games, European Championships, World Cup Finals, Finals at Kuala Lumpur, and the Falsterbo Horse Show for the past 23 years. Here, the typical touch of his golden hand makes the courses shine with top tier design, professionalism, ride-ability with the true and unmistakable shimmer of fanaticism that only a true jumpcourse built by Rothenberger himself casts.

Founding CARO with his family many years ago, to meet the growing demand for the sport, their products have been used in Olympic Games, and other top jumping events around the globe. Meet Frank Rothenberger, the entrepreneur, the designer, the architect.

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**How does it feel to be possibly the best jump course designer in the world?**

Who says I am, have you asked the riders?

**Yes, indeed, and quite a few of the world's elite think you are.**

Oh that's nice, well what can I say, to me it's more like just spending time relaxing and playing out my passion than doing hard work.

**So then, do you consider your job to be somewhat laidback?**

Yes, I feel it is quite laidback, it's not really a big physical effort designing or building jumps. It's more a thrill and a challenge to the artistic sides of the mind and soul than to one's muscles.

**Well, just how much work is in it for you?** It usually takes me about two days to set up for a big competition, but when I'm there I'm completely immersed in it, and it honestly feels like it's more work walking around the course as much as I do, than designing it.

**So, how long have you been playing around with your passion now?**

Well, I suppose it began when I was sixteen years old. I was constructing my first fences and just suddenly, in that very moment, my passion for fences and jumps was born. After that it all accelerated into four decades of crazy dedication to jumpcourse design, hundreds of hours spent thinking and drawing world famous courses, and many thousands of kilometers walking the greens...

**You have been in the business for forty years, that's a long time!**

Well I'll tell you, any man should be happy to have waltzed around green and pretty jumpcourses for forty years. And forty years is nothing... If I looked as old as I feel, I would still have to show my Id-card when buying my favorite white wine in the Swedish liquor-stores. And as always, a man is only as old as he feels. Add that up, and the mathematics will tell you I'll be out here waltzing for a few more decades before feeling satisfied.

**What is it exactly that you find so thrilling with designing jumps?**

For me jump course design is like architecture. Architecture plays with attributes as mass, space, form, volume, texture, structure, light, shadow, materials, and beauty. That thrills me. That keeps me up at night. Therefore it's worth walking a long weekend at a big show, usually over 50 kilometers, just for the joy of playing with the design and the purpose of it.

**What do you think you would be doing if you were no longer designing courses?**

I would be an architect, without a doubt.

**Have you always been so determined and self-assured?**

Yes, actually I have been quite strong-minded since I was young and competing. See, I had already ridden with the YR national team when I was 20, and by that age I already thought it was time to start up a business. So, at 21 I stopped riding and started doing what I do today full time. Truthfully, I think it has more to do with liking what you are doing, than being determined and self-assured. To like what you do creates an innate lust for progression and a natural will to develop and go forward. I simply like what I do.

**You have practically built everything a man in your field can build, do you have any challenges you still wish to meet?**

That would have be to do the Olympic Games.

**But you will go to the Olympic Games in Hong Kong, won't you?**

Yeah, but only to give a hand and help out where necessary, and of course to enjoy the games.

**You are still in the best health a man can be in, still slim and fit, how do you do it?**

For the most part I just enjoy life simply. I don't drink beer, but I do occasionally drink white wine, and I walk a lot. During a big show I walk between 40 to 50 Kilometers a weekend, which makes quite a lot of K's in a lifetime. Do you reckon I have already rounded the world?

**Ah, White wine instead of beer, do you have any other eccentric sides?**

I don't have any... or more so, do I really have to admit them?

**What competition is your biggest success so far?**

In Aachen, the semifinal there. That was a perfect round.

**What is 'perfect' for you?**

Perfect as in a perfect round? This should be a course a good flow and a good rhythm to it, without too much risk for accidents or injuries. I don't want to build hard courses, rather just the opposite. The rider shouldn't be thinking about the difficulties in the course, he or she should be thinking about riding their horse well. If 25% come out clear, with near flawless rounds, and around 40% of the riders with one mistake then I am happy.

**What do you think about this year's Falsterbo?**

I have been building there for 23 years, and I like it considerably. I come back year after year and it's always a really fun competition to do.

I think Falsterbo is really what it says. As much show as horse. Anyone that has been there, knows what I'm talking about.

