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THE HAMPTON CLASSIC

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THESE TWO FAVORITE

SHOWS

IN
THE
CITY



Two of *Equestrian Living's* favorite events share the same unique qualities. They are both in the top tier of America's finest and most competitive events. And they are both located in special places that can easily turn a few-days' visit to the show into a great family vacation. Late summer's **HAMPTON CLASSIC** is surrounded by beaches, villages, and restaurants that make the Hamptons one of the country's most famous celebrity playgrounds. A month later, the **WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW** is staged in the center of the nation's capital, within walking distance of the endless attractions the city has to offer.



WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW

BY EMILY HOLOWCZAK

The Verizon Center in Washington, D.C., is home to one of the most diverse and exciting events in the world of equestrian sport. The Washington International Horse Show (WIHS) draws crowds from all over the globe, including non-equestrians, political figures, celebrities, and even curious passers-by on the street. From Kid's Day and Barn Night to world cup showjumping and special events for military families, the show truly has something for everyone.

The WIHS is held every October and features over 500 of the top riders and horses from around the world, including Olympic veterans. The event hosts numerous high-caliber classes, including the \$130,000 Longines FEI World Cup Jumping, Puissance, and the WIHS Equitation Finals. Additionally, one of the most exciting events of the show is the ever-popular Shetland Pony Steeplechase Championship Series. *The Washington Post* calls the race, D.C.'s newest and cutest sport.



YOU CAN WATCH GRAND-PRIX SHOW JUMPING AND TOUR THE WHITE HOUSE ON THE SAME DAY.

At the WIHS, the plentiful daytime horse-show activities are equally met by glamorous parties and VIP events in the evenings. These include the Buck Breast Cancer Benefit, the Armed Forces Reception, and the President's Cup Party. The parties are hosted by the PwC Club on the sky-box level of the Verizon Center. Spectators can easily socialize with friends while enjoying the sophisticated hospitality in which the WIHS prides itself.

When a high-quality horse show meets a bustling city such as Washington, D.C., the options for activities outside the show ring are endless. The city's rich history and political significance offer a unique backdrop for the four-star event. Where else can you witness grand-prix show jumping firsthand, and tour the White House in the same afternoon? Over the years, the WIHS has become an integral piece of Washington culture, and the show continues to entertain and inspire people within the city each year. **EO** PAGE 113



Clockwise, from top left: Verizon Center arena; Hunter Holloway victory gallop; Kama Godek and De Grande; Lauren Hough and Ohala; Olympic team recognition; Karen Godek in the city; equitation top three; Daily and Spanky high five; Kathryn Tyree; Beezie Madden and Quister.

Before becoming president of the Washington International Horse Show, Vicki Lowell spent 15 years at Discovery Communications, where she led brand strategy and creative development for Animal Planet and TLC. On the equestrian-sport content side, Lowell helped produce the Animal Planet series Horse Power Road to the Maclay, the Animal Planet sport-horse series Jockeys, and two FEI World Cup Finals.

Earlier this year, she joined the United States Equestrian Federation (US Equestrian) as chief marketing and content officer. She will also continue in her volunteer role as president of the Washington International Horse Show, which she has helped build into one of the most popular and entertaining horse shows in the U.S. Lowell also competes successfully as an adult amateur jumper rider.

How long have you been running this show?

I've been president for four years, and before that I was the secretary, and before that I was on the board. So, I've been involved with it for 8 or 10 years.

Is this similar to what the show in Madison Square Garden used to be like—with all the horses out on the street?

It's such a surprise for everybody in the city. People come up out of the Metro and they cross the street and their faces are just amazed. To be able to touch and pet and experience the horses firsthand in the city is just amazing. People are really friendly and welcoming. I think the exhibitors really enjoy the opportunity to interact with people that aren't around horses all the time.

Do you get a different audience that would never be exposed to horses in the city?

Yes, absolutely! On Saturday during the day session, we open up for free for kids and families to come in. We shut down one more street and we have free pony rides, grooming stations, and a horseless jumping opportunity during Kids Day.

MEET THE PRESIDENT, VICKI LOWELL



There's face painting and horseshoe painting. We really want to make it accessible for everyone to come in and be able to experience the horses. There are so many people that you come across who are experiencing this for the first time, and people that are coming back to the show year after year because of their first experience at Washington. There are so few horse shows where the horses come to the people. They come to where the people are. That's what we do here. The reception is amazing, whether it's the local media, or the security in the building, or kids walking down the street on their way to school. Everybody loves the horses.

We have a military ticket program that was created in 2010 and is returning in 2017. The 2016 first responders ticket program will also be back this year, so that reaches out to a lot of people who may not have otherwise known about the show.

Who are the beneficiaries?

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) supports family members of fallen heroes. When someone is lost in the military, they provide support services for the family. We have a jump called Jump Clear for TAPS. It's an American flag jump, and it will be the last jump in the speed class on Friday night. Every time that jump is cleared, \$1,000 will go to TAPS.

Capital Breast Care Center is another beneficiary of WIHS. It is a local organization that provides

mammograms and care to people who cannot afford to receive services. We have a money-raising pink breast cancer ribbon jump in Thursday's open jumper class, along with a host of parties that benefit the U.S. Equestrian Team Foundation and our other respective charities.

Is there pressure to move the show out of the city, like there was in New York?

No, the city actually really embraces the horse show. Events D.C. is a big sponsor and partner of ours, and the Verizon Center loves having us. So, we plan to be here for a while. We continue to bring in more sponsors, and our entries are up. It's a lot of work for everybody involved, whether you're an exhibitor or on the board or you do PR. We really try to make it positive and as enjoyable and as much of a celebration and a party in the city as we can. It's the end of a long year of competing, and we just really try to make it as wonderful as we can for people.

Is part of the mission to promote the sport for a younger group to keep the sport vital?

Yes. Barn night is our big night. We do group ticket sales to local barns, and they compete for prizes. They might compete for a golf cart or for a clinic from one of the top riders. This year's clinician will be an exciting announcement. We also have a junior committee of about 20 local kids, and it's a very competitive process to become a member. We put

them to work, they volunteer all week long, and they love it!

What are fun things to do while you're here?

We're just blocks from the Capitol, and the National Portrait Gallery and the Spy Museum are right across the street. Everybody loves the Spy Museum, especially the kids. I personally love the Air and Space Museum. A lot of people take a tour of the White House while they're here.

My favorite hotel is the Monaco because it is so close to the show and it's pet friendly. Other hotel suggestions are the Hay Adams. It is amazing if you want an authentic D.C. experience overlooking the White House. The Four Seasons is first class all the way if you want to be in Georgetown, which is another one of my favorite areas in D.C. If you are looking to stay outside of the city in horse country, you can't beat Salamander Resort.

Some favorite bars are the Graham Rooftop Bar in Georgetown, Barmini, by José Andrés, if you can get in, and Oyamel. My top restaurants include Zaytinya, Cafe Milano, Fiola Mare, Le Diplomate, Tail Up Goat, Jettie's or Luke's Lobster for a sandwich, and Carmine's. As far as shopping, a beautiful, sophisticated open mall with Hermès and Dior has opened a couple blocks from the Verizon Center.

What would you say makes the show special?

I think what's really special about this show is that there's something for everyone. From the exhibitor's standpoint, we have everything from small ponies to regional competitors, children's and adults' events, to FEI top international riders. For the spectator, we have everything from a free opportunity to come in and experience pony rides and get into the Verizon Center to watch a horse show for the first time, or to enjoy the highest-level VIP experience that you can have at a horse show in the U.S. I feel that "something for everyone" is what we're trying to be, that we want to put on a show that's not just a horse show. It's a show!



Clockwise, from top left: Hotel Monaco; the National Portrait Gallery; Kids visit horses in the city; Le Diplomate restaurant; Barmini by José Andrés; Cafe Milano; the Four Seasons, Georgetown; Air and Space Museum; the Washington Monument.

