



Thermal & Wellington: HIGH STYLE, HIGHER PURPOSE

# USET FOUNDATION

Bicoastal benefits raise \$1.7 million to fuel team spirit.

The USET Foundation's two recent benefit galas ahead of this summer's FEI World Championships in Aachen, Germany, raised nearly \$1.7 million in total. The dazzling events—at USET Foundation Trustee Rowan O'Riley's ROasis Riding Oasis in Wellington, Florida, and Desert International Horse Park in Thermal, California—raised funds to support U.S. horses, athletes, and teams preparing for and attending the championship at the iconic, world-class Aachen venue.

"Sustaining competitive excellence at the highest levels of equestrian sport requires hard work, unwavering commitment, and meaningful resources," said USET Foundation Chairman, President, and CEO Kristi Mitchem. "Unlike many other countries, the United States does not receive government funding for equestrian sport. Our teams rely largely on support from the USET Foundation and our dedicated donors. We are tremendously grateful for the generosity shown at this year's benefits."

The USET Foundation's prestigious annual awards were also presented during the gala. Akiko Yamazaki received the 2026 R. Bruce Duchossois Distinguished Trustee Award; the 2026 Whitney Stone Cup was awarded to U.S. jumping athlete Lillie Keenan, and eventing athlete Cassie Sanger was recognized with the 2026 Lionel Guerrand-Hermès Trophy.

The highlight of the West Coast event featured inspiring and emotional performances by California-based U.S. athletes, including FEI Jumping Nations Cup Youth Final Young Rider Team gold medalist Skylar Wireman, Olympic jumping silver medalist Karl Cook, triple Olympic dressage bronze medalist Guenter Seidel, USEF's 2025 Vaulters of the Year, Klynn Ghafouri, and Emi Yang, as well as noted American dressage athletes Steven Paulson and Tina Caldwell.

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PHOTOS: WELLINGTON-LIUKONE; THERMAL-MEGAN GISE MEDIA

1. Christian Simonson, Dr. David Da Silva, Adrienne Lyle, Katie Duerrhammer, Gerard Duerrhammer, Phylis Massey, Jill Briggs.
2. Philip Richter with Springsteen's guitar.
3. Katie Dinan and Georgina Bloomberg.
4. Emily Dehoff, Zayna Rizvi, Mimi Gochman.
5. Rowan O'Riley, Rebecca Hart, and Fernando Ortega.
6. Jerry Yang, Erin Nichols, Akiko Yamazaki, Diane Nichols.
7. Andre Dignelli, Joe Fargis.
8. Signe Ostby and Carly Vasan in Thermal, California.
9. Karl Cook at the West Coast event.

