

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT: HOUND & HARE

SPRING

# HORSE & style

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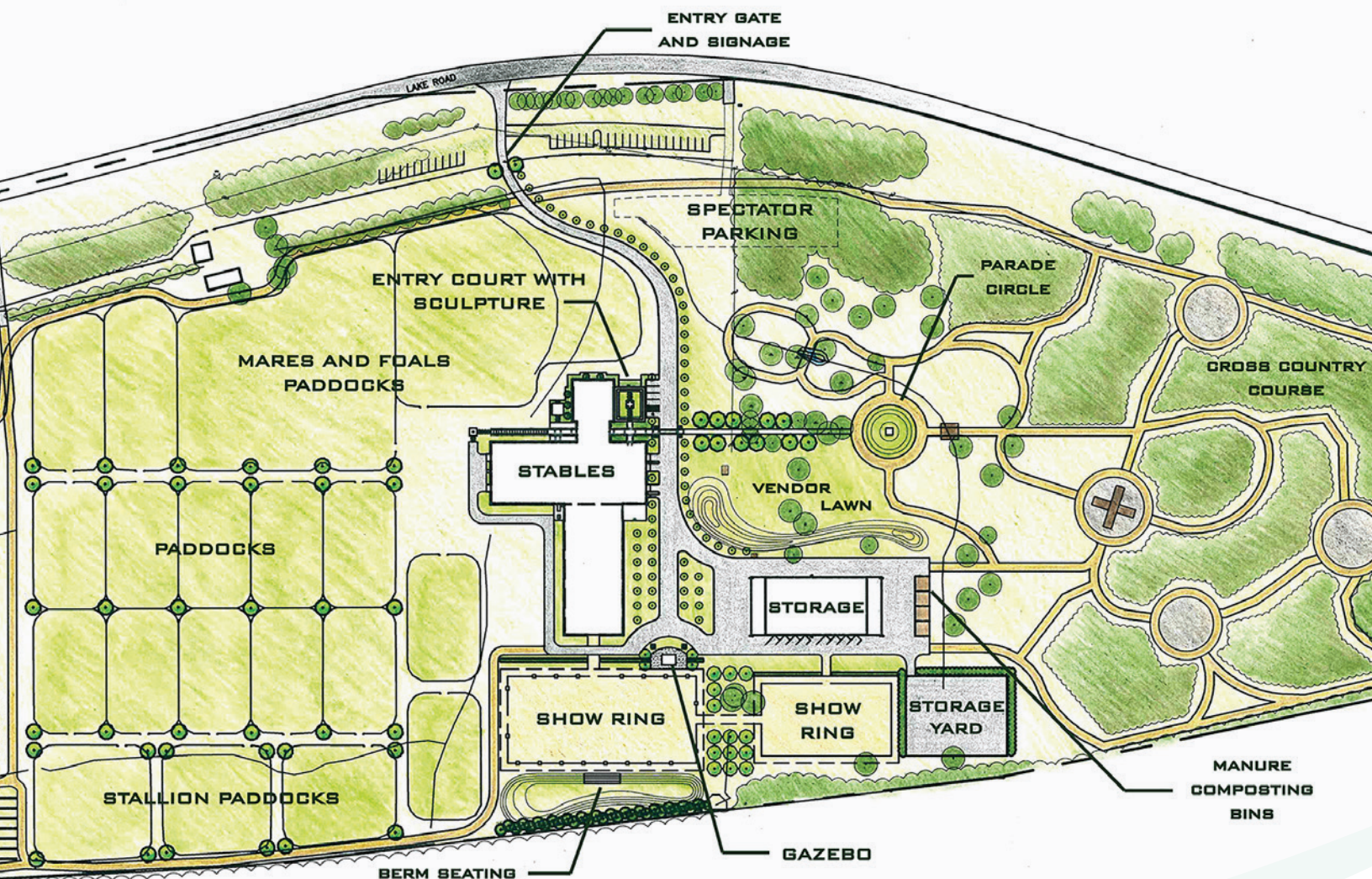
## Willow Creek Estancia

10 THINGS: KARDEL GLOBAL PARTNERS

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2019





# Deborah Cerbone

## Equestrian Landscapes

Our 'Horse & Style: Home' column typically takes us inside some of the most enchanting houses where equestrian style and décor radiates through every room. For this issue, however, we instead take you outdoors to get a glimpse of several stunning equestrian exterior projects. Joining us is Deborah Cerbone, design industry expert, who has recently added "equestrian landscape architect" to her resume. By combining her passions, she has become what she calls, "a problem solver." When working on a new design project, she takes the needs of both horse and rider and combines everything to create an inviting space that is not only safe and functional, but beautiful.





*Horse & Style: Tell us a little about your business. Specifically, how did you get into equestrian design?*

Deborah Cerbone: I've had a successful design practice specializing in high-end residential design for 27 years. As a hobby, I have always had horses, but I had boarded them, so their care was provided by others. It wasn't until I met my husband 10 years ago and started spending time with him at his second home in Montana, that I realized all that was involved with having your horses in your backyard. One of our horses had behavioral issues so I began to research horse behavior so I could communicate better with all of them. I researched everything about farm management, pasture management, farm design, footings, and general horse keeping, so I could become a better provider of an ideal environment for our horses.

Up until then, I had designed a few horse farms, but it wasn't until I was an actual horse farm owner and was asked to collaborate on an equestrian estate for a couple new to horse ownership, that I realized how much I had to

offer to those who are building horse farms. Being able to use my horse knowledge in design and provide such valuable information to them was so much fun! I began to think, "I wonder if I could specialize in this?" I looked online and saw that there were only four or five landscape architects in the country specializing in equestrian design, so I knew there was a need in the market. I also knew that I had all the skills and the passion to make it happen, and that's how "Deborah Cerbone Associates: Design for Equestrians, by Equestrians" was conceived.

Our mission is to design optimum environments for our clients' horses, specific to their riding disciplines and the special needs of their horses. We create environments that are safe and comfortable and provide for all their horses' basic needs.

*H&S: When beginning a new project, what are some of the first tasks you perform in order to get a sense of design direction?*

DC: Many of our clients know what they want but just don't know where to

start and how to put it all together. Some clients already have a horse farm and are building a new one and don't want to make the same mistakes they made with the first. Other clients have no idea what they want or need to have horses at home, so we help them develop a program and guide them through various options for their particular discipline – all of this while making it look beautiful.

First and foremost, we complete a study of the zoning for the property, the same as we do with any design project. A thorough review of the local and state codes is always the first part of our analysis to find out what the town, or county, is going to allow us to do. The town usually sets the number of horses you're allowed based on the size of the property. The setbacks, maximum heights, building coverage, and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) regulate where and how big the buildings can be.

We determine the siting of the barn to maximize shade and breezes in the summer and maximize sun and protection from



harsh winds in the winter. We also take into consideration sun orientation to capture natural light for the barn or solar power. Another consideration is the sunset views.

We design the grading and drainage to direct the rainwater and run-off so we don't end up with low spots and mud. Mud is every horse owner's enemy, not only because it's dirty and messy, but it can lead to injury from slipping, thrush, rain rot, scratches, cracked heels, etc. The placement of fences and gates are other important factors. We also design training areas, indoor and outdoor arenas, round pens, tracks, cross country jumps, etc., as well as plan for vehicular circulation for trailers, hay deliveries, fire trucks, parking for owners, guests and farm hands, and vet and farrier access.

Other considerations are storage of hay, jumps, trailers, tractors and equipment, and attachments such as the mower, manure spreader, seeder, snow blower, etc. All these things need to be factored into the spatial requirements of the farm, and the functional relationships between each of these is measured in the design and placement of these features.

*H&S: Do you design new farms only or do you renovate existing farms?*

DC: Both – sometimes a project is a new farm from raw land, and sometimes it's a renovation. We have a large 88 acre project in Middleburg, Virginia, that is an existing farm renovation, so there's already a barn but no house. They need barn renovations, new arenas, renovated paddock layouts, vehicular circulation, and parking renovations. In collaboration with their architect, engineer, and contractors, we are designing their dream home to look down over their farm. We have another much smaller project on seven acres in Neshanic Station, New Jersey, that has a house already, so we're designing stables, a dry lot, grass paddocks, trailer storage, and accommodations for chickens, goats, vegetables, etc.

*H&S: Do you also design the barns?*

DC: We do not. We work with an architect or a barn builder/architect team. We often lay out the general floor plan based on our clients' desires and needs. There is always a collaboration between us and the

architect as to how the barn relates to the site in orientation, placement of doors and aisles, and how to tie the aesthetics of the property and barn together, so it becomes one cohesive design story.

*H&S: Can you describe a current project you're working on?*

DC: We are currently working on the design of an equestrian estate for a junior rider, her hunter/jumpers, and her family in Saddle River, New Jersey. We've designed the property for 12 horses: six of their own and six boarders. When we design for boarders, it's important to keep the main house area private so boarders don't feel like they're intruding, and the owners have their own privacy.

On this project, our design team consists of working with B&D Barn Builders and their architect for the stables, indoor arena, and run-in sheds. There's a separate architect for the house and numerous outbuildings. We have a civil engineer who has handled all the state and local environmental permitting and detailed out the utility design and storm water management plan based on







our pre-engineered grading and drainage design. A land use attorney has guided us through the local zoning approvals and state environmental approvals. The house and four outbuildings are currently under construction and we've recently submitted for approvals of the stables, and indoor and outdoor arenas.

*H&S: What trends are you seeing in equestrian design?*

DC: We find our residential equestrian clients also looking to have small farm animals like goats and sheep, mini horses and donkeys. They are often interested in raising chickens for eggs, fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, and sometimes beekeeping.

We also see the desire to incorporate outdoor lounge or entertainment areas outside the stables for socializing. My favorite time of day is before sunset, when the sunlight casts a golden glow on our pastures. The sight of our horses grazing in our front field is magical. We like to plan an area on the farm where our clients can sit outside the barn to relax and enjoy those beautiful sunsets.

*H&S: You seem to genuinely enjoy what you're doing. What makes the job fun? How does that reflect in your work?*

DC: I'm like a little kid the way that I love horses. I get so excited when I see one anywhere. It seems so silly for someone my age, but it's true. I absolutely love being able to combine my passion for horses with my passion for design; it has added another level of challenge to my work. We've been designing beautiful properties for people for 27 years, but now we've added a new user of these properties – the horse. I wish I had thought of specializing in equestrian design years ago, but I guess I just wasn't ready back then. It is very rewarding to see our clients get so excited over hearing our ideas and feeling that we really understand their equine challenges and have their needs and their horses' health and safety first and foremost in our designs. I love when a client says, "What a great idea! I would have never thought of that!" **H&S**

*Deborah and her team work with clients all over the United States to help them realize their horse farm dreams. They are a small, boutique-type landscape architecture group based in New Jersey with a satellite office at Deborah's second home in Northwestern Montana.*