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## The Menlo Diary 2006

August means it's time again for the Menlo Charity Horse Show, widely regarded as Northern California's premier hunter/jumper show, and frequent winner of the NorCal Hunter/Jumper Association "Show of the Year" award.

"Menlo" is held annually at the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton, on the San Francisco Peninsula. Funds raised by the show benefit the Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Last year's show alone raised over \$400,000 for the charity.

### **Monday, August 7**

Officially, the show begins tomorrow, but the action is already underway. Today the show office opened, competitors arrived, warm-up classes ran throughout the afternoon, and the trade fair tents went up along the Clubhouse drive.

With only three show rings and three warm-ups, ring time is at a premium, as is stabling, so the show fills with 600+ horses on the same day it opens for entries, usually within just a few hours. Not surprisingly, the waiting list is 200+ horses strong.

### **Tuesday, August 8**

Official classes began today, and for those not showing, the shopping and socializing were equally entertaining.

Carmel painter and Galerie Plein Aire owner Cyndra Bradford was selected as this year's official artist. Her painting "Up and Over" graced the show program cover, and Cyndra's original art and giclee prints were displayed in front of the Clubhouse. Other art on display included sculpture by Susan Bahary and portraits by Jolyn Montgomery, as well as equine prints both antique and contemporary at Wolfgang Studios. Walking through the trade fair tents, shoppers found custom clothing for the show ring or the social scene, browbands with bling, canine accessories, antiques, saddles, belts, and a complementary shoeshine stand sponsored by Oppenheimer & Co.

Social activities are a tradition at Menlo, and every night, there's a dinner, refreshments, or a party, courtesy of the show's generous sponsors. Every day, there's a Continental Breakfast served by the horse show office and delivered to the barns – courtesy of the Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

### **Wednesday, August 9**

What do you do when your training barn is just a few minutes from the show grounds, and you've got horses in training there as well as horses showing at Menlo? If you're Colin and Toni McIntosh of McIntosh Stables, located at the Portola Valley Training Center just 15 minutes away, you rack up a lot of mileage running from location to location. "We make about three trips a day," Colin told me. "It's unique: a fabulous environment, the jumps, the grass, the people ... on the first day, our kids rode like it was the Menlo Olympics!"

Although Menlo isn't considered an international show, Colin and Toni pointed out that with the number of their fellow New Zealand Kiwis here (Guy Thomas, Peter Breakwell, Malcolm Barnwell, Rachel Yorke, and Todd Gregory, among others) plus Australian Harley Brown, Menlo definitely has an international aspect.

### **Thursday, August 10**

Children's hunters and hunt seat equitation classes filled the arena today, and pony hunters, "eq" classes, and medal classes filled the grass hunter field.

Today was also Hermes Jumper Championship Day in the grass jumper field, and the list of winners reads like a "Who's Who" of jumpers: Guy Thomas on Peterbilt, owned by Peterbilt LLC, took home the Level 6 Jumper Championship. Duncan McFarlane, riding Alison Heafey's Laricello, won the Level 7 Jumper Championship. Harley Brown rode Corynn Chaney's Cartwright to the Level 8 Jumper Championship. This evening's featured class in the jumper ring was the \$2,000 Larry Mayfield Memorial Gambler's Choice Jumper Class. It's always an exciting class, and this year was no exception. Jennifer Matthews on her own Lucky 1096 took home \$600 for first place.

### **Friday, August 11**

"He likes the adrenaline rush," Alec Lawler's trainer, John Charlebois, told me as Alec grinned and agreed with his trainer of five years, "I do - that's the best part of jumping."

With his two horses, Savvy and Cosmos 36, 14-year-old Alec competed in the Modified Junior/Amateur Jumper division, ultimately taking the Championship with Savvy, and the Reserve with Cosmos 36. He also rode in Thursday's Gambler's Choice Jumper Class, and Friday's Speed Jumper Class, where he was the youngest rider.

Later this year, Alec wants to qualify for the FEI Children's Jumping Final in October at Spruce Meadows, as he did for last year's event in Los Angeles. Eventually, Alec would like to have a couple of Grand Prix horses and compete in the Grand Prix.

### **Saturday, August 12**

This morning's Lead Line Class featured riders 6 years old or younger, mounted on ponies too cute for words or full-size horses with hearts of gold, led at an easy walk by beaming parents, siblings, trainers or friends, around the arena. Future stars of the Menlo Grand Prix? You never know.

This evening, the \$40,000 San Jose British Motors Grand Prix was the headline event. In the first round, five riders jumped clear and returned for the jump-off: Leslie Steele on SRF Dragonfly, Keri Kampsen on Altitude, Benson Carroll on Santana, Guy Thomas on Oberon 48, and Duncan McFarlane on Eezy. Altitude, a 9-year-old grey Holsteiner gelding leased by Monarch International from owner Rose Sullivan, lived up to his name, the only horse to go clean in the jump-off. In second place, the fastest of the four-fault rounds was Guy Thomas on Oberon 48 owned by Bay Rose.

After winning the jump-off, her first-ever in a Grand Prix, Keri Kampsen exclaimed, "It's incredible! This is something I'll never forget." The Tampa, FL., native has been training and riding with Joe Thorpe at Monarch International for the past three years.

Keri said that Monarch International originally acquired Altitude for Nicoletta von Heidegger to show in the Junior Jumpers, but at Menlo Nicoletta showed in the hunters instead, with record-breaking results. Nicoletta rode Breckenridge to the Small Junior Hunters 15 & Under Championship, and the pair also garnered the "Trip of the Show" Award for the highest scoring round in the rated hunter divisions. Their score of 97 was the highest in anyone's memory, perhaps in the history of the hunter show ring. Keri's understated wrap-up: "I'd say Menlo was a good Team Monarch effort!"

### **Sunday, August 13**

"I'm really honored," Joanna "Joey" Pedroni said of winning the Best Adult Amateur Rider Award yesterday. "I thank Hope and Ned for believing in me and helping me become a much better rider." Joey has trained with Ned and Hope Glynn of Sonoma Valley Stables for five years.

"I really love my horses and try to build strong relationships with them," she said of her 8-year-old geldings. She bought the Swedish Warmblood, Da Kine, three years ago as a jumper, but he turned out to be a phenomenal equitation horse, and now an adult amateur hunter. "I've only had Peerfekt for a week at this point," she said of her Hanoverian. Together, they won the Adult/Amateur Jumper Championship for the 18-35 age group.

### **Show of the Year**

Seven days, three rings, 600+ horses, unlimited shopping, and all for a good cause: The Menlo Charity Horse Show truly is "the show of the year"!