

The Millbrook Independent

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The Fitch's Corner Horse Trials (Millbrook, NY) broke their own records in attendance and success at their 20th Anniversary and the USEA Area 1 Championships, July 19-21. Fernanda Kellogg and Kirk Henckels, who hold the event at their private, 150-acre farm, pulled out all the bells and whistles for a memorable weekend.

Three years ago, the Area 1 Council consolidated all Championship activities to one venue; this year boasted the largest number of entries with 107 riders competing in the Championships for a shot at prize money, awards, and prizes donated by retailers such as Dover Saddlery and Tiffany & Co. On Friday evening, the Championship riders were honored at a buffet dinner complete with celebrity bartenders: Boyd Martin, Kerry Millikin, Ryan Wood and Allison Springer. Phillip Dutton was also in attendance, hosting a book signing of his new book, Modern Eventing.

The original concept of running a horse trials at Fitch's Corner was born 20 years ago by Fernanda Gilligan and Eric Bull, who managed the farm at the time. The first year saw 40 local horses and Brian O'Connor acted as the only experienced professional to guide the well-intended volunteers and organizers. This year, however, saw record entries of 333 horses, with 350 attending the Meet the Champions party, 665 attending the Blue Jean Ball with New York City's DJ FLO, 350 attending the Spectator Luncheon to benefit the Millbrook Rescue Squad, 55 shops in Fitch's Market with fantastic shopping, and over 16,000 pounds of ice used by horses, riders and party goers....and Brian O'Connor returned in his 20th year as announcer and course controller.

Derek di Grazia designed all the cross-country courses, which were built by Eric Bull and included an expanded water jump and jumping mound. The beautiful and fun stadium course was designed by Chris Barnard. Dressage was held during the hottest day, but the weather gods smiled upon the cross country and stadium jumping days and provided excellent footing and a breeze for all phases.

The divisions were well-represented by many of the country's top riders that choose to bring their up-and-coming young horses to compete in the big atmosphere. The prize

money of \$20,000 was divided evenly throughout all divisions. Boyd Martin made his comeback to competition after ankle surgery with four rides, Phillip Dutton had five and Allison Springer rode four. The weekend also brought the announcement of the Land Rover Competition Grants to compete at the Military Boekelo CCIO3*, October 10-13, 2013 in Boekelo, The Netherlands. These grants were awarded to two riders who were both in the winners' circle at Fitch's Corner: Caitlin Silliman and Lauren Kieffer.

The weekend was sponsored by the national fashion retailer, J McLaughlin, Houlihan Lawrence Real Estate and Fresh Gourmet. Congratulations to everyone who helped make the event a success, and to those who took home the Champion title for their level in Area I.

Area 1 Championship Winners:

Preliminary Champion - Paige Garson riding Cambalache

Training Champion - John Bourgoin riding Fernhill Ballinabook

Novice Champion - Linda Fountain riding Logan Go Bragh

Beginner Novice Champion - Haley Kates riding Dromolin