



Top 10 Moments from the Vermont Summer Festival

By Lindsay Brock/Jump Media

At the start of every summer, thousands of horses flock to picturesque Harold Beebe Farm in Southern Vermont for six weeks of competition in the foothills of the Green Mountains. Attracting riders and their mounts from the U.S. as well as a strong contingent from Canada, the Vermont Summer Festival has grown over the years to become one of the more popular summer showing destinations among hunter, jumper, and equitation competitors.

In 2016, the circuit proved extremely popular with sold-out stabling, record-breaking numbers, and lots of new faces. The consensus among attendees was that there is no better way to spend the summer than showing in Vermont!



Here's a look at the top 10 moments from the 2016 Vermont Summer Festival:

#1 - A Victory For The Entire Family

JJ Torano is the six-year-old son of grand prix rider Jimmy Torano and amateur competitor Danielle Torano. He carried on the family name by dominating the walk/trot division riding Mighty Mouse during the second week of the season. The youngest Torano was named champion and, true to form, Danielle, Jimmy, and their daughter, nine-year-old Natalia, were all on hand as a family to congratulate JJ on his tricolor ribbon.

This photo perfectly exemplifies why families love showing at the Vermont Summer Festival. His mother said it best, noting "The Vermont Summer Festival is a show with classes for everybody and anybody. It's laid-back, family-oriented, and fun! We always feel like we can relax a little and just enjoy the show when we get to Vermont."

Moment #1: The Torano Family.
Photograph: Andrew Ryback Photography

#2 - International Representation, Courtesy Of Ireland's Cormac Hanley

When 19-year-old Cormac Hanley stepped foot on the Vermont Summer Festival grounds for the first time, he made the competition truly international. Hailing from Ireland, Hanley rides for Missy Clark and John Brennan's North Run, situated in nearby Warren, Vermont.

Hanley and his homebred stallion, Captain Caruso, cruised to their first win together in the \$10,000 NYDJ Welcome Stake, presented by Manchester Designer Outlets, during week three. A ten-year-old Irish Sport Horse stallion (Captain Clover x Caruso), Captain Caruso was bred by Hanley's father Charles in Ireland.

Moment #2: Cormac Hanley and Captain Caruso.
Photograph: Jump Media



#3 - Hunters Soaking Up The Spotlight

Some of the country's top hunter competitors made the pilgrimage to the Vermont Summer Festival for World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) week, held annually during week three of the Vermont Summer Festival. With her eye on WCHR Finals, held each October at the Capital Challenge Horse Show, professional hunter rider Jennifer Bauersachs arrived wearing her game face.

Bauersachs was named champion in the High Performance Working Hunter Division as well as the 3'6" Performance Working Hunter Division during WCHR week. She also topped a staggering starting field of 50 entries in the \$5,000 3'3" NEHJA Hunter Derby, presented by Eastern Hay, riding Cleaveland, owned by Meritage Stable and Spring Hill Farm.

Moment #3: Jennifer Bauersachs and Cleaveland.
Photograph: Andrew Ryback Photography



#4 - Paying It Forward

When the ribbons were handed out for the \$50,000 Summer Celebration Grand Prix, there was a new face making the presentations. In co-operation with Make-A-Wish Vermont, Wish Kid Shannon Watson was the guest of honor during the final grand prix of the circuit at the Vermont Summer Festival. After meeting some of her show jumping heroes, getting autographs, and judging the leadline class, Watson awarded the ribbons to grand prix riders.

When the victory gallop was complete, class winner Catherine Tyree gave Watson a gift that trumped all others. She presented her blue ribbon to Watson, sending her home as the queen of the Vermont Summer Festival.

Moment #4: Make-A-Wish
Photograph: Jump Media
Photography



#5 - Future Stars Getting Their Start

Each week, the future stars of show jumping have an opportunity to strut their stuff in the grand prix ring at the Vermont Summer Festival. Held each Saturday, leadline riders serve as the opening act to weekly grand prix events, giving spectators a glimpse at the future of their sport (and some pretty cute ponies, too!).

Moment #5: Future Stars Getting Their Start
Photograph: Andrew Ryback Photography



#6 - A Sentimental Win

When he isn't cheering ringside for his children, Jimmy Torano can often be found competing in the grand prix ring at the Vermont Summer Festival. Torano won his first grand prix of the season as the sad news spread that Kiki Umla, a well-known figure in the show jumping industry, had died, prompting an emotional prize giving and a heartfelt dedication.

"I found out that Kiki had died right before walking the course for the grand prix," said Torano. "She is a long-time friend and has been so great to us and our kids. At that moment, I knew I had to win the class for her."

Moment #6: Jimmy Torano and Day Dream
Photograph: Andrew Ryback Photography

#7 - Experience Trumps Youth

It was starting to look like no one would produce a clear round in week five's \$30,000 Manchester & The Mountains Grand Prix when Mark Jungherr came to the rescue. The 66-year-old, easily the most senior competitor in the class, gave a riding lesson to the rest of the starting field, many of whom were still in their teens. Riding Conte Couleur, Jungherr won the class on a single time fault.

When asked how it feels to win against young riders, including runner-up Michael Hughes, 20, he responded with a laugh and said, "It still feels good!"

Moment #7: Mark Jungherr and Conte Couleur
Photograph: Andrew Ryback Photography



#8 - Hunters Cashing In

As the Vermont Summer Festival reached its peak, so did the prize money. The final NEHJA Hunter Derby of the season offered \$15,000 in prize money, the lion's share being claimed by winner Sarah Barge riding Danturano. The pair is no stranger to success in the hunter ring, having won the \$5,000 3'3" NEHJA Hunter Derby, presented by Eastern Hay, during week two and also claiming the 3'3" Pre-Green Hunter division circuit championship title.

"When you first see him, he's not flashy, but once you see him jump, you can't help but watch!" said Barge of the eight-year-old gelding.

Moment #8: Sarah Barge and Danturano
Photograph: Andrew Ryback Photography

#9 - A New Era

The sixth and final week of the Vermont Summer Festival was a big one for the next generation of show jumping competitors.

Fourteen-year-old Alexandra Pielet couldn't wipe the smile off her face after winning the \$10,000 Theory Welcome Stake, presented by Manchester Designer Outlets, on Helene VE. It was a win that, according to her, she will never forget.

"I was one of the youngest in the class and it was one of the biggest courses I have ever jumped," said Pielet who trains with Valerie Renihan. "To win against professionals and older riders is an incredible feeling."

Moment #9: Alexandra Pielet and Helene VE
Photograph: Andrew Ryback Photography





#10 - Out With A Bang!

Moment #10: Catherine Tyree and Don't Go
Photograph: Jump Media Photography

For the first time in their nearly four-year partnership, 22-year-old Catherine Tyree and Don't Go led a victory gallop. They waited all the way until the final week of the Vermont Summer Festival to top a 12-horse jump-off and win the grand finale, the \$50,000 Summer Celebration Grand Prix. As the saying goes, good things come to those who wait!