

# ELITE EQUESTRIAN®

*Celebrating The Equestrian Lifestyle*

Volume 19 Issue 5  
Complimentary



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**STEFFEN  
PETERS**  
*Exclusive  
Interview*

Washington International • Dressage at Devon • American Gold Cup

**TRAVELING**  
*With Your Horse*

**FALL FASHION**  
*Show Coats*

**BUILDING**  
*A Healthy Barn*

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# ELITE EQUESTRIAN®

Celebrating The Equestrian Lifestyle



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Fashion · Home · Art

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Georgina Bloomberg and Paola 233 competing at the Washington International Horse Show, photo by Jump Media

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# Things Happen **FAST** *On Course* at the *Washington International Horse Show*

Presented by MARS EQUESTRIAN

*By Molly Sorge, Jump Media*

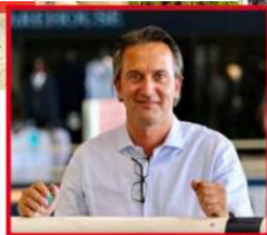


Georgina Bloomberg and Paoli 233  
Photo by Shawn McMillen

In the span of just 48 hours, the Capital One Arena, a 20,000-seat multi-purpose sports and entertainment venue usually home to the NBA's Washington Wizards, the NHL's Washington Capitals, the WNBA's Washington Mystics, and the NCAA's Georgetown Hoyas men's basketball team, is transformed into the stage for one of the country's best horse shows. For a week in October, the famed arena plays host to more than 500 of the country's best horses as they compete at the Washington International Horse Show (WIHS), presented by MARS EQUESTRIAN™.



Capital One Arena  
Photo by Rex Reed



Olaf Petersen Jr.  
Photo by Lindsay Long

Olaf Petersen, Jr., of Germany, is returning as jumper course designer this year for the show's 61st anniversary from October 22 through 27 in the heart of Washington, D.C. "I like the location, right in the city," he said. "The atmosphere inside is always unique; it's always nice for the fans to be so close to the horses. There's a good crowd there at Washington."

Just two days before the horses move in, there's a Washington Capitals ice hockey game, so the first step toward preparing the ring is melting the ice, which takes place overnight with the help of climate-controlled flooring. Next, walls and signage are installed around the ring before 72 dump trucks arrive one at a time to deliver the GGT blend footing. Four loaders spread 1,400 tons of lime sand before 10,000 pounds of footing fiber are mixed into the sand by tractors and drags.

By 7:00 a.m. on Tuesday of show week, the ring is ready for competition, and Petersen gets his first look at the horses and riders that will compete in the jumper divisions through the week. For the first day of jumper competition, he builds a welcoming track. He also takes into account the limited space available indoors for riders to warm up. "When we start the first day, I would like the possibility for the horses and riders to get some rhythm, because it's difficult for them to do that in the warm-up ring," he said. "So the first two or three jumps should always have an easy approach and be off a nice gallop."

As the week progresses, Petersen gradually increases the difficulty of the courses, culminating in the \$136,300 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Washington, for the President's Cup. He takes into account the long, narrow shape of the ring at WIHS, which is 85' wide and 255' long.

"In that ring, you can't always have a jump and then turn. You usually have two or three jumps in a row on a longer line," Petersen said. "I try to use some bending lines, but also make it as fluid as possible for the rider. I like free, forward, galloping courses because that's the nature of our sport. Ideally, the riders will come to me at the end of the week and say, 'My horse jumped better and better every day.' That's what I'm looking for."

Callan Solem has shown at WIHS, including in the \$136,300 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Qualifier, for many years and has specific exercises she uses to prepare her jumpers for the courses in that ring. "I do some gymnastics with horses that are headed to Washington, because that ring is narrow but long," she said. "There might be a sequence of three or four jumps across a diagonal or long side, and then a quick turn and another few jumps in a row. Gymnastic exercises are helpful to prepare for that."

At the show, Solem is mindful of making sure that her horses get a lot of time out of their stalls, just hand-walking on the sidewalks of the streets in D.C., so they stay loose and relaxed. "I also do a lot of stretching with the horses before I get on them, because there's not a lot of space in the warm-up to get them loosened up," she said. "I stretch their legs and do neck stretches with carrots." All the riders showing at WIHS also get a chance to work their horses in the competition ring during the overnight hours, keeping them limber.

*“Any good course designer makes the best use of the ring that they have to work with.”*

Both Solem and fellow grand prix rider Alison Firestone, who has been riding at WIHS since she was on pony hunters, noted that the size of the ring at an indoor show like WIHS mean that once on course, there's less space between jumps to regroup. "You definitely expect things to come up faster than they normally do," said Firestone. "On a big, outdoor field, you could have 16 or 17 strides around the turns, but the most strides you have around a turn at Washington is probably about eight."



Beezie Madden and Breittling LS  
Photo by Jump Media



McLain Ward and Queen Jane  
Photo by Shawn McMillen



Allison Robitaille and Vio Volo  
Photo by Jump Media



Catherine Tyree and Bokai  
Photo by Jump Media

Solem makes sure she's very conscious of riding well on the landing of the jumps at WIHS. "I try to make sure I get the horse back in balance and me back in position as soon as possible after landing, because the back side of the jump is very close to the front side of the next jump there!" she said.

"Any good course designer makes the best use of the ring that they have to work with," said Firestone. "Luckily, the horse show does a great job of picking great course designers like Alan Wade and Olaf Petersen, Jr.; those guys are at the top of their game and certainly have a feel for whatever ring they're designing in.

"WIHS is such a great show, and the atmosphere is part of what makes it so special," Firestone continued. "I love having such an enthusiastic crowd."

## DON'T-MISS Days at WIHS

- Thursday, October 24 – Barn Night, presented by the Lindsay Maxwell Charitable Fund, including prizes presented by BarnManager, The Clothes Horse, Springtime Inc, US Equestrian and United Metro Golf Carts as well as Barn Night Trick or Treat, sponsored by SNICKERS®.
- Friday, October 25 - The breathtaking \$25,000 Land Rover Puisseance (high jump)
- Friday, October 25 - \$50,000 Speed Final on Military Night, presented by Caterpillar, Inc., featuring the Jump For TAPS in support of Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, the Official WIHS Military Charity
- Friday, October 25 – Saturday, October 26 - The Lindsay Maxwell Charitable Fund WIHS Equitation Finals featuring the country's top junior riders
- Saturday, October 26 – Kids' Day, a free, fun, family-friendly event where kids can enjoy pony rides and learn about horses
- Saturday, October 26 - \$136,300 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Washington, for the President's Cup
- Plus entertaining exhibitions, including the WIHS Shetland Pony Steeplechase Championship Series presented by Charles Owen, community activities, the WIHS Silent Auction, and shopping in more than 50 specialty boutiques