

HI Spy: Share Your Horse Show Memories

As part of our monthly HI Spy, what's your special horse show memory?

Horse shows are about more than winning ribbons. They challenge our horsemanship skills. They teach us how to deal with adversity when things invariably go wrong. Through the emotional ups and downs, we develop close bonds with our horses and many of our fellow exhibitors. Whether we spend a lifetime on the show circuit or just compete occasionally, horse shows are responsible for some of our fondest memories.

Betty Jean Bullman recently recounted her favorite horse show memory. It concerned her faithful old horse Turning Point, a fiery chestnut Thoroughbred who maintained his zeal for showing until he was well into his twenties.

"He was a great horse," Bullman recalls wistfully. "I'll never forget the year I showed him at the big Del Mar horse show in an amateur jumper class. My horse had spent many years as a showjumper before I got him, and he seemed to recognize that he was about to be 'on stage.' He was all pumped up."

Bullman explains that to enhance the atmosphere of the high-stakes class, the show management played loud, upbeat music as each rider began their opening circle. The musical accompaniment seemed to evoke an extra zing of competitive spirit in her veteran show horse, and he arched his neck and bounded into a sprightly gallop.

"All the spectators — including people from our barn — could see that I could barely contain my horse. They were laughing and cheering me on at the same time. The lights, the crowds, the fancy jumps, the music ... it all made my horse act like he was five years old again. I had a great round," she concludes, "but I don't think I won a ribbon. What made it all so memorable was just the thrill of riding my horse under those special circumstances. I got a sense of what he must have been like in his prime. I think he had just as much fun that night, too."

What's your special horse show memory? Can you recall your first blue ribbon? Was there an instance when you overcame incredible odds to ride to victory? Did something funny happen at a horse show that still makes you laugh? As another installment of our monthly "HI Spy" series, we'd like to hear from you. Just click on [Submit a Comment](#) below. Some of the responses may be selected to appear in an upcoming issue of Horse Illustrated magazine!

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