



Fall Farm Projects Guide

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Cerbone helps horse farms blend beauty with function

Back in the early days of New Jersey's agricultural heritage, it took a village to raise a barn. Not much has changed in the ensuing decades. Today, planning a successful barn build or renovation takes a team of professionals and craftspeople, preferably with first-hand knowledge of horses. Landscape architects, if they are brought in to the project at all, are often brought in last.

When should you consult with a landscape architect? Deborah Cerbone of Deborah Cerbone Associates, Inc. says, "I encourage people to consult with me before they purchase a property. If they are planning a renovation, they will get the best result possible when the landscape architect is brought in at the beginning." Cerbone, a long-time horse owner herself, has a specialty division of her firm devoted to equestrian site planning.

Cerbone and her team of experienced equestrians ensure a property conforms to the zoning, engineering and environmental standards required by local municipalities and state codes. Using resources such as the Equine Science Center at Rutgers University, the Cooperative Extension Service of New Jersey and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) they educate clients on the newest technologies and best practices of horse keeping.

"My job is to integrate the needs of the horse with the desires of the owner," Cerbone says. "Coming in at the beginning of a project, I can ensure that a property is designed for both beauty and function for my human and equine clients. Horses have very specific needs to stay healthy and happy in their work. If those needs are not met, the animal can engage in harmful behaviors." Cerbone also takes inventory of the hazards a site may present to a horse. Poisonous plants, drainage issues, fire hazards and many other considerations are addressed in her analysis and design.

Location may be a critical metric for real estate value, but curb appeal runs a close second. No one does curb appeal for equestrian properties quite like Cerbone. Lorick Stables, USEF Friesian Breeder of the Year in 2012, 2013 and National Pleasure Driving champions called Cerbone when they wanted to design a master plan for their breeding facility and add world-class show grounds. Cerbone's plan incorporates a driving trail encircling the property, a cross-country driving course with hazards, arenas, viewing areas for clients, and spectator seating. Practical functions like manure management are now consolidated and hidden.

The modern architecture of the barn is now centered on formal axes leading to paddocks, arenas and driving trails. Accommodations for large events are balanced with a private patio where clients can watch the horses at pasture. Rather than bleachers, a grassy embankment with reclaimed granite slabs serves as stadium seating along the main arena, one of many sublimely lovely gestures Cerbone incorporated.

Cerbone and her team have assembled a network of skilled professionals and tradesmen over her 30 plus years of experience. They can assemble a team or work as part of a crew of your choosing to bring your project from plan to reality.

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