

FIVE REASONS *the*
Vermont Summer Festival
IS THE PLACE TO BE THIS SUMMER



*The Vermont
Summer Festival*

has not only charmed show jumping athletes along the East Coast and beyond over the last two decades, but it also has become one of the most popular summer destinations in North America.

Tucked just south of the Green Mountain National Forest, the competition grounds at Harold Beebe Farm, home to the six-week circuit each July and August, are surrounded by photo-worthy views. The series in the Manchester, VT, area attracts riders from all corners of the United States for dynamic competition spanning the levels from cross-rails to weekly grand prix events. While the competition is family-friendly, welcoming, and just plain fun, the surrounding community provides plenty of entertainment for equestrians who choose to spend their summers in Vermont.

Take a look at all there is to love about the Vermont Summer Festival, running July 2 through August 11, 2019, at Harold Beebe Farm in East Dorset, Vermont:

1. Location, Location, Location

When Vermont Summer Festival exhibitors are asked what they love most about spending their summers in the mountains of Manchester, Vermont, their first response is almost always, “the views!”

While the location seems meant-to-be, the process of finding Harold Beebe Farm was a result of good business sense. A quarter of a century ago, the Vermont Summer Festival sprouted up as a tiny horse show in the parking lot of a popular ski resort in Killington, VT. The show felt like a carnival with everything from footing to bathrooms trucked in, and it attracted riders from neighboring states in the Northeastern U.S. and Southeastern Canadian provinces.

After a few years at a number of different locations, the Vermont Summer Festival settled in East Dorset to better serve the largest concentration of its exhibitors, which existed in the Manchester area. It was then that the Vermont Summer Festival as we know it today was born and began attracting competitors from far and wide.

“I am proud to say that after 25 years, we are still here and continuing to grow and thrive,” said Vermont Summer Festival Show Manager John Ammerman, who saw the show celebrate its 25-year anniversary last year. “The show has experienced quite the evolution, but my staff and I have poured countless hours into the current location and could not be more proud of what it has become.”

2. Families Who Show Together Stay Together

That summer feeling is hard to beat, especially for families with young children. When the final school bell rings, many horse show families head to Vermont. They may come from different parts of the country and have different goals for the six-week circuit but their experiences, both in and out of the show ring, can be summed up in two words: family fun.

It is common to see grand prix riders like Marylisa Leffler, who hails from Rolling Acres Show Stables in Brookeville, MD, competing herself and then helping her niece at the amateur hunter ring or coaching her brother-in-law in the adult jumpers. It’s also an unspoken tradition that many riders finish a round in the grand prix ring before quickly hurrying over to the pony ring to watch their children compete. Manchester itself mirrors that all-inclusive vibe and is home to attractions that range from public swimming holes and ice skating to mountain biking and fly fishing and so much more.

For another family – the Schauders of Country Lane Farm of Greenwich, CT – summer vacation means one thing: horse showing in Vermont! Emma, 23, Lindsay, 20, and Avery, 14, accompany their mother, Christina, and father, Fred, to the Vermont Summer Festival each summer. It would be considered a working vacation for most, but the Schauders embrace any opportunity to horse show together.

For Emma, the Vermont Summer Festival has been a part of her show schedule since she first sat in a saddle. A graduate of the University of Georgia, Emma said, “We have seen the Vermont Summer Festival get better and better each year. It has become a second home for me, my family, and our barn.”

3. Points Palooza

The Vermont Summer Festival is the ideal location for points-chasing from the equitation ring to the hunter ranks. Qualifying opportunities span the disciplines, and exciting offerings are served up to hunter and equitation riders courtesy of World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) week and “Equitation Tuesdays.”

Some of the country’s top hunter competitors make the pilgrimage to the Vermont Summer Festival for WCHR week, held annually during the third week of competition. After gaining points at member horse shows across the nation, including the Vermont Summer Festival, the top 10 nationally-ranked riders and top six regionally-ranked riders in each category go head-to-head in the WCHR Finals at the Capital Challenge Horse Show in Upper Marlboro, MD.

It doesn’t stop there for hunters. The weekly \$5,000 3’3” NEHJA Hunter Derby makes its return in 2019 to highlight the Thursday schedule and culminates with a \$15,000 offering on August 8 during the sixth and final week.

Additionally, any rider with equitation finals on his or her to do list can check off all the boxes at the Vermont Summer Festival. Thanks to weekly equitation offerings, as well as the extremely popular “Equitation Tuesdays” introduced in 2013, the Vermont Summer Festival has quickly made a name for itself among equitation riders and trainers as an “Equitation Bootcamp” of sorts. With opportunities to qualify for all the major finals, Tuesdays at Vermont are host to a big group of young riders and national championship hopefuls, all with the goal of preparing for prestigious year-end finals.



4. Top Sport

As a spectator, if there's one day to not miss at the Vermont Summer Festival, it's Saturday. The show peaks each week with a \$30,000 Grand Prix, held the first five Saturdays of the six-week circuit, before the season culminates with the \$50,000 Grand Prix on the final weekend. The show serves as the perfect environment for tomorrow's stars to shine with young horses, and up-and-coming riders often pocket the first big wins of their careers at the Vermont Summer Festival. The jumps are big, the riders are hungry for a win, and the sport will not disappoint!

It's not just the riders and the horses who steal the show. The course designers at the Vermont Summer Festival are some of the best in the world. The list includes the likes of Alan Wade of Ireland, who was honored with the prestigious appointment of course designer for the 2018 World Equestrian Games (WEG) in Tryon, NC. In addition, Mexico's Manuel Esparza was part of the course-building team at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, while Canada's Michel Vaillancourt has the 1976 Olympic individual silver medal to his credit. All three will bring their talents to Vermont this summer.

5. After Hours

When the show wraps each day, ample opportunities exist for entertainment. So many, in fact, that it often takes all six weeks to fit everything in.

First, there's the food. Dining in the Manchester region is second to none. Home to restaurants spanning the gamut of food options, Manchester and its surrounding areas are a foodie's paradise. The perfect opportunity to test drive the options is to attend the weekly exhibitor parties, which are hosted by a different venue each Wednesday throughout the six weeks of showing.

Second, there's the shopping. One of Manchester's biggest claims to fame is the Manchester Designer Outlets, which are considered a shopping getaway for locals and visitors alike. Located in the heart of Manchester, the outlets included within the Manchester Designer Outlets offer boutique shopping opportunities from more than 40 brands, including iconic names like Bass, Overland, Theory, and Vineyard Vines.

In addition to dining and entertainment, Manchester area hotels and resorts embrace country luxury and provide an ideal home away from home for horse show-goers. The best part is that the community truly embraces the Vermont Summer Festival and welcomes riders, trainers, and their families into the region. ■ BY LINDSAY BROCK/JUMP MEDIA

Want to find out more about the Vermont Summer Festival? Visit www.vt-summerfestival.com, or follow on Facebook and Instagram.

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