

Horse Shows in the Sun California Circuit Begins Today

Entries are up over last year for the popular winter hunter/jumper show series.

Edited Press Release

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McLain Ward aboard Goldika 559 compete in the indoor arena at the HITS Desert Circuit in 2009. Photo © 2009 Flying Horse Photography.

Entries for the 2010 HITS Desert Circuit are up nearly ten percent over last year for the 2010 HITS Thermal Circuit, for “an impressive leap in a down economy” says Tom Struzzieri, President and CEO of HITS. Struzzieri attributes Thermal’s 2010 growth to discounted circuit rates for stabling prices, sixteen Pfizer \$1 Million Grand Prix Qualifiers, four FEI World Cup Qualifiers, and the \$300,000 Grand Prix of the Desert, which will take place on Sunday, March 14.

“All of the indications we’ve had for the past several weeks that Thermal was going to be bigger than last year have been confirmed,” said Struzzieri. “Entries have been strong and it’s clear that the plans we put in place to return to a six-week schedule and to offer discounted circuit pricing for stabling have really made a difference. Despite losing a few of our high-performance riders to the WEG trials, we are seeing a lot of interest from other high-performance riders looking to take advantage of the World Cup Qualifiers, Pfizer \$1 Million Grand Prix Qualifiers, and the great prize money up for grabs here in Thermal.”

HITS has been promoting a circuit discount of nearly thirty percent for permanent stalls, while also offering a half-circuit rate for permanent stalls for either the first or second half of the six-week circuit. During weeks II, III, IV and V, HITS Thermal will host four FEI World Cup Qualifiers, which will take place in its popular indoor arena.

On the road to qualifying for both the Pfizer Million and the FEI World Cup Finals in Geneva, Switzerland, McLain Ward, two-time Olympic Gold Medalist, returns to HITS Thermal for “a nice change of pace, great shows, new faces, and good business opportunities.” Ward plans on bringing five of his top horses, including Phillipa and Goldika, to California from February 3-13 for Weeks II and III.

When asked about whether or not he planned on aiming towards the Pfizer Million, Ward said “absolutely, and starting off with HITS Thermal will allow me to get a few events and hopefully some good prize money under my belt.” With FEI World Cup Qualifiers doubling as Pfizer \$1 Million Grand Prix Qualifiers, HITS Thermal Weeks II, III, IV, and V offer riders the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone.

Unprecedented in nature, the Pfizer \$1 Million Grand Prix will be held in Saugerties, New York on September 12, 2010. To qualify for one of only forty slots, riders will need to compete in at least eight of 54 HITS Grand Prix Qualifiers – to be held over the course of the HITS Thermal, Ocala, Arizona, Culpeper, and Saugerties circuits. Once riders have competed in the eight required qualifiers, accrued money is then counted towards the Pfizer USGPL Standings List. Come September, that list will provide the basis for deciding which riders are to jump for a top prize of \$350,000 in the Pfizer Million.

The HITS Desert Circuit in Thermal, California gets underway on Tuesday, January 26 and continues until Sunday, March 14. More information, including a copy of the 2010 HITS Desert Circuit prize list is available online at www.HitsShows.com.

Announcements on special classes, judges, course designers, prize money, and more will be made regularly for all of the HITS Horse Show circuits. To learn of the latest news, please become a fan of HITS’ page on Facebook and sign up to receive HITS’ Twitter updates.

For more information on qualifying for the Pfizer \$1 Million Grand Prix, [click here](#).