

The VERMONT Summer Festival Charms the Northeast

By Lindsay Brock of Jump Media



Christian Coyle and Dolce Vita
KDW Z by Jump Media

The Vermont Summer Festival has enchanted show jumping athletes in the Northeast over the last two decades and become one of the most popular summer destinations in North America.

Nestled along the Battenkill River just south of the Green Mountain National Forest, picturesque views surround the competition grounds at Harold Beebe Farm, home to the six-week circuit each July and August. The series attracts riders from all corners of the United States for dynamic competition spanning the levels from cross-rails to weekly grand prix events.

Take a look at three reasons to visit the Vermont Summer Festival, running July 2 through August 11, 2019, at Harold Beebe Farm in East Dorset, VT, this summer:

1. The Sport

The Vermont Summer Festival serves as the perfect environment for tomorrow's stars to be born with young horses and up-and-coming riders often pocketing the first big wins of their careers at Vermont Summer Festival. The jumps are big, the riders are hungry for a win, and the sport will not disappoint!

"There is something about Vermont," said Matthew Metell, a consistent grand prix winner at the Vermont Summer Festival who considers the event his favorite horse show not only for the competition, but also for the local entertainment options, which include his favorite restaurant The Sliver Fork. "We have good luck here, and honestly, what's not to like?"

Each week, the \$10,000 Open Jumper Welcome is held on Thursday, and a \$30,000 Grand Prix takes place the first five Saturdays of the six-week circuit, before the season culminates with the \$50,000 Grand Prix on Saturday, August 10, during the final weekend. Additionally, jumper riders can celebrate the return of a \$10,000 Open Jumper Rider Bonus, presented by World Equestrian Center, to be divided among the top-scoring open jumper competitors during the six-week circuit. Hunters will be showcased in the \$5,000 3'3" NEHJA Hunter Derbies each Thursday, highlighted by a \$15,000 finale on Thursday, August 8.

When you go: Make it a Saturday outing! Purchase a ticket for one of the weekly grand prix events to benefit local Vermont charities and join the conversation by using tags #VSF2018 and #summerinvermont on social media.



Photo by Jump Media

2. Vermont Living

When Vermont Summer Festival exhibitors are asked what they love most about spending their summers in the mountains of Manchester, VT, their first response is almost always, 'the views!'

While the location seems perfect, the process of finding Harold Beebe Farm stemmed from good business rather than a knack for finding panoramic views. A quarter of a century ago, the Vermont Summer Festival sprouted up as a tiny horse show in the parking lot of a popular ski resort in Killington, VT. The show felt like a carnival with everything from footing to bathrooms trucked in and attracted rider from neighboring states in the Northeastern U.S., and South-eastern Canadian provinces.



Jennifer Jones and Carlos
by Jump Media



David Jennings and Cesar de Lison Z
by Andrew Ryback Photography



Photo by Jump Media

The Vermont Summer Festival By The Numbers

- When it started, the Vermont Summer festival included 200 stalls and two competition rings.
- Today, the event has grown to nearly 1,400 stalls and five competition rings.
- Each summer, the Vermont Summer Festival hires 20 seasonal crew members to impeccably maintain the grounds and show rings.
- There are 750 tons of sand that are mixed with fiber to create the footing. The fiber arrives in roughly 15 square bales totaling 80,000 lbs. in weight.
- Each summer, Eastern Hay and Grain, the official feed supplier of the Vermont Summer Festival, delivers 1,500 bales of hay (supplemented by other deliveries) and 1,000 bags of Purina grain for the hundreds of hungry horses that come and go each summer.
- The last delivery in the preparation of each season is the delivery of the stars of the show - the horses! Roughly 1,000 are trucked in from all corners of the country by the official horse carrier of the event, Johnson Horse Transportation.

After some location hopping, the Vermont Summer Festival settled in East Dorset to better serve the largest concentration of their exhibitors, which existed in the Manchester area. It was then that the Vermont Summer Festival as we know it today was born and began attracting competitors from far and wide.

"I am proud to say that after 25 years, we are still here and continuing to grow and thrive," said Vermont Summer Festival Show Manager John Ammerman, who saw the show celebrate its 25-year anniversary last year. "The show has experienced quite the evolution, but myself and my staff have poured countless hours into the current location and could not be more proud of what it has become."

When you go: Dine out! Take a stroll through the streets of Manchester, VT, and indulge in the restaurant options. Also, be sure to pick up a Manchester Designer Outlets coupon book in the horse show office for even better deals! Finally, stay the night! From the historic charm of The Dorset Inn and Barrows House to the luxury of the Kimpton Taconic and Equinox Resort, you will want to stay for all six weeks.

3. Points Palooza

Any rider with year-end finals on their radar can accomplish their qualifying goals at the Vermont Summer Festival. Qualifying opportunities span the disciplines, but the most exciting offerings are served up to hunter and equitation riders by way of a World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) week and "Equitation Tuesdays."

Tuesdays at Vermont see a flurry of young riders and national champion hopefuls focused on qualifying and preparing for year-end finals. Their hope is that the summer competition will land them spots in prestigious year-end equitation finals. The "Equitation Tuesday" schedule, which is held in addition to equitation offerings taking place each week, features classes ranging from the THIS Children's Medal to USEF National Hunter Seat Medal and ASPCA Maclay Horsemanship qualifiers. The idea for "Equitation Tuesdays" was introduced in 2013 and they have quickly become known among equitation riders and trainers as an "Equitation Bootcamp."

Some of the country's top hunter competitors make the pilgrimage to the Vermont Summer Festival for WCHR week, held annually during the third week of competition. After gaining points at member horse shows across the nation, including the Vermont Summer Festival, the top 10 nationally-ranked riders and top six regionally-ranked riders in each category go head-to-head in the WCHR Finals at the Capital Challenge Horse Show in Upper Marlboro, MD.

When you go: **Watch hunter riders cash in during the \$15,000 NEHJA Hunter Derby on Thursday, August 8.**

Want to find out more about the Vermont Summer Festival? Visit www.vt-summerfestival.com, or find it on Facebook and Instagram.