

*A Perfect Weekend* at the

# Vermont Summer Festival

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Story By Lindsay Brock

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*The Vermont Summer Festival, nestled just south of the Green Mountain National Forest in the hills of East Dorset, VT, welcomes accomplished riders from all corners of the world for six weeks of show jumping, hunter, and equitation competition each summer. This year, the beloved event returns from June 30 through August 9, to offer both a family-friendly horse show environment, and the ideal spot for any weekend getaway.*

*The views are unbeatable, the after-hours options are endless, and the food is second-to-none. Here's our guide to the perfect equine-inspired weekend at the Vermont Summer Festival.*



Cassie Orpen and Cadillac FS Z competing at the Vermont Summer Festival.  
By Jump Media



**Kevin McCarthy and Catch A Star HSS** on their way to one of two grand prix victories in 2019.  
By Andrew Ryback Photography



Competition spans all ages and levels at the Vermont Summer Festival.  
Leadline by Jump Media

### ***Dine...(or Shop!)***

Foodies will delight in all that the Vermont Summer Festival has to offer the pallet. And, you don't have to go far. The Mane Event food truck, owned by Carrie and Peter Stark, is the gathering place for hungry horse show visitors and offers something for everyone. From scrumptious salads on the go to seaside-inspired lobster rolls, there's no getting tired of this horse show food.

Dining while in the Manchester area for the Vermont Summer Festival is an experience all its own with restaurants spanning the gamut of food options. Whether it's a gourmet wiener schnitzel or a traditional Mexican burrito you crave, it's a food-lover's paradise.

If you're dining out, don't miss these three rider favorites:

#### ***Depot 62 Bistro & Café***

Try classic wood-fired pizza and Mediterranean fare before browsing an incredible selection of one-of-a-kind home furnishings for sale.

#### ***The Silver Fork***

Be sure to make a reservation for this hidden gem! The chef's fresh, international-inspired menu is well worth the wait.

#### ***Chantecleer Restaurant***

Just a two-mile drive south of the horse show, Chantecleer is a star of the local dining scene, Chantecleer is located in a remodeled dairy barn and offers fine American cuisine with European sophistication.

Aside from extensive dining options, Manchester's biggest claim to fame is the Manchester Designer Outlets (MDO), which is considered a shopping getaway for locals and visitors alike. Located in the heart of Manchester, the stores included within MDO offer boutique shopping opportunities from more than 40 brands, including iconic names like Armani, Brooks Brothers, Theory, and Vineyard Vines. This summer marks the 15th consecutive year that MDO has played a pivotal role in the Vermont Summer Festival as a valued supporter and sponsor of the \$10,000 Open Welcome Stake Series throughout the season.

### ***Don't Miss the Ringside Action***

The Vermont Summer Festival hosts many of North America's top hunter and show jumping competitors during its six-week run. Highlighted by a weekly \$30,000 Grand Prix, and \$5,000 Hunter Derby, the competition is fierce, but there's no need to scour the order of go to find the rider you're rooting for. We've done the research for you! Keep an eye on these four competitors this season.

#### ***Kevin McCarthy***

Hailing from Ireland, but now based in Cazenovia, NY, Kevin McCarthy took the 2019 Vermont Summer Festival by storm. Following the conclusion of the final grand prix, McCarthy masterfully clinched a \$5,000 bonus as winner of the World Equestrian Center (WEC) Leading Open Jumper Awards.

McCarthy consistently topped the leaderboard all summer, notably winning four out of the six Manchester Designer Outlets Open Welcome Stakes classes and capturing two grand prix victories. This year, watch for McCarthy paired and his top horse, Catch A Star HSS, a nine-year-old Swedish Warmblood mare (Sheraton x Amulet).

#### ***Cassandra Orpen***

Cassandra "Cassie" Orpen is a native of Westport, CT, and trains for the Fairfield County Hunt Club where she also got her start in the saddle.

A successful competitor in both the hunter and jumper rings at the Vermont Summer Festival, Cassie has collected many top finishes in the grand prix ranks as well as in the weekly \$5,000 3'3" NEHJA Hunter Derby, presented by Eastern Hay. After welcoming her second child this spring, Cassie is primed to collect more wins this summer.

#### ***Morgan Ward***

Morgan Ward is a young professional working out of her family's Willow Brook Farm based in Whitehouse, NJ, and a familiar face in the \$5,000 NEHJA Hunter Derby winner circle. After first sitting atop a horse at age two, she was in the show ring just two short years later.

In 2019, Ward went two-for-two during the first two weeks of the season, winning both NEHJA Hunter Derbies. The first came for her partner of two years, Cypress, a 12-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding by Quidam de Revel. The following week's blue ribbon was earned by catch ride Carpedi, a seven-year-old Holsteiner gelding. Morgan has her sights set on even more hunter glory this summer.

### **Amy Momrow**

Amy Momrow grew up riding under the tutelage of trainers Monty Kelly and his mother, Sandy, of Stepping Stone Farm based near Albany, NY. Amy has become an integral part of the Stepping Stone Farm team, now serving as a fellow trainer.

Amy made a name for herself in the grand prix ring with top placings at prestigious horse shows spanning from Florida to Vermont. However, Amy also demonstrates impressive versatility by excelling in the hunter ring. In 2019, she and her equine partner, G. Eleven, an eight-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding, won two NEHJA Hunter Derbies.

### **Stay The Night In Dorset**

A short drive west from the Vermont Summer Festival, the town of Dorset is home to a trio of classic Vermont establishments.

The Dorset Inn, named "The Best of the Oldest" by Yankee Magazine, has thrived for two centuries. "For more than 220 years, The Dorset Inn has offered traditional New England hospitality with gracious lodging, gourmet dining, fine wine, and great spirits, which are all trademarks of a quintessential Vermont experience," said Lauren Bryant, owner of the Dorset Inn. "All of us at the Dorset Inn and its sister properties love food and enjoy sharing it within warm and inviting properties."

One of the Dorset Inn's sister properties is Dorset Rising. Located a few short steps from the Inn, it's the perfect quick stop for a morning coffee and pastry before heading to the horse show. Rounding out the trio of offerings from the Dorset Inn, Barrows House is a can't-miss for a weekend getaway. Have a seat on the iconic front porch or by the cozy backyard fire before enjoying dinner in the restaurant or out on the patio.

*One of North America's most cherished horse shows, the Vermont Summer Festival is so much more than a six-week show. Even though a weekend may not be enough, use this guide to get the most of your Vermont Summer Festival experience. Want to find out more about the Vermont Summer Festival?*

**Visit [www.vt-summerfestival.com](http://www.vt-summerfestival.com),  
or find it on Facebook and Instagram.**

Right, top to bottom:

**The historic Dorset Inn**, located a short drive from the Vermont Summer Festival grounds.

Photo courtesy of Dorset Inn

**Morgan Ward and Carpedi**, pictured with owner Teddy Demetriou, after winning the \$5,000 NEHJA Hunter Derby, presented by Eastern Hay. By Andrew Ryback Photography

**Manchester Designer Outlets**,

The ever-popular Manchester Designer Outlets. Photo courtesy of MDO

