

Stallwalkin' Dude Gets 20th Career Victory

Cosequin Presents Aftercare Spotlight: Retraining In The Tranquility Of Southern Pines

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by Jen Roytz | 02.22.2017 | 3:48pm

Fat Tw Em Pri



Riding under the pines of The Winter Farm OTTB Rescue and Retirement in Southern Pines, N.C.

When one has enjoyed a successful career as an interior designer, what is the natural next step? For Holly Carter, a life-long rider with a penchant for Thoroughbreds both on the track and in the show

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ring, the answer was easy:

create a Thoroughbred

adoption facility to honor the memory of those whose backs she rode upon to her happiest memories and help a new generation of horses who may someday provide the same joy for someone else.

Nestled in the rolling hills of Southern Pines, N.C., The Winter Farm OTTB Rescue and Retirement is a 501(c)(3) non-profit aimed at helping horses make an easy transition from the racetrack to the second phase of their lives. There, in its tranquil setting far removed from the hustle-bustle of the track, Carter says she watches as horses transform from animated, overly eager racehorses to more relaxed and calm versions of themselves, ready to learn new lessons and make the transformation from racehorse to riding companion.

“Thoroughbreds have given me everything I wanted in life and have taken me everywhere,” said the 65-year-old Carter, who competed on the “A” circuit as an amateur owner at venues like Palm Beach and Devon. “For so many years interior designing paid for my horse habit, nearly all of which were Thoroughbreds. Now I get to give back to the breed that has given me so much.”



G1 Winner, Millionaire & Breeders' Cup Winner

The Winter Farm OTTB Rescue and Retraining is the culmination of what was a slow build for Carter. While she did not come from an equestrian upbringing, she sought out ways to interact with horses. It was a polo pony she exercised for a family friend that was her first impression of Thoroughbreds. She was in love.

Carter later got involved with foxhunting, and concurrently steeplechasers, when her family moved

The advertisement has a green background. At the top, "Sallee" is written in large white letters, with "Horse Vans Inc" in smaller white letters below it. In the center, "HIRING RACETRACK SALES AGENT" is written in large yellow letters, followed by "for Florida and New York" in smaller yellow letters. Below that, "Prior racetrack experience is required" is written in white. At the bottom, there is a photo of a brown horse running on a track, wearing a green and white saddle cloth. Below the photo, "> CLICK HERE <" is written in yellow, and "For full job description, requirements and benefits" is written in white.

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from their home in Philadelphia to western Pennsylvania.

“One of the whipper-ins there used to ride steeplechases and point-to-point races. She had all Thoroughbreds, many of whom were failed racehorses that she would take as foxhunters to prepare them to transition to steeplechasing,” said Carter. “That’s how I started foxhunting – riding racehorses that were transitioning to steeplechasing. It was an education, but I loved it.”

During her college career is when Carter landed a job galloping young Thoroughbreds for Saxony Farms near Pittsburgh, where she was attending school.

“I just loved galloping babies there. The farm manager and trainer was an ex-jockey and I learned a ton from him, not only about riding and galloping, but about Thoroughbred breeding and bloodlines,” said Carter.

As she embarked on her interior design career after college she maintained as much time in the saddle as she could, showing hunter/jumpers. Most of the horses she rode and competed against were Thoroughbreds, many of which were former racehorses.

Eventually, however, her continually expanding business took up more and more of her time and riding became less of a priority.

“For 15 years I didn’t ride,” said Carter. “I was in my 40s and working 6-7 days a week and I just missed horses. So, I decided to move back to Southern Pines, where I’d lived previously and loved the area, and got back into riding with the purchase of a 12-year-old Warmblood mare that I thought was a Thoroughbred when I bought her. She was perfect. It was like I found a part of myself that I had misplaced.”

By the time the mare was in her late teens, Carter started the search to find her replacement, and this time, she was determined to get a Thoroughbred.

A friend introduced her to the CANTER website and there she found a lovely horse by the name of Winter Escape, a dark bay listed by his trainer on the website who had raced 105 times in the span of his six-year career.

Carter loved the dark bay from the moment she met him, but with so many races on his resume and in his legs, he

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was not the picture of soundness. So, back to CANTER she went to find another horse.

“I planned to get one to replace him, but ended up with two, as the trainer gave me a great deal on them. Then, I got a few others here and there and would work with them and sell them, and then get a few more. I was having a blast,” said Carter. “I figured I needed to either start doing this as a business or start a non-profit, and since Thoroughbreds had done so much for me through my life, I decided this was how I wanted to repay the breed. I know I can't change the world or help them all, but I can help a few.”

So, for the past several years Carter has operated her Thoroughbred adoption organization under the name inspired by that first horse she purchased from CANTER – The Winter Farm OTTB Rescue and Retraining. While she rides all of the horses who come through the program, she also has a young woman who works with her to get the horses started in their retraining.

“She is a beautiful hunter rider and just gets along with anyone, horse or human. She does a lot of ground work

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A graduate of The Winter Farm OTTB Rescue and Retirement in his new career.

with them and gives them a good foundation both on the flat and hacking out on trails,” said

Carter.

With thousands of acres throughout the Walthour-Moss Foundation equestrian shared land use in Southern Pines, horses that go through her program enjoy long hacks through the countryside and the sandy soil allows many of them to train without shoes. She adopts out between 9 and 12 horses a year and has a dedicated volunteer board of individuals with similar motivations and backgrounds as her own.

While the organization has only been in existence for a few years, Carter says one of her goals and that of her board is to eventually build partnerships with programs like Saratoga War Horse that serve veterans and therapeutic riding programs.

Added Carter, “At my age now, it's about giving back to all of the people and animals who have blessed me. They are all part of who I've become and it is something I am quite passionate about.”

Jen Roytz is a marketing, publicity and comprehensive communications specialist based in Lexington, Kentucky. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, her professional focus lies in the fields of equine, health care, corporate and non-profit marketing. She holds board affiliations with the Make a Wish Foundation, Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance and the Retired Racehorse Project, among others. While she currently has no plans to build an arc, she is the go-to food source for two dogs, two cats and two off-track Thoroughbreds.

Email Jen your story ideas at Jenlroytz@gmail.com or connect with her on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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“My first trip to Del Mar and the people out here are so nice I can't wait to get back some day,” said Dutrow. “It was a Grade I race and our horse had a chance and I just felt like we had to be here. The race itself? I don't know how this turf course plays, but I knew at the top of the stretch Mo Town had a lot of work to do and I'm glad he was up to it.”





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“My horse had quite the learning experience,” Alvarado said. “He’s still a baby so there is a lot of room to grow still. He’s a big colt. He got a little lost once he got in front but he dug in and finished well. I thought I had it at the wire but it was very close.”



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