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**YOU ARE HERE:** NEWS > SHOW JUMPING > MAY2012 > MCLAIN WARD HEADS LIST OF WINNERS AT OLD SALEM FARM SPRING HORSE SHOWS

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## McLain Ward Heads List of Winners at Old Salem Farm Spring Horse Shows

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North Salem, NY - Two-time Olympic Gold Medalist McLain Ward of Brewster, NY, made his long-anticipated return from a three-month layoff and showed that he hasn't lost a thing as he swept both featured Grand Prix at the 2012 Old Salem Farm Spring Horse Shows.

As impressive as Ward was in his two Grand Prix wins, it was Old Salem Farm itself that seemed to make the biggest impression. "These horse shows were phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal," said Grand Prix rider Jimmy Torano, a member of the Board of the North American Riders' Group (NARG). "The field, the footing, the hospitality — everything! I think it'll be in our top 10 and there's one thing I can tell you for sure — you will absolutely see me back here next year!"

The horse shows attracted a star-studded line-up that included Olympic riders such as Ward, Beezie Madden, Chris Kappler, Nona Garson, Leslie Howard, Anne Kursinski, Peter Leone and Mario Deslauriers. It also featured internally-respected course designers like Alan Wade of Ireland and Leopoldo Palacios of Venezuela who had great words or praise for Old Salem's huge, grass Grand Prix Field. "It was a privilege for me to design courses in a ring like this," the Olympic course designer said. "The footing was perfect and the terrain gave me the chance to design courses that allow horses to be horses!"

In the ring, Ward announced loud and clear that he is back, riding to the win in the first week's \$40,000 Old Salem Farm Grand Prix on Grant Road Partners' Antares F and then electrifying a packed crowd on Grant Road Partners' Zander to capture the top prize in the second week's \$75,000 Empire State Grand Prix Sponsored by the Kincade Group.



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"It hurts but it's holding up well," said Ward of his kneecap, fractured in January. "I have had such great people behind me during my recovery – my owners never wavered, my own team which has been together for 25 years and got these horses ready to go, a great orthopedic surgeon, physical therapist and the person who has done the most in my recovery, my wife Lauren. It hasn't been easy but all these people deserve the credit for what we've been able to accomplish."

Ward's injury caused him to miss the Olympic trials but the Selection Committee chose to give Ward a bye and included him on the list of finalists riding in two observation events in May-June which determine the final team. His Grand Prix win over a 33-horse field on Antares F, his candidate for a spot on a third consecutive Olympic team, showed him to be more than ready to contend.

An Olympic spot would not come, however, with Sapphire, his two-time Gold Medal mount as Ward announced the mare's retirement during the Old Salem horse shows. "While it is the end of her incredible career, I refuse to be sad," he said. "She is retiring healthy, happy and at her best."

But Ward was able to show that he is capable of winning on a number of horses, as he rode the inexperienced Zander to the win in the featured \$75,000 Empire State Grand Prix Sponsored by the Kincade Group. Ward, who topped another field of 33 entries, had high praise for the 8-year-old KWPN gelding, "We bought him at the end of last summer with Elizabeth Miller [Grant Road Partners] as a young prospect. We thought the world of him. I showed him the first week of Palm Beach in two classes and then I got hurt. He's just kind of been on ice since then.

"Last week we started him in the 1.30 Meter class and then this week we tried him in the Friday Grand Prix because he is an incredible horse and I wanted to see where he was. I decided to put him in the big Grand Prix today because I wanted to ride him again and he was incredible. He's on a fast learning curve because of my injury. We are blessed with great horses on every level and this is another testament to the great group of people I have on my team. They had him ready to go."

Ward also had words of praise for Old Salem and its Spring Horse Shows. "We are right in the middle of horse country and you see it in the quality of the horse show, the crowd, the sponsors, everything," he said. "I've always been a fan of what the Hakim family does here and now they have this horse show at the level where I think it can become a major international event."



### Dinan and Ashe-Cawley Also Claim Grand Prix Wins

Also winning Grand Prix events at Old Salem were Ward's student, 18-year-old Katie Dinan, who rode Nougat Du Vallet to the win over a 47-horse field in the \$25,000 New York Welcome Stake Grand Prix and Molly Ashe-Cawley on Carissimo who topped a field of 45 in the \$25,000 North Salem Grand Prix Presented by Presented by

Land Rover of Mt. Kisco and Larchmont, members of the Premiere Group. Top honors in the \$20,000 Speed Derby of North Salem went to Ireland's Darragh Kerins on Hot Wheels.

Winning the first week's \$10,000 High Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic was Michael Hughes on Luxina and winning the second week's \$15,000 High Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic, sponsored by Catlin Kaplow Insurance, was Dana Scott on KM Whatever RV. Both classes are member events of the Show Jumping Hall of Fame

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### **Keenan and Griffith Head List of Hunter Winners**

Fifteen year-old Lillie Keenan also added to her reputation as a standout rider, taking top honors in both the \$10,000 USHJA Hunter Derby and Old Salem's inaugural Equitation Challenge, sponsored by Heritage Farm. She took top honors in the Hunter Derby on Kid Rock, owned by Lexi Maounis, with a two-round score of 388 points



and won the Equitation Challenge on Chansonette Farm's Monterrey, on whom she also finished second in the Talent Derby and won the Platinum Performance USEF Show Jumping Talent Search.

Patricia Griffith, Katonah, NY, was the first week's Grand Hunter Champion on Sutherland with Jennifer Bauersachs, Frenchtown, NJ, earning that honor during the second week on Wingman. Griffith won the horse shows' \$5,000 Leading Hunter Rider Award, given to the rider who earns the most points in the Pre-Green, Green, Conformation, High Performance 3'3" and High Performance 3'6" Hunter classes during the two weeks of the Old Salem Spring Horse Shows. Griffith amassed a total of 171.5 points with mounts such as Sutherland, Lourdanos, Grid Iron and Akinda. Second place went to Amanda Steege, Far Hills, NJ, with 117.5 points and Bauersachs was third with 117 points.

### **Action Outside the Ring**

The Old Salem Farm Spring Horse Shows benefited the Old Salem Farm Foundation. The goal of the Old Salem Farm Foundation is to use the Spring Horse Shows as a vehicle to help support charitable organizations and create an opportunity for corporate sponsors and equestrian athletes to benefit the community during the annual event. This year, the Old Salem Farm Foundation is providing support to four charities – ASPCA, JustWorldInternational, Pegasus Therapeutic Riding, and the Voss Foundation.

The ASPCA® (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and its Mobile Adoption Center were at the show, bringing shelter animals and potential adoptive families together, with two of the dogs finding homes. In addition, ASPCA Equine Welfare Ambassador Georgina Bloomberg, who like Ward made a long-anticipated return to competition at Old Salem, signed copies of her newest book, *My Favorite Mistake*, with proceeds benefiting the ASPCA Equine Fund, a lifeline for at-risk horses. The day was capped off with the "Spring Frolic for Horses" Cocktail Party, featuring celebrity bartenders including Georgina Bloomberg, Beezie and John Madden, and Lorenzo Borghese from ABC's "The Bachelor."

Over the years, Old Salem Farm, located an hour north of New York City, has played host to major equestrian competitions including Selection Trials for U.S. teams for World Championships and Olympic Games. Old Salem Farm boasts a state-of-the-art stabling facility, its historic pristine grass Grand Prix field as well as outstanding show and schooling rings, all surrounded by one of the nation's most quaint and picturesque settings.

All the action from all the rings at the 2012 Old Salem Farm Spring Horse Shows was available daily on shownetvision.com. In addition, the USHJA International Hunter Derby and \$75,000 Empire State Grand Prix were broadcast free of charge over usefnetwork.com sponsored by SmartPak.



### **Parting Words of Praise**

As riders prepared to leave Old



Salem, they continued their praise of the horse shows and looked forward to returning in 2013. Grand Prix rider Candice King said, "The footing is perfect in every ring so we can use all the rings no matter what the weather. It's great for our young horses and for our old horses. They fixed the problems they used to have with

the stabling and they expanded the parking so now everything is perfect. They've made this one of the nicest facilities in America."

Amateur-Owner jumper Philip Richter agreed, "This is a world-class facility in every regard – the stabling, the footing, the food, the way they treat you. The field is fantastic and they have people like Leopoldo designing courses. Riding here feels just like riding at the Hampton Classic."

Two-time Olympic Medalist Leslie Howard added, "The footing is as good as any place in the world, both the grass field and the sand rings. It's truly become a world-class facility."

"Really, what they've done here," concluded three-time Olympic Medalist Beezie Madden, "is turn it into the best show facility in the country!"

Further information on the Old Salem Farm Spring Horse Shows is available on line at [www.oldsalemfarm.net](http://www.oldsalemfarm.net) or by calling 914-669-5610.

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