



W I N T E R E Q U E S T R I A N F E S T I V A L

WEEKLY WIRE

WEEK 2 • JANUARY 15, 2025

NAYEL NASSAR SHINES
UNDER SATURDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

ROBERTO TERAN TAFUR
OWNS WEF 1

MEET WEF COVER ARTIST
WEATHERLY STROH



Nayel Nassar Checks Saturday Night Lights Victory Off His Bucket List



Nayel Nassar has cantered under the iconic International Areana bridge during 'Saturday Night Lights' on many occasions, but he has never left with a blue sash over his horse's shoulder. That all changed during WEF 1. Claiming his first-ever 'Saturday Night Lights' victory at Wellington International, the Egyptian Olympian topped the \$140,000 Southern Arches CSI3* Grand Prix riding ESI Ali.

"This one feels great," said a beaming Nassar after his win. "It's always special to win here, and I've come close a few times but never won under the lights. This was my horse's first time jumping at night, so I didn't know what to expect but he impressed us all."

Nassar's 10-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding by Stakkato Gold appeared to rise to the occasion with a ground-covering stride and heart-stopping turns. The Evergate Stables owned mount carried Nassar to a time of 37.35 seconds to pip

"...this venue is so special...especially 'Saturday Night Lights'—it's buzzing and I think great horses feel it and they rise to the occasion. They know that this isn't just another class."

six-time U.S. Olympian Mclain Ward by less than six tenths of a second. Michael & Wendy Smith's High Star Hero carried Ward to the runner-up finish. The 12-year-old Belgian Sport Horse gelding (Zazu x Darco) stopped the clock at 37.92 seconds.

After winning the \$30,000 CPKC National Grand Prix earlier in the afternoon, Colombia's Mark Bluman ended a banner day with a podium finish under the lights riding Concare PS for owner Norma Leticia Coello Garrido. Their time clocked in at 38.24 seconds.

Fourteen horses advanced to course designer Nick Granat's (USA) jump-off track, setting the stage for a fierce speed battle. The times got quicker and quicker as the final round progressed, but none could catch Nassar.

"In the jump-off, I try to set my pace early—once you put him in gear, you don't have to do a whole lot," said Nassar of the horse that was found for him as an eight year old by fellow Evergate Stables rider and former world no. 1 Harrie Smolders. "I came out of the ring and everyone told me he didn't look that fast, but he has an amazing way of covering the ground and a natural rhythm that once you set him off, you just have to

steer and avoid the jumps. If I can match everyone else's strides, he comes out a little bit quicker.

"I only caught part of Mclain's jump-off on the screen but he's always so fast," continued Nassar. "The eight to the last was a must and luckily we were able to get it done."

Most recently, Nassar and ESI Ali won a two-star grand prix this summer and have been taking their time climbing the ranks. "We've been bringing him along slowly," explained Nassar. "The horse always had so much quality but he did need some basics put into him, so we took our time to do that for the first year. Last season he started to step up into some 1.50m classes and was always competitive. He gave us the feeling that he

was ready for a bigger ask and that's what we gave him tonight."

When discussing what's next for ESI Ali, Nassar said, "He's 10 so this is the first year I start to ask them a little bit more. I try not to do too much with them as nine-year-olds and hope that it lengthens their career. We're listening to him telling us what he's ready for and we'll keep placing him where we think he can be successful."

Despite a wave of low temperatures covering south Florida, horse sport fans

turned out with enthusiasm for the first

'Saturday Night Lights' grand prix of the season at Wellington International. "I think this venue is so special in the way that you feel the community come out to support," said Nassar of the Wellington International experience. "Especially 'Saturday Night Lights'—it's buzzing and I think great horses feel it and they rise to the occasion. They know that this isn't just another class."

Continuing an evening of firsts for Evergate Stables, ESI Ali's groom Tames Pezzim was awarded a \$500 check for the Double H Farm Grooms Award in her debut appearance during 'Saturday Night Lights' at Wellington International. "We're nothing without the caretakers of these horses," concluded Nassar. "The entire team is really proud of this win."





Roberto Teran Tafur DOUBLES DOWN

Columbian Olympian Roberto Teran Tafur was seeing double during WEF 1 after winning the \$32,000 Adequan® CSI3* WEF Challenge Cup Round 1 aboard Iron Maiden, followed by the \$32,000 Dodd Technologies CSI3* 1.45m Speed riding Santana.

"When you're on, you're just on," said Teran Tafur after leaving the ring on Friday.

In the Adequan® CSI3* WEF Challenge Cup, he stepped out to challenge riders from 12 other nations. In the winning round format where the

top 12 riders from the first round advance to the tie-breaking jump-off, Teran was able to recover from a late rail over the opening course. He and his 10-year-old Zangersheide gelding (Clarimo x Kashmir van't Schuttershof) owned by Rocking Basilisk Farm returned for the jump-off in winning form to stop the clock at 41.63 seconds, more than two seconds faster than closest challenger Shane Sweetnam.

Teran got the ride on Iron Maiden at the end of winter season in 2024 and has already amassed nine international podium finishes.

"He has a great technique," said Teran of the horse that's headlining his up-and-coming string. "He's light

off the ground, sensitive and a true modern type but very rideable. He's a fantastic prospect for the big sport—he lets you put him exactly where it's optimal for him to jump clear.

When asked about what a win at WEF means to him, the Wellington resident of 24 years said, "Wellington is a special spot in the world during the winter. I'm looking forward to a five star win this year, hopefully."

Aboard Santana in the \$32,000 Dodd Technologies CSI3* 1.45m Speed, Teran Tafur jumped early in the order but could not be caught.

"It feels amazing," Teran said of going two-for-two in international competition so far. "To win here is super exciting and two wins here is fantastic. When you have a good week, usually it keeps going like that."

His time of 58.73 seconds remained unmatched, with Lillie Keenan (USA) just barely scoring second aboard Opium JW van de Moerhoeve TN, owned by Chansonette Farm. Egypt's Nayel Nassar claimed third with Dorado de Riverland, owned by Evergate Stables.

Teran has been piloting Santana, a 12-year-old Holsteiner gelding (Cascadello x Carthago) owned by



PHOTO © CASSIDY KLEIN/ESP



PHOTO © CASSIDY KLEIN/ESP

Rocking Basilisk Farm, since the winter of 2022. He's felt progression each year, recognizing the horse is prepared for a higher level of competition.

"He's always been very talented, but a little too full of energy," Teran said of Santana. "I think he's finally mentally

ready to be more consistent. He was always brave and good, but he had his ups and downs. Since the summer he's been very consistent."

Teran's plan for the season is to step Santana up into higher-level ranking classes, allowing him to space out his top

horses' schedules to produce the best possible results. So far, Santana understands the assignment.

With an eye on the 2026 FEI World Championship in Aachen, Germany, as his next major goal, Teran appreciates the competitive environment Wellington International provides him every year to prepare both himself and his horses for significant career opportunities.

"This circuit is really challenging for any horse and rider combination," he continued. "You take it one week at a time because all the best horses and riders in the world are here. That's why any win here is so meaningful. It's great preparation for anywhere in the world. After this you can go to any show in the world and be ready to compete, not just show up."



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WELLINGTON INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES THE WORLD

Some of the biggest names in horse sport gathered for an opening press conference to mark the opening of the 2025 Winter Equestrian Festival and Adequan® Global Dressage Festival, set to be the biggest and most notable events in the history of the prestigious Wellington International. The season will welcome returning Paris Olympians, including members of the U.S. silver medal show jumping team and gold medal dressage Paralympians, plus more than half of the world's top-20 ranked show jumping athletes.

The season at Wellington International will showcase top-tier dressage, show jumping competition for the span of 13 weeks, and in 2025, both disciplines will culminate in the newly introduced U.S. Equestrian Open, elevating the profile of equestrian sports leading up to LA 2028.

In attendance were Murray Kessler, CEO of Wellington International; Michael Stone, President of Wellington International; Thomas Baur, Adequan® Global Dressage Festival Sport Director; United States show jumping athlete Lillie Keenan; and German dressage U25 European Champion Felicitas Hendricks.

Those who have attended the Winter Equestrian Festival and Adequan® Global Dressage Festival over the years can attest to the incredible level of growth it's sustained, both in the physical property and in the caliber of competition. Having recently taken over the reins as CEO, Kessler is proud of the venue's accomplishments and what they bring to the table for 2025 and beyond.

"It's not just a horse show; it's a destination," Kessler stated. "I take a lot of pride in the fact that Wellington International is the anchor of this community," he continued. "[In 2024,] there was \$403.6 million of economic impact to Palm Beach County. We are the number one sport in Palm Beach County by far, and a lot of people count on us. We want this to be the very best

experience it can be. That starts with horse sport."

The final week of 2024 brought an unmatched slate of competitors to Wellington International, and the momentum seen that week is continuing to build as many riders worldwide choose to devote more time to the Winter Equestrian Festival each season.

"I think you'll see us raising our game here this year," Kessler continued. "We have a lot in store, but it all starts with the horses and I'm happy to say we anticipate that eight of the top 10 ranked riders in the world will come this season and 35 Olympic riders between the two venues."

Stone echoed the importance of building up the sport and attracting top talent, both for the good of the community and for every rider that competes in Wellington. "We're fundamentally about the sport and we want to make the sport as good as it possibly can be," he shared. "The best way of doing that is having the best athletes in the world. That drives the level for the U.S. athletes. It's the opportunity they have to compete against the very best in the world and show how good they are and how successful they can be."

As part of the US Equestrian Open, both dressage and show jumping athletes will have the opportunity to compete on one of the biggest stages worldwide. The US Equestrian Open of Jumping Final, the culminating event known each year as the Rolex Grand Prix, has jumped from \$500,000 to \$750,000 in prize money.

"Having a championship like the US Equestrian Open is perfect," Kessler concluded about the new series. "We want this to feel like the US Open [of Golf] or Wimbledon. Major championships are an important part of the sport because it gives a much broader group of people the ability to work their way into a championship."

Keenan, one of the riders with her eye set on that Rolex US

Equestrian Open CSI5* Grand Prix, has skyrocketed through the world rankings over the past few years of international competition, both in Wellington and beyond.

"I've been coming to Wellington for 20 years," the 28-year-old remarked. "I have jumped FEI here for about 12 [years], and it's the one time of year that we get to stay in one place, which is so wonderful. I think that's something that's so unique about this place, that we are able to bring horses to the very top level in conditions that they're the most comfortable in," she shared.

Keenan has risen from the ponies to the grand prix podium in Wellington, and the venue has allowed her to not only thrive but to take her offerings to the next level. With a full string of both up-and-coming and seasoned mounts, Keenan sees plenty of opportunity to give every horse the time and attention it needs, from daily jumping opportunities to some of the show calendar's biggest events, all strategically forming part of her complex plan to approach championship events in future years, all leading up to LA 2028.

Top Dressage and Para Dressage Athletes Descend Upon Wellington International

The Adequan® Global Dressage Festival is setting the stage for its biggest year as well, featuring seven US Dressage Open Qualifiers, four CDI World Cup Qualifiers, the CDI O3* Nations Cup, a CDI5* event, and 10 national shows. The schedule will also feature two CPEDI events – international shows for para dressage athletes – which began at Wellington International in 2016 right before the Rio Olympics.

The CDI competition will be fierce as additional athletes and champions return to Wellington International. Hendricks is back for another season after a career high in 2024, scoring her first Friday Night Stars CDI5* victory in the 2024 edition of the Adequan® Global Dressage Festival. The 24-year-old began competing in Wellington in her early teens and has grown to become one of the most recognized U25 dressage athletes worldwide.

"Wellington has been the kickstart of everything for me," Hendricks explained. "Whether it was juniors or seniors, I really went all the way. I'm always so happy to prepare [Drombusch OLD] for the European season over here because the conditions are just amazing. The competition organization is fantastic. It's just perfect conditions all over, so it's always the perfect start of the season."

Friday and Saturday Nights Dazzle for Wellington Community and Athletes

Hendricks and Keenan agreed that they love the energy and atmosphere they get from competing under the lights throughout the winter season. Keenan has jumped many 'Saturday Night Lights' over her years as a show jumper and agrees there's nothing quite like it.

"The atmosphere is electric and the best horses really grow in that condition," she said of the night class setting. "It's incredible because we get to do it quite a few times if you're lucky enough to have a grand prix horse that you get to jump

continued on page 16



16TH ANNUAL GREAT CHARITY CHALLENGE

Sponsored by Fidelity INVESTMENTS

1 NIGHT
1 COMMUNITY
\$2+ MILLION TO CHARITY

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2025
at WELLINGTON INTERNATIONAL

FOOD VENDORS ~ PETTING ZOO ~ FACE PAINTING
CAROUSEL ~ WELLINGTON SCHOOL ART FESTIVAL

GATES OPEN AT 6 PM ~ FREE GENERAL ADMISSION



Wellington International Announces Increases in Grand Prix Prize Money for 2025 WEF Season



Wellington International announced today that the 2025 Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) will now feature two \$500,000 CSI5* grand prix offerings ahead of the season finale \$750,000 Rolex Grand Prix. Highlighted by 12 weeks of consecutive FEI competition, WEF continues through March 30 in Wellington, FL.

In addition to the previously announced increase in prize money to \$750,000 for the Rolex US Equestrian Open Grand Prix, a Rolex Series event, prize money for both the Lugano CSI5* Grand Prix on February 22 and Bainbridge Companies CSI5* Grand Prix on March 8 have both been increased to \$500,000. A group effort between Wellington International, Lugano, Bainbridge Companies and the US Equestrian Open has made the added prize money this season possible and represents nearly a half a million dollars in elevated prize money across the three top sport jumping events.

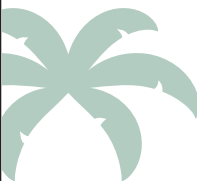
"We are incredibly grateful to our longstanding partners; Lugano, Bainbridge Companies and the US Equestrian Federation (USEF) for joining us in our efforts to raise the level

for WEF 2025," said Murray S. Kessler, Wellington International CEO. "Our overarching goal for Wellington International is to remain the premier horse sport destination in the world. One of the most effective ways to accomplish that goal is to attract the best riders in the world, and increased prize money is one important way that we can do that."

Wellington International's Winter Equestrian Festival is the only horse show series in the United States to host four five-star competitions, the highest international jumping level, where this season eight of the top 10 ranked riders in the world and 35 Paris 2024 Olympic riders will compete.

Kessler concluded "New LED stadium lighting, a new jumbotron, increases in prize money along with the Rolex Series Finale and the world's best riders are sure to make for an exciting and memorable 2025 season."

Kicking off with the \$500,000 Lugano CSI5* Grand Prix, momentum is already building for the second half of the WEF season, which will include six weeks of consecutive four- and five-star action.



WEF STANDINGS



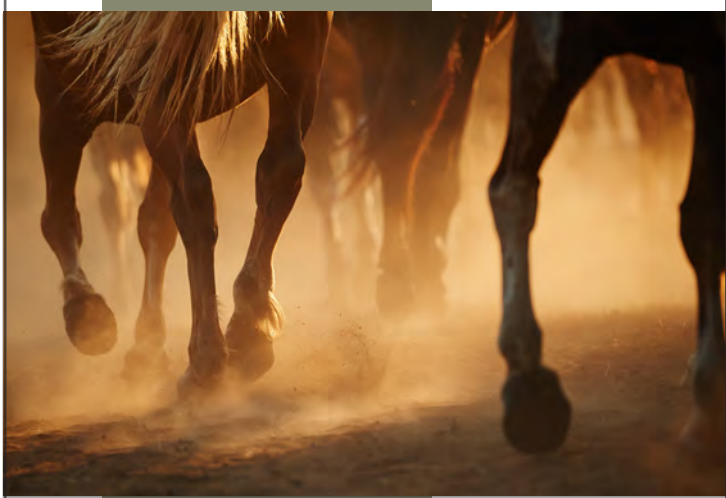
MARTHA W. JOLICOEUR Leading Lady Rider Award

- Caroline Mawhinney - 136 pts
- Elizabeth Madden - 126 pts
- Charlotte Jacobs - 110 pts
- Lillie Keenan - 109 pts
- Hallie Grimes - 105 pts

HERMÈS SELLIER PARIS

1.50M CHAMPIONSHIP JUMPER SERIES

- Cian O'Connor IRL – 54 pts
- Tom Wachman IRL – 54 pts
- Luis Fernando Larrazabal VEN – 46 pts
- Doug Payne USA – 43 pts
- Darragh Kenny IRL – 41 pts



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featuring
VDL Stud

// AUCTION

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February 27, 2025

Auction of talented 5, 6, 7, and 8-year-old showjumpers during WEF week 8

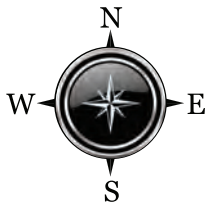
// PRESENTATION

Tuesday
February 18, 2025

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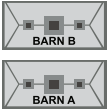
www.wefsporthorseauction.com





COMPETITION RINGS

- International Arena
- Mogavero Ring
- DeNemethy Ring
- Rost Ring
- Grand Hunter Ring
- South Ring
- Rings 6 -12



OFFICES & PARKING

- 1 Exhibitor Services
- 2 Administration
- 3 Show Office
- 4 Admin Parking
- 5 VIP Parking
- 6 General Parking
- 7 Stabling / Dever

SHOPPING AREAS

- Bridge Deck Shops
- Farm Stand
- Hunter Hill
- Pony Island
- Ring 6 Vendors
- South Ring Vendors
- Vendor Village
- Tiki Terrace
- The Shops at Int'l Club

SHUTTLE STOPS #

- 1 Main Entrance
- 2 Farm Stand
- 3 Ring 6
- 4 Exhibitor Services
- 5 Vendor Village
- 6 Dever Golf Cart Rentals
- 7 FEI Barns
- 8 South Ring
- 9 South Parking
- 10 Ring 10
- 11 DeNemethy Ring
- 12 International Club

LEGEND

- Medic
- Fire Rescue
- Gate Entry
- Restrooms
- Food Vendors
- ATM
- Handicap Parking
- Horse Crossing
- Shuttle Stop
- Shuttle Route

14440 PIERSON ROAD

EXHIBITOR ENTRANCE

GENE MISCHIE WAY

WEST PARKING

SOUTH PARKING

SOUTH RING

SOUTH RING

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dever
GOLF CART MAINTENANCE

TENT A

OPEN LONGEVING

LAUNDRY

BARN C

BARN 1

BARN 2

BARN 3

BARN 4

BARN 5

BARN 6

TENT 1

TENT 2

TENT 3

TENT 4

TENT 5

TENT 6

TENT 7

TENT 8

ADMIN PARKING

4

1

2

3

PRIVATE FARMS

Welcome to
Wellington International
3400 Equestrian Club Drive, Wellington, FL 33414

RING 6

SCHOOLING RING

GENERAL SEATING

OASIS

VENDOR VILLAGE

RING 7

RING 8

MOGAVERO RING

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLING RING

ROST RING

HUNTER HILL VENDORS

INTERNATIONAL ARENA

GRAND HUNTER RING

CAROUSEL

VALET PARKING

SCHOOLING RING

RING 10

RING 9

SCHOOLING RING

DENEMETHY RING

\$30 RING

SOUTH RING

SCHOOLING RING

MAINTENANCE

TENT 10

TENT 11

TENT 12

TENT 13

TENT 14

TENT 15

ISOLATION

LONGEVING RING

LONGEVING RING

LONGEVING TILL 10AM
OPEN RIDING 10:30- DUSK

OPEN RIDING RING

FUTURE EXPANSION OF SHOW GROUNDS



INTERNATIONAL CLUB

Lugano
Kiton
NetJets Business Centre
Weatherly Stroh Artist
Lauracea

TIKI TERRACE

WEF Store
Hermès
Karina Brez Jewelry
Kaval
DandyLion (WEF 1-6)
Equestrian Stockholm (WEF 7-10)
Julie Keyes Art (WEF 11-12)
Serenella

BRIDGE DECK AT TIKI TERRACE

Dada Sport
Michel McNabb (WEF P-2)
Helgstrand Jewellery (WEF 3-4)
Carol Morano Equine Art (WEF 5-6)
Equisite Elements of Style (WEF 7-12)
Alexander Academic Access (WEF P-1)
DELGÉ (WEF 2)
J Wilder Imports (WEF 3-5)
The Calvert Collection (WEF 6-10)
Maya Delorez (WEF 11-12)

THE BARN AT HUNTER HILL

LeMieux

HUNTER HILL

Ola' Mair Boutique
Vanner House
UNIQ. Jewelry (WEF P-4)
Ryde Equestrian (WEF 5-6)

INTERNATIONAL RING WARM UP

Prestige Italia
Equitan
Bruno Delgrange Maître Sellier
Barnwalkers
IDA Development

RING 6

Antarès Sellier
Voltaire Design
THEAULT

OASIS

Charles Ancona
La Enovesé Designs
Devoucoux

VENDOR VILLAGE SOUTHSIDE

Danny & Ron's Dog Rescue
Equestrian Team Apparel
Optic Nirvana
Fab Finds by Sarah
JODS
Sofie's Boutique
Der Dau
Human Touch (WEF P- 4)
Gladiator Equine (WEF 5- 8)
Shop Cou (WEF 9- 12)
Equiline
Turner & Co
Running Fox
Kocher Tack Shop
Tony Hanley Supplements
Stephex
CWD
Tack n Rider
Personalized Products
Equine Tack & Nutrition
CM Hadfields

VENDOR VILLAGE NORTHSIDE

Loopy's Crepes
The In Gate
Ride EquiSafe
Miki Saddlery
Hunt LTD
Parlanti
Fratelli Fabbri
EQUIS
Vogel NYC
Harry's Lemonade

PONY ISLAND

Farm Stand
Silvia's Tacos
Palm Beach Int'l Academy
Florida Snow
Hunter's Landing

THE BARN

Dandy Products
FarmVet
Josey's Laundry
Anonymous Coffee
Paddock Paws Veterinary Clinic

RING 9

Arion Sellier
Forestier Sellier
Sportfot
Muddy Paws Ice Cream
Nathalie's Café

RING 10

Ringside Health Clinic
McGuinn Farms
Magdalena's Mexican

SOUTH BARN

Rider's Boutique
Zest
Best Islands Kitchen
Alorian Saddlery



PLACES TO EAT

- Anonymous Coffee.....Barn 4
- Florida SnowPony Island
- Harry's Lemonade.....Vendor Village
- Loopy's Crepes.....Vendor Village
- Magdalena's Mexican ...Ring 10
- Muddy Paws.....Ring 9
- Nathalie's CaféRing 9
- Oasis Café.....Vendor Village
- BrainJuice Tiki HutInternational Arena
- Toasties.....Vendor Row
- Silvia's Tacos.....Pony Island



AROUND THE GROUNDS

from the Wellington International Photography Collective



PHOTO © KATHRYN HAY PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO © ELEGANT EQUUS PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO © LINDSAY BROCK



PHOTO © GIANA TERRANOVA



PHOTO © CHELSEA LOTHROP PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO © ALEXIS MALIN



PHOTO © ELEGANT EQUUS PHOTOGRAPHY



CHAMPIONS GALLERY



Clemantine, Champion of the Barnwalkers Adult Amateur 50 & Over Hunter division with Jennifer Schechter in the irons.



Disney, piloted by JJ Torano, was Champion in the Small Junior 15 & Under Hunter division.



Encanto, ridden by John French in the Green Hunter 3'3" Stake and owned by Robinson Ridge, was awarded the Champion Insurance Hunter Style Award by Laura Fetterman.



Vemac JJS Z E earned the Champion Equine Insurance Style Award presented by Laura Fetterman after Sally Glassman piloted the Kindie Hill Affiliates-owned horse to win the \$10,000 NAL/WIHS 1.15m Amateur Jumper Classic 36+.



Kamera Shy earned a tri-color ribbon in the USHJA 2'6" Hunters with Maggie Gould aboard.



Cora Stanish jumped Bon Voyage to a Champion title in the TRM 1.0m Junior Jumpers.



After the Rain carried Mischa Morrissey to Champion honors in the Short Stirrup Hunter division.

Passion in Motion:

WEATHERLY STROH'S JOURNEY THROUGH ART & HORSES

This season, we are thrilled to welcome an incredible artist whose work will be on display at the International Club Lobby during the 2025 Winter Equestrian Festival

(WEF). From her dynamic equestrian portraits to abstract representations

of wildlife, Weatherly Stroh is captivating art lovers with her bold colors and unique take on the animals she loves.

Her passion for art and horses shines through each brushstroke, making her work an unmissable part of this year's experience.

Hailing from Metamora, MI, a small town near Detroit, Weatherly Stroh was born with a love for both art and horses. Growing up, she was surrounded by inspiration from her family's deep ties to the arts and equestrian pursuits. Her mother, a lifelong horsewoman and talented artist herself, works in pencil, graphite, bronze and marble, while



her great-great-uncle was an accomplished American Impressionist painter. With parents who met through riding and shared a passion for equestrian life, it's no surprise that Stroh has dedicated her life to both pursuits.

Education played a key role in shaping her journey. She attended the University

of Colorado, where she earned an undergraduate degree in art with a focus on photography and ceramics. She later pursued a graduate degree in elementary education, though her heart was always drawn back to the arts. Even as she explored other career paths in her twenties and thirties, she found herself returning to

painting classes and retreats.

In 2011, Stroh made a pivotal decision to dedicate herself to painting full-time, a choice that transformed her life.

Her early work focused on landscapes, but after painting a friend's dog, her art took on a more personal dimension. As she returned to competitive riding in 2010, clients began commissioning



her to paint their horses, merging her two greatest passions—horses and art. Today, she mainly focuses on her own work but still takes on select commissions each year. One of her clients has a gallery wall of her paintings featuring all their children's ponies, showcasing the deep connection she forms with her clients and their animals.

This year, Stroh is excited to unveil some new works. Visitors to the International Club lobby can expect to see vibrant abstract zebras and bold horse portraits, capturing the grace and energy of these animals with a playful twist. Her latest works feature bright, unexpected colors, bringing a fresh energy to her portfolio. In addition to her paintings, she's launching a new line of scarves and pillows inspired by her equestrian and wildlife art—perfect keepsakes for art lovers and equestrian enthusiasts alike.

As a competitive rider, Stroh remains actively involved in the equestrian community. Riding with



Hannah Isop and Tracy Freels at Harkaway Farm based in Brewster, NY, she competes in both the Amateur Owner and the Adult Amateur Hunters.

Throughout this past year, she has competed at prestigious events like HITS Saugerties and the Kentucky Bluegrass Festival, with future goals to return to the Devon Horse Show and the National Horse Show.

Travel and nature are major sources of inspiration for Stroh. She has visited Africa numerous times,

photographing and observing zebras and other wildlife, whose beauty and spirit often influence her work. Her travels, while hosting retreats from Italy to Morocco and Croatia, have provided her with a rich palette of experiences and memories that inform her artistic style. She studied in Italy during college and continues to travel there to paint with other artists, returning to capture the essence of the Italian landscape in her own work.

Outside of her artwork,

Stroh is passionate about hosting creativity retreats with a close friend. These retreats, titled "The Art of Life," aim to help others savor life's moments through art and personal expression. Held in inspiring locations like Tuscany, Sardinia, and soon, Morocco and Croatia, the retreats combine elements like yoga, photography, journaling, watercolor painting, and cultural excursions. These immersive experiences allow her to share her love for art and

creativity in a meaningful way, fostering connection and inspiration among attendees.

For aspiring artists, her advice is simple yet profound: “Follow the breadcrumbs of things that you love.” She encourages others to seek out mentors and examples of artists who have built successful careers, proving that a life dedicated to art is not only possible but immensely rewarding.

Her inspirations range from abstract artist Nicholas Wilton, whose philosophy and approach deeply resonate with her, to equestrian artist Jill Soukup, with whom she has learned from. Some of her favorite art institutions include the Musée d’Orsay, the Munnings Art Museum in England, Rubell Museum and the Gari Melchers Home and Studio (Stroh’s great-great-uncle) in Fredericksburg, VA. She



also finds inspiration close to her childhood home at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

With her captivating artwork, contagious passion, and connection to the equestrian world, Stroh is sure to leave a lasting

impression on the WEF community this season. Be sure to stop by the International Club Lobby to experience her vibrant collection, meet the artist, and discover new pieces to bring home.

For more information, reach out via email at weatherlystroh@gmail.com, follow her on Instagram at [weatherlystrohstudio](https://www.instagram.com/weatherlystrohstudio), or visit her website at weatherlystroh.com.

PRESS CONFERENCE, continued from page 7

on the Saturday nights here. Then throughout the year, you feel the most comfortable in that atmosphere and I guarantee you when the crowd gets into it, we do better.”

Stone echoed the importance of the night environment for the special events held across the property.

“I think the main thing is it’s fun,” he remarked. “It’s very

high-level sport—the highest level you can watch—but it’s also fun and free. You pay \$22 for your car and you’re here for the night. I think it’s really important for the community to have this in their backyard. The fact that they can come watch Olympic champions in both disciplines and also have a great night out is an amazing opportunity for everybody.”



Got (new) Dirt? WEF DOES...

You may have heard about WEF's secret new rings. The secret is out, and the management team is proud to announce that a new set of flatting and lunging rings is officially ready for use.



WHAT?

- Expansive areas for riding and lunging
- New state-of-the-art footing

WHERE?

- Future site of expanded showgrounds
- Follow South Ring bridle path South, past Tents 15 & 16

WHO?

- Open to all lunging and flatting
- Don't forget your back numbers!



LILLY WARD

Living Up to Her Name at WEF

Nine-year-old Lilly Ward is making quick work of living up to her name. The daughter of Lauren and six-time U.S. Olympian Mclain Ward, she and Woodlands Corduroy dominated the \$1,500 USHJA Pony Hunt & Go Derby. The Pony Hunt & Go Derby is a weekly offering throughout WEF and quickly becoming a crowd favorite on Pony Island.

With Lauren, Mclain, younger sister Madison and family dog Timber looking on, Lilly posted a total score of 175 and handily took the top spot by three points and embarked on what she hopes to be a highly successful WEF season.

"Last year I was circuit champion [in the Small Ponies] and this year I really want to be circuit champion again because this is my first year doing the Medium Ponies at WEF," she said of her goals, another of which is to take the win in the WCHR





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Pony Hunter Challenge during WEF 6, known historically as "Hunter Week."

When asked about her winning ride the 17-year-old Welsh Pony cross gelding called Roy around the barn, Lilly said, "I've had him since the summer and he's so sweet and loving. He's fun to ride, super easy to turn and he's just the best."

Their turning and smooth execution, with direction at the in-gate from trainer Jimmy Torano, was enough to get them the win over course designer Thomas Carlson's single-round course. The simplicity of the course and ease of inside turns were what Lilly said really made the difference.

Torano's advice to her on the way into the show ring was, "Just stay cool. There was only one line, so it was pretty easy. It was very, very fun and there were a lot of places to turn inside and have fun."

Lilly will continue to eye the Pony Hunter Derby events as the season continues, quickly becoming the one to watch as she adds this victory to her resume.



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