

The Vermont Summer Festival



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U.S. Equestrian Team veteran Candice King and Calisto 26 topped the \$10,000 Manchester Designer Outlets Welcome Stake at the 2018 Vermont Summer Festival.

America's Favorite Summer Horse Show Returns

By *Lindsay Brock/Jump Media*

The annual northern pilgrimage of the equestrian set will soon begin. As the weather turns warmer, it can only mean one thing in the mind of a rider – the summer show season is fast approaching!

Running for six consecutive weeks from July 2 through August 11 at Harold Beebe Farm in East Dorset, VT, the Vermont Summer Festival has become a favorite among riders, trainers, and local spectators alike. The 2019 summer series will continue the tradition of competitive options to please the hunter, jumper, and equitation rider, as well as an ever-evolving dedication to improving the competitor experience.

A Rider Favorite

When the weather warms and the days lengthen, those who travel as far north as Vermont experience a relaxed summer show circuit with rousing competition, all set in a family-friendly environment. For these and many other reasons, the Vermont Summer Festival continually ranks at the top of every “must-visit horse show” bucket list for hunter, jumper, and equitation riders.

“There is something about Vermont,” said Matthew Metell, a consistent grand prix winner at the Vermont Summer Festival who considers the event his favorite horse show not only for the competition, but also for the local entertainment options, which include his favorite restaurant The Sliver Fork. “We have good luck here, and honestly, what’s not to like?”

Nestled into the southern foothills of the Green Mountain National Forest, the Vermont Summer Festival offers entertainment opportunities that charm children, adults, and everyone in between. The Manchester area mirrors the all-inclusive vibe of the horse show itself

and offers attractions that range from public swimming holes to mountain biking and much more.

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 stores comprising the Manchester Designer Outlets offer boutique shopping opportunities from more than 40 brands, including iconic names like Bass, Overland, Theory, and Vineyard Vines.

A favorite among the Vermont Summer Festival crowd is the wide variety of options for post-show dining. Home to restaurants spanning the gamut of food offerings, Manchester and its surrounding areas are a foodie’s paradise. Attending the weekly exhibitor parties, hosted by a different venue each Wednesday throughout the six-week show, is the perfect opportunity to sample a variety of menus.

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PHOTO BY JUMP MEDIA

David Jennings of Franklin, TN, and Cesar de Lison Z won the \$15,000 NEHJA Hunter Derby, presented by Land Rover Experience, during the final week.



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Morgan Ward of Milford, NJ, and Diacord sped to victory in the \$30,000 Otter Creek Grand Prix.

Competition Aplenty

The Vermont Summer Festival is a hotbed for collecting valuable points for year-end finals. Qualifying opportunities span the disciplines, but the most exciting offerings are served up to hunter and equitation riders by way of a World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) week and “Equitation Tuesdays.”

WCHR week welcomes some of the country’s top hunter competitors 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 October in Upper Marlboro, MD.

Additionally, weekly \$5,000 3’3” NEHJA Hunter Derby offerings make their return in 2018 with a \$15,000 offering on August 9 during the sixth and final week of competition.

For equitation riders, the Vermont Summer Festival’s “Equitation Tuesdays” have developed a reputation as a points-palooza. Tuesdays are dedicated to equitation classes and give riders several opportunities to qualify for, and accomplish, year-end goals at the nation’s top equitation finals.

Saturdays at the Vermont Summer Festival see packed stands thanks to a dedicated following of local equestrian fans. The show is highlighted each week by 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. Additionally, jumper riders can celebrate the return of a \$10,000 Open Jumper Rider Bonus, presented by World Equestrian Center.



PHOTO BY JUMP MEDIA

Christian Coyle and Dolce Vita KDW Z competed with the Vermont mountains as a backdrop.

Admission at the Vermont Summer Festival is only charged on Saturdays and Sundays and 100% of the gate proceeds benefit local Manchester-area charities.

“It’s like a vacation and a horse show at the same time,” said Jennifer Kocher, a 2018 grand prix winner at the Vermont Summer Festival. “The footing, in my opinion, is almost perfect, the course designers are great, and the jumps are nice. My only complaint last year was that I could not stay the whole six weeks!”

Whether for year-end points, a family-friendly atmosphere, or a vacation and a horse show wrapped into one, the Vermont Summer Festival is a must during the 2019 summer season.

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

The Vermont Summer Festival By The Numbers

When it started, the Vermont Summer festival included 200 stalls and two competition rings.

Today, the event has grown to nearly 1,400 stalls and five competition rings offering hunter, jumper, and equitation competition.

The East Dorset location includes 14 iconic blue and white stabling tents that can be spotted for miles in any direction.

Each summer, the Vermont Summer Festival hires 20 seasonal crew members to impeccably maintain the grounds and show rings.

Between five rings and adjacent warm-up and lunging areas, there are 750 tons of sand that are mixed with fiber to create footing. The fiber arrives in roughly 15 square bales totaling 80,000 lbs. in weight.

Each summer, Eastern Hay and Grain, the official feed supplier of the Vermont Summer Festival, delivers 1,500 bales of hay (supplemented by other deliveries) and 1,000 bags of Purina grain for the hundreds of hungry horses that come and go each summer.

The last delivery in the preparation of each season is the delivery of the stars of the show - the horses! Roughly 1,000 are trucked in from all corners of the country by the official horse carrier of the event, Johnson Horse Transportation. **HGD**



PHOTO BY JUMP MEDIA

Alexandra Carlton earned her first grand prix win riding Cardiograaf in the \$30,000 Mount Equinox Grand Prix, presented by Hampton Inn & Suites Manchester.



PHOTO BY JUMP MEDIA

Jennifer Kocher and Carlos claimed the \$30,000 Battenkill Grand Prix, presented by The Equinox Resort.



PHOTO BY JUMP MEDIA

A cherished tricolor from the Vermont Summer Festival.



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Coveted prizes in the weekly leadline competition were presented by Stonewall Ponies and Emily Elek.