

WEDDINGS 2023

# VENUES FOR HORSE LOVERS

From national equestrian landmarks to picturesque barns, there are choices you may not have considered.

BY JILL NOVOTNY

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**PICTURE EXCHANGING VOWS** surrounded by dressage horses or polo ponies or celebrating in a grand arena amid meticulously groomed grounds and stables. Equestrian centers epitomize elegance by blending architectural grandeur with the rich legacy of history and excellence. These venues boast top-quality facilities and attention to detail, ensuring a beautiful backdrop for both intimate gatherings and grand festivities.

Whether it be the regal splendor of equestrian landmarks or the rustic charm of a barn, these venues can provide a canvas on which you can paint the event of your dreams. Embrace the grandeur of horses and the timeless allure of these unique locations, allowing the celebration to resonate with grace, romance, and the enduring enchantment of the equestrian world.



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## WORLD EQUESTRIAN CENTER

Featuring the luxurious Equestrian Hotel.

**S**ituated on 378 acres, the World Equestrian Center in Ocala, Florida, offers an awe-inspiring setting for a truly unique destination wedding. Surrounded by lush forests and picturesque landscapes, the venue features a captivating non-denominational chapel adorned with locally crafted stained-glass windows, Swarovski crystal chandeliers and elegant pointed arches. Just a short horse-drawn carriage ride away, guests can enjoy the luxurious accommodations of The Equestrian Hotel—a full-service hotel boasting 248 rooms, seven restaurants, a spa, a pool and high-end retail experiences.

A hidden gem within The Equestrian Hotel is the enchanting Rose Garden—an intimate and open-air venue ideal for receptions. Nestled amidst tall hedges, delicate rose bushes, and vibrant flower gardens, the space exudes an air of tranquility. When in full bloom,

the garden becomes a breathtaking sight, with countless pink rose petals. Throughout the sprawling property, guests can stroll along walking trails beneath majestic oak trees draped in Spanish moss while equestrian competitors of Olympic caliber can be seen mingling with guests. The World Equestrian Center hosts weekly equestrian competitions that draw competitors from around the globe. You don't have to know anything about horses to enjoy the tradition and pageantry.

Additionally, the patio of Stirrups, the hotel's fine dining restaurant, provides a stunning vantage point overlooking the Grand Arena, making it a picturesque location for wedding receptions. The Saturday night Grand Prix is a prestigious event and an extraordinary spectacle. With up to 7,500 spectators in attendance, the Grand Arena becomes the stage for majestic equine athletes competing for substantial prizes, often exceeding \$100,000.