

USET Foundation's 'Equestrians in Paris' West Coast Benefit Gala a Rousing Success

THE UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN TEAM (USET) Foundation's "Equestrians in Paris" benefit event raised \$475,000 to support the U.S. equestrian teams competing at the upcoming 2024 summer Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Held on Friday, March 22, 2024, at the Del Mar Fairgrounds in Del Mar, California, the event was hosted by 2023 Miss California Sabrina Lewis, and benefit co-chairs Sean Caddell, Katherine Annie Finch, Laura Maloney, Patricia Mayer, and Francie Nilforushan, as well as several athlete host committee and benefit committee members. More than 500 attended and there was live music and equestrian performances, both presented by Halter Ego.

"The event was a spectacular success, and I'm so humbled by all of our donors and supporters for their role in helping our athletes achieve their Olympic and Paralympic dreams," said Lisa Munro, Director of Development, USET Foundation. "The generosity of our community is crucial, especially in an Olympic and Paralympic year. Unlike in some other countries, U.S. equestrian sport does not receive government funding. As a result, our athletes rely solely on the support of US Equestrian (USEF) and funds raised from the USET Foundation. It's truly a team effort."

"This evening was particularly special because we were able to celebrate our avid community of West Coast-based supporters and equestrians," Munro continued. "This community plays an integral role in furthering the USET Foundation's mission, so I'm delighted with the outcome of 'Equestrians in Paris'. It will bolster the support we can provide our athletes as we cheer them on at this summer's Olympic and Paralympic Games."

In the highly anticipated silent auction, a month of residential training with U.S. Dressage Chef d'Equipe Christine Traurig and Sabine Schut-Kery in California attracted a bidding frenzy.

The private jet roundtrip flights donated to the silent auction by Sky Partners were another hot item, with

the company deciding to offer a second identical lot on the spur of the moment. There was also much interest in the private dinner cooked by Guenter Seidel with wine served by Traurig.

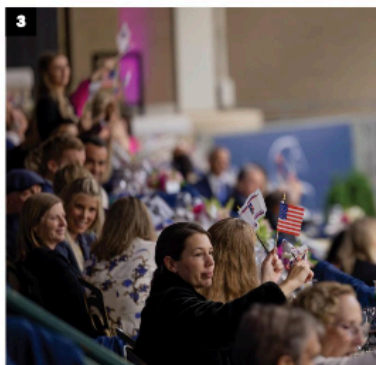
Guests were awed by spectacular demonstrations from several top athletes including U.S. Olympic dressage medalists Seidel, Steffen Peters, and Schut-Kery, as well as U.S. FEI Dressage World Equestrian Games bronze medalist Kathleen Raine and a liberty performance to the national anthem. The dressage riders brought with them a host of experience, in the shape of a dazzling 20 medals between them for the United States from Olympic Games, World Equestrian Games, and Pan American Games.

Olympic show jumping team gold medalist Will Simpson also led a unique performance with his daughter and North American Youth Championships show jumping gold and bronze medalist Sophie Simpson-Leckie. Their tandem jumping performance was a highlight of their demonstration.

Honorary chairman Mark Wahlberg donated a VIP experience at the premiere of one of his upcoming films. Other lots included an Olympic VIP package experience with gold level dressage hospitality passes and a private course walk and VIP tickets to the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event, among others.

"With Paris 2024 just months away, the USET Foundation would like to emphasize our appreciation to our devoted donors and supporters who have contributed greatly to the thriving West Coast equestrian community," concluded Munro. "In addition to all of those in attendance, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our benefit chairmen and committee members, as well as our sponsors. Thanks to the unparalleled collective effort, our U.S. equestrian teams will have a very exciting and momentous year ahead." 🐾

For additional information or to support the USET Foundation and the U.S. equestrian athletes headed to the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, visit www.uset.org/donate



1 Liberty demonstration
2 Olympic show jumping team gold medalist Will Simpson and daughter Sophie Simpson-Leckie
3 Some of the 500+ attendees waving USA flags • **4** U.S. Dressage Chef d'Equipe Christine Traurig and U.S. Olympic medalist Guenter Seidel were part of the silent auction • **5** U.S. Olympic medalist Steffen Peters and WEG competitor Kathleen Raine were part of a dressage quadrille demonstration

