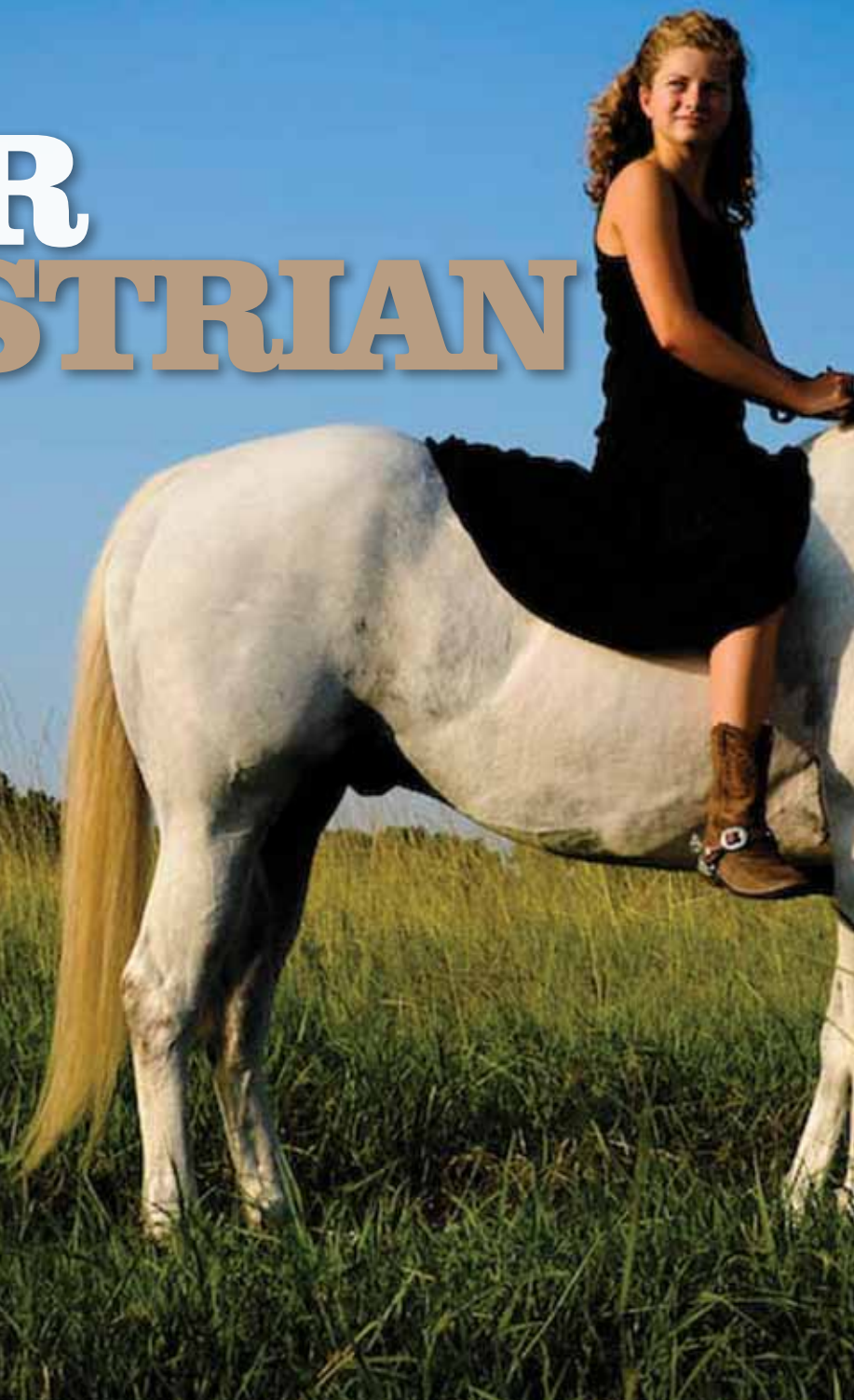


CY-FAIR EQUESTRIAN LIFE

Horse lovers enjoy resources close to home

Written by Donna Kay Moore



Horse riding combines the great outdoors with animal companionship

Photo Courtesy of Erin Miller Photography



Find a barn with horses that are well-cared for

Consider the type of riding style suited to your equestrian goals



Cy-Fair may be considered the suburbs, being so close to Houston and all its amenities, but some of the comforts of the country can be found here, too. For horse enthusiasts, Cy-Fair combines the best of both worlds, with an abundance of barns that offer horseback riding lessons, training, and horse boarding. With so many options, riders and horse owners have the ability to find a quality stable to meet their needs. Before investing a lot of time and potentially money into your riding education, be sure to find the right facility to help you achieve your equestrian goals

RIDING WITH STYLE

As a prospective rider, the first decision you must make when choosing a barn for lessons is the style of riding you are interested in, according to horse trainer Shea Galloway, who owns and operates Someday Farm in Hockley. If unsure, it is best to visit several barns and watch some lessons, or even take a lesson in some of the different styles. The most common riding styles available in Cy-Fair include western riding, dressage, eventing, and hunter/jumper. “The riding disciplines which receive the most exposure around the world are the three equestrian events in the Olympic Games: show jumping, dressage, and eventing,” Galloway says.

CHOOSING A DISCIPLINE

Before making a selection, also consider your future goals and whether you want to ride for recreation or competitively. A range of riding disciplines are available to help you accomplish your riding aspirations.

Western Riding

Western riding evolved from the working needs of the cowboys of the American West. Western riding events vary from slow, controlled Western pleasure classes to speed events, such as barrel racing and calf roping.

Dressage

Dressage is an English style of riding where no jumping is involved and has been described as horse ballet. This style uses progressive training to produce a horse and rider capable of effortlessly executing a series of movements based on the natural gaits of the horse.

Photos: Courtesy of Meredith Kohut

Before signing up for lessons, visit any barns you are interested in



Make sure you are comfortable with the trainer's teaching style





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Nicole Donaldson shows off her bareback riding skills at Callagari



Riding lessons are available for equestrians of all ages

Eventing

Eventing is also considered English riding. This discipline is considered the triathlon of equestrian riding and is comprised of dressage, cross-country jumping, and stadium jumping.

Hunter/Jumper

A hunter is a type of show horse that is subjectively judged on its movement, manners, and way of going, particularly while jumping fences simulating those found in a fox hunting field. A jumper is a horse judged on the ability to jump cleanly over a series of obstacles within an allotted time.

STOP IN TO VISIT

Once you have chosen a riding style, visit the barns that cater to that particular discipline and consider the following:

- Does the barn have lesson horses available or do you have to own your own?
- Are the lesson horses well cared for, suitable, and most important, are they safe?
- Is the rider comfortable with the instructor's teaching style? "Just like with students at school, everyone learns differently and every trainer [and] instructor has his own teaching style," Galloway says. If the teacher's style is not a good fit, continue looking at other barns and instructors.
- What are the instructor's qualifications? Horse trainers and instructors are not required to have certification, so it is advisable to ask about their riding and teaching history and any formal training they have received.
- Does this barn have ample facilities to accommodate the goals and needs of the rider?

REWARDING SPORT

Although horse riding may start off as a lengthy process, remember it is a graceful, exciting sport that connects the best of the outdoors along with animals. Whether you have just started your equestrian career, or have been riding for years, horses offer an unmatched companionship that many enthusiasts find hard to live without. **CFM**

DONNA KAY MOORE is a Cypress resident and working mom. She dedicates this story to her daughter, Lena, who loves horses.



HUNTER/JUMPER BARNES

Grand Oaks Farm
13405 Huffmeister Rd.
832-715-1466
grandoaksfarm.org

Little Bay Farm
21403 Mueschke Rd.
281-794-5009
littlebayfarm.com

Someday Farm
19715 Hopfe Rd.
832-277-2788
someday-farm.com

Top Line Sporthorse International
18703 Juergen Rd.
713-898-1188
christianrogge.com

DRESSAGE/ EVENTING BARNES

Isabella Farms
12638 Huffmeister Rd.
281-955-8200
isabellafarms.com

Snowdonia Farms
21605 Mueschke Rd.
281-351-5955
snowdoniafarms.com

Sonesta Farms
17302 Swansbury
281-373-0125
sonestafarms.com

WESTERN BARNES

Becky George Show Horses
P.O. Box 703
832-515-7495
beckygeorgheshowhorses.com

Callegari Equestrian Club
12751 N. Eldridge Pkwy.
281-955-9623
callegarihorses.com

Oak Hollow Equestrian Park
11325 Grant Rd.
281-890-4420
oakhollow.us