

Meet Carl Holmen: Rotarian, grandpa, lover of the arts

Close to 10,000 people visited Milton Mall last week to see the famous Carlsberg championship team of Belgian show horses and the solid oak brewery wagon — and to catch a glimpse of Danish brewmaster Carl Holmen.

Between April 20-23, Mr. Holmen spent a total of 14 hours at the Mall shaking hands with the crowds and signing his autograph for an estimated 3,000 people.

Mr. Holmen also took time out for a private interview with Canadian Champion reporter Ann Hauprich-Nielsen during which he talked openly about his unexpected rise to success as a nationally known personality in Canada through his commercials for Carlsberg beer and also about his family and favorite pastimes when home in Denmark.

So, get ready for some surprises. You're about to meet Carl Holmen, the person.

By Ann Hauprich-Nielsen
By the time most men reach the age of 60, they're more interested in reviewing past achievements than in looking ahead to meet the challenges of the future.

There are, however, a few exceptions.

One of them is Danish brewmaster Carl Holmen, known to millions of Canadians for his commercials promoting

Carlsberg beer.

Until three years ago, Mr. Holmen was content to live the relatively quiet life of a Copenhagen executive with his writer wife Grethe, and their three daughters, Marianne, Lise and Eva — now all married and employed as teachers in various parts of Denmark.

During his leisure hours, Mr. Holmen kept busy working on community projects with his fellow Rotarians, listening to classical music, brushing up on his photographic skills with his favorite Nikon or taking an occasional vacation to one of the nearby European countries.

But an invitation to come to Canada in September 1973 for the purpose of teaching Canadians at Carling O'Keefe how to brew Carlsberg beer sparked the beginning of a new and exciting life for the happy-go-lucky Dane.

The 60-year-old grandfather is one of the best known personalities in this country today, and keeps pace with an itinerary that would exhaust most men half his age.

When in Canada, (he and his wife usually fly here six times a year, each visit lasting between three and four weeks at a stretch) Mr. Holmen works 18 hours a day, seven days a week. During this time, he is always in front of a TV camera or otherwise in the public eye.

People expect him to be smiling, witty and charming. Rarely does he disappoint them.

Some tell him they don't believe he's really a brewmaster, which bothers him a bit since this has been his occupation in Denmark for over three decades.

"They tell me I must be a professional actor," Mr. Holmen related. "But nothing could be further from the truth. I don't know how to be anything but myself."

"I didn't come to Canada to make commercials," he states quite definitely. "I simply came here to explain the facts about how to make Carlsberg beer."

"When I came here in 1973, I only expected to stay a few weeks on business and then return to my regular duties as Managing Director of Carlsberg International in Copenhagen."

But the people at Carling O'Keefe in Toronto took a special liking to the white-haired Dane and his accent, and insisted he be featured in their introductory commercial for Carlsberg to be filmed at a sidewalk cafe in downtown Metro.

The rest is history. During the past three years, Mr. Holmen has been featured in 110 commercials including several made especially for Quebec in which he demonstrates his ability to speak fluent French (he also speaks German and Swedish, as well as his native Danish.)

As a direct result of his exposure through these commercials, Mr. Holmen has appeared in interviews and on numerous radio and television talk shows in many parts of Canada.

He has also participated in numerous festivals and community events from coast to coast including the Canadian National Exhibition, the Calgary

Stampede, Edmonton Klondike Days and the Quebec Winter Carnival. As recently as two weeks ago, he made the CBC and CTV news pedalling alongside Toronto Mayor David Crombie and columnist

Paul Rimstead in the 30-mile Bike-A-Thon for Crippled Children.

When he left Milton Saturday, he was headed for a series of engagements in Oshawa and will be seen at the opening of the World Series in Wein on May 7 and 8.

Asked what Mrs. Holmen does while he's busy gallivanting about the countryside, Mr. Holmen replied: "Mrs. Holmen always accompanies me in my travels. She enjoys the visits to Canada as much as I do. In fact, she always blames me for heading home to Denmark too soon!"

He said they share a Bloor St. apartment, which serves as "home base" when in this country, and that from there, Mrs. Holmen does her own thing — visiting art museums, researching and writing articles and books.

In fact, she recently completed her second book entitled "Women Artists in the 1500s and 1600s", due to appear on Danish book store shelves next week.

The Holmens have been married 33 and a half years. ("We were wed on my birthday — December 7 —" Mr. Holmen laughs, "so I've never forgotten our anniversary yet.")

At the time of their wedding, Mr. Holmen had just received his MA from the Royal Pharmaceutical College in Copenhagen.

In 1944, he received his Master's Brewers diploma from the Scandinavian School in Copenhagen and continued his studies the following year

at the Stockholm Breweries Central Laboratory in Sweden.

Two years later he became Associate Brewer at the Carlsberg Brewery in Copenhagen. In 1965, he was made Production Manager, and, in 1970 became (Continued on Page B17)



IT TOOK A LOT OF COAXING before television personality Carl Holmen could convince three-year-old Kevin Johnson of Milton that Carlsberg colt "Erik" liked to be petted and would make a good friend. But, at long last, little Kevin got up the courage to pat the three-month-old horse on the head. From there on in, the trio got along just fine.

—It's a busy weekend coming up, the high school formal is on Friday evening followed by the Scouts' graffiti dance and the Hospital Auxiliary "Fantasy Ball" both scheduled Saturday night.

—A community bazaar is scheduled Saturday at Milton Mall, with several groups participating.

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P.M.	A.M.	STOPS	A.M.	P.M.
12.30	9.15	Milton	11.20	2.35
		Shoppers World		
		Brampton	11.00	2.15
		Bramalea GO Station	10.45	2.00
		Islington Subway	10.20	1.35



CHILDREN hold a special place in Carl Holmen's heart and he welcomed them to come and sit beside him for a chat as he signed autographs for visitors at Milton Mall last week. The 60-year-old Dane is himself a father three times over and has three grandchildren, as well.

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