

Every Horse Show Exhibitor Dreams of Del Mar

The grand event is now in full swing.

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For more than 60 years the Del Mar National Horse Show has been one of the most respected, distinguished and popular equestrian events in Southern California. The horse show originally took place in conjunction with the world-renowned San Diego County Fair. Veteran competitors recall hopping on a tram that would shuttle them (clothed in their show attire) from the back gate to the bustling activity of the fair. But, like many horse shows once conjoined with state and county-run fairs, the Del Mar horse show outgrew its surroundings. There was simply too much demand for exposition hall space and parking lots. Hence, the equine events occur during the spring, while the ever-expanding fair takes place during the summer.

Yet, that doesn't keep the Del Mar National Horse Show from being one of the premier spectator draws for horse lovers. Consisting of three disciplines — western, dressage, and hunter/jumper — the Del Mar National Horse Show runs for extended weekends April 19 through May 6. The show is highlighted by three major Saturday night events that showcase the best equestrian competitors and performers.

The western week of competitions kicked off the Del Mar National Horse Show yesterday and runs through April 22. The spectacular equestrian showcase is the "Night of the Horse," which highlights horsemanship from some of the most highly respected equestrian performers in the world at 7 p.m. April 21.

Dates for the dressage week are April 26 through 29. The grand event is the "Evening of Musical Freestyles" dressage competition at 7 p.m. April 28. This is a qualifying competition for the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) 2007 World Equestrian Selection Trials and the 2007 USEF National Grand Prix Championship. The world-famous Budweiser Clydesdales, the symbol of quality and tradition for Anheuser-Busch since 1933, are scheduled to make an appearance during the show's intermission.

Dates for the 2007 hunter jumper week are May 1 through 6. This competition is highlighted by the "\$100,000 HBO Grand Prix of Del Mar," an American Grand Prix Association event, and is scheduled for 7 p.m. May 5.

Weekday competitions are free to the public. Tickets for the evening and weekend events are now available through Ticketmaster at (619) 220-8497 and online at www.ticketmaster.com. For more information on the 62nd annual Del Mar National Horse Show log onto www.delmarnational.com