

Elmington Farm, LLC

Horse Show Times

SHOW HUNTERS, FOX HUNTERS, JUMPERS and MORE

Serving Northern Virginia, a touch of West Virginia, and a hint of Maryland

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FREE!

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Photo Courtesy: Bullz Eye Photographic Services

In Your Backyard

Virginia's Finest Horse Farms Open Their Gates

Annual Event Showcases Our Region's Equestrian Heritage

By Aggie Sterret



Photos Courtesy: Kevin Cadwick

Newstead Farm is one stop on the Hunt Country Stable Tour and was also home to Kentucky Derby winner, Genuine Risk, shown in the photo above.

Perhaps one of the most unique local opportunities for horse enthusiasts happens each Memorial Day weekend when some of Virginia's finest estates open their doors for the annual Hunt Country Stable Tour. Winding between stone walls and board fences, pastures and woodland, the scenic self-driven tour benefits the Upperville Trinity Episcopal Church programs.

On May 26 and 27, visitors will have the opportunity to see some of the premier Thoroughbred breeding farms, hunter/jumper barns, and foxhunting estates in the area – even my non-horsy friends have been impressed and entertained during past tours when they've come along. The comment that you are likely to hear from visitors wherever you go, is, "These horses live in more luxurious surroundings than I do!"

Even if you've been on the tour before, there will still be plenty that you've never experienced. Here are some of my personal highlights from past tours.

In 2007, I saw 30-year-old Genuine Risk living out her

retirement at Newstead Farm. The grand old lady was still regal, and to this day remains the only filly ever to place in all three US Triple Crown races, winning the Kentucky Derby.

Another year, I had the opportunity to pet Frank, a handsome gray enjoying retirement at Rokeby, who had the distinction of being one of Jackie Onassis' favorite foxhunters. And who wouldn't love seeing the new foals at the MARE center?

Rokeby's broodmare barn is a staple on the tour, and when you see it you'll know why. It is a wonderful example of excellence in stable design and has provided a healthy beginning for well known Thoroughbreds since 1949. Beagling, the sport of tracking hare with hounds bred specifically for this purpose, will be demonstrated at Rokeby at 11 a.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Sunday.

Make sure that Heronwood Farm is on your agenda. After meandering down a long picturesque driveway, you will find yourself at the Yearling barn that is featured in

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Tour.....continued from p. 15
 Randy Leffingwell's *Ultimate Horse Barns*. Don't miss the Alpaca area with hand spinning demonstrations and fiber product sales. Do you own Alpaca socks? Try them. Trust me. The pair that I got during my last visit to Heronwood are my favorites.

Thundering hooves are a



Heronwood is home to alpacas as well as horses, not your traditional mix of farm animals.

hallmark at the Middleburg Track but make sure you get there before 10 a.m. on Saturday morning to hear them. If you are lucky, you may see the next Spectacular Bid or Hoist the Flag, both of whom trained here.

New on the tour this year is the National Sporting Museum, featuring a book fair with local equestrian authors Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The adjoining National Sporting Library, dedicated to preserving and promoting the culture of equestrian and field sports, will be open on Saturday only.

Right down the road is Virginia Tech's Middleburg Agricultural Research and Extension

(MARE) Center. Get a close up view of a new foal, or come at 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. either day to see a foal handling or treadmill demonstration.

Sunny's Corner Foundation at Takaro Farm is dedicated to inspiring the development and balance of life skills with fun for youth through education programs, internships, scholarships, and equestrian sports competition. See a horse show on Saturday, and have your child take a pony ride around the farm. On Sunday, your family can still enjoy pony rides, and have a blast painting a pony – yes, a real pony.

Newstead Farm's 400 acres of rolling fields and paddocks are a tribute to the caliber of horses residing there. Owned by Bertram and Diana Firestone, Thoroughbred breeders for over 40 years in the US and Europe, the farm also has a show jumping ring, a world class Grand Prix course, and is home to International Grand Prix rider Alison Robitaille.

The recently renovated Rock Hill Farm, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register, has many original structures including a Quaker-style house and a bank barn that dates back to 1797.

Now a working foxhunting farm, visitors can explore the property, feed carrots to the friendly horses, and bring lunch to enjoy by the pool or pond pavilions.

Trappe Hill Farm, home
 Continued on p. 47



Photos Courtesy: Stephanie Knapp

The animals seem to enjoy the farm tour as much as the visitors.



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Tour.....continued from p. 19



Photos Courtesy: Stephanie Knapp

Virginia International Polo will host an exhibition Polo match on Sunday as a special attraction for the Stable Tour.

to Thoroughbred mares and foals, racehorses, hunters, and 100-mile endurance race Arabians, will have experienced horsemen on hand to describe each specialty.

Swimming demonstrations will be held at 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m.; and taped steeplechase races described by steeplechase riders will be shown throughout the day.

Lazy Lane Farm in Upperville is often among the top five of Virginia-bred earners in Thoroughbred racing and may be best known for 1991 Preakness and Belmont Stakes winner, Hansel and the stakes winner and successful Virginia sire, Secret Hello. Visit the equine cemetery on the property, and see the gravesite of 1934 Kentucky Derby winner Cavalcade.

Two barns and the principle training facilities will be on tour at St. Bride's Farm, a breeding and training facility for champion show jumpers. The lower barn houses the farm's mares, foals and retired horses. The upper barn is home for the active show jumpers.

Built as an environmentally responsible "green" facility, it won the 2011 NFBA Barn Building of The Year Award, and has such features as radiant floor heating and a run-off rainfall collection pond. Jumping demonstrations will be held both days at 2 p.m.

On Sunday, the Virginia International Polo Club will host

an exhibition polo match at 4 p.m., weather permitting. Located at historic Llangollen, VI Polo offers clinics, camps, boarding, breeding and training, with clubhouse amenities, an arena, and three Bermuda grass playing fields.

Hours are 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. both Saturday, May 26 and Sunday, May 27, with the Middleburg Training Track open Saturday morning from 7 a.m. until 10 a.m.. Tickets are available the days of the event for \$30 at any tour location.

You can purchase discounted tickets prior to May 18 online or at Trinity Episcopal Church. The church will be open for tours both Saturday and Sunday.

Lunch by Back Street Catering is available for purchase, and be sure to visit the Country Fair on the church grounds featuring horse-themed arts and crafts, food, and more.

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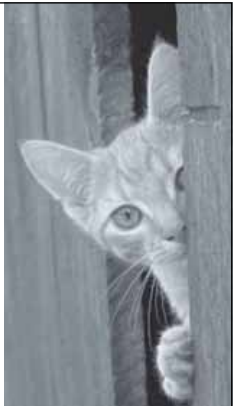
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