

VENDORspotlight



Equis Boutique

If you're going to have goals, they might as well be big ones, believes Cesar Hirsch. Along with his business partner Elena Couttenye, Hirsch cofounded the brand new Equis Boutique, which opened for business in early January at the 2015 Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, Florida.

Hirsch and Couttenye are both FEI stewards/judges with a lifetime's experience in the horse industry. Natives of Venezuela, they began their careers in their home country, but various horse pursuits brought both to South Florida, where they now live with their families. There aren't many FEI stewards who dive headfirst into the retail business, but for Hirsch and Couttenye offering a very specific group of brands to the discerning hunter/jumper set is a thrill, an exciting new project that is already in motion. With a second boutique open at the HITS Ocala winter circuit, and plans for a very busy 2015, Equis Boutique is off to a running start.

Horse & Style: Where, when and how did Equis Boutique start?

Cesar Hirsch: The short story: Elena and I have known each other since freshman year in law school. She became a lawyer, and I went on in business. I've been involved with the sport all my life, my grandfather rode, my father rode, and I rode. Later I started judging and stewarding, and Elena did also. I'm an FEI steward and the president of the appeals council of the World Cup Final in Las Vegas.

Elena is an FEI Delegate Judge, and was the secretary general for the Venezuelan Equestrian Federation.

My family owned tack shops in Virginia in the 80s. We had five retail shops and were also the Miller's distributors in Venezuela. I had the opportunity to be distributor for Kentucky Horsewear boots when they were new to the US.

Elena and I were sitting down over ice cream one day and I said Elena, we have a good opportunity here. We can do something with this, something simple. That "simple" only lasted about two days.

Elena Couttenye: The idea was to have a very small booth at the show for Kentucky boots. But quickly, it became more brands, and then a whole vendor space at WEF. Then if we have one vendor boutique, we thought we should have two, one at WEF and one at Ocala. Equis Boutique quickly became a whole store, that carries the carefully selected brands of Manfredi, Anna Scarpati, Kingsland, Parlanti, of course Kentucky, and a deep selection of hard to find bits sourced from Europe.

H&S: Why did you choose to open a store that carries a limited group of brands?

CH: We're not looking to be a whole tack shop selling from halters, to brushes, to jackets. We want to be very specific. It's a different concept, and that's the concept we designed. Our focus is basically on carrying premium brands and having the whole lineup of that brand available, and to have a direct connection to the manufacturer. Manfredi, we'll have the whole lineup, from belts, to jackets to shirts. With Anna Scarpati, we offer the whole line. Same with Kingsland.

H&S: How will Equis Boutique be represented at Ocala?

CH: We have a new concept for the mobile store. At WEF, we have a space on vendor row that we designed, but for the other shows we have a very nice concept called SpaceMax. It's like a container, but it