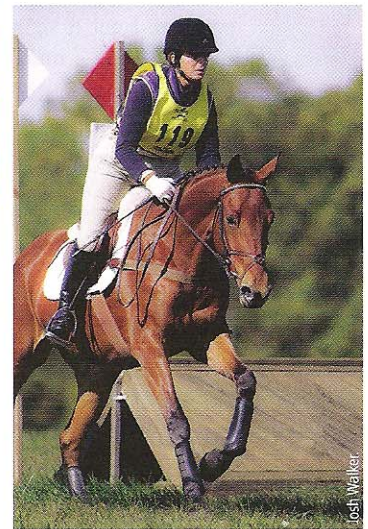
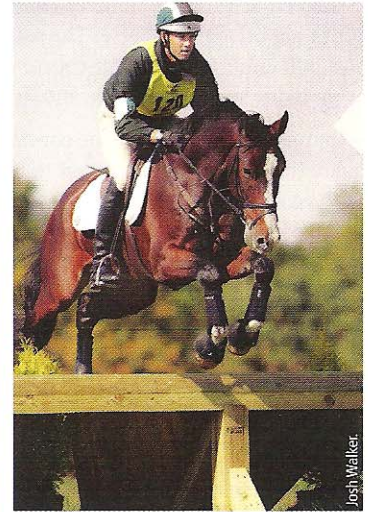
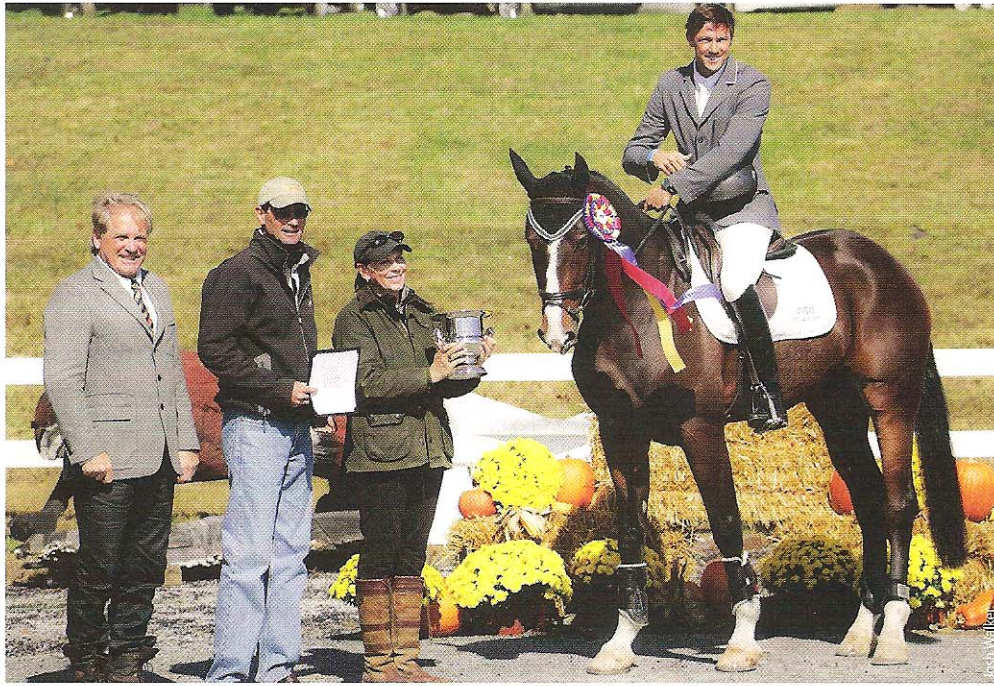




# Head of the Class:

## 2010 Spalding Labs/USEA Young Event Horse Championships



### Spalding Labs/USEA YEH Championships: EAST COAST

October 14-15 • Fair Hill International Three-Day Event  
Elkton, Maryland

Some familiar faces stood in the winners circle at this year's East Coast Spalding Labs/USEA Young Event Horse Championships at the Fair Hill International Three-Day Event; as well as some new blood.

Distinguished rider Will Coleman showed last year's West Coast Four-Year-Old YEH Champion, Artesian, to victory in the five-year-old division meanwhile, Matt Flynn, who won the Five-Year-Old East Coast Championship last year, brought a new mount, Boateng, to take home the Four-Year-Old Championship.

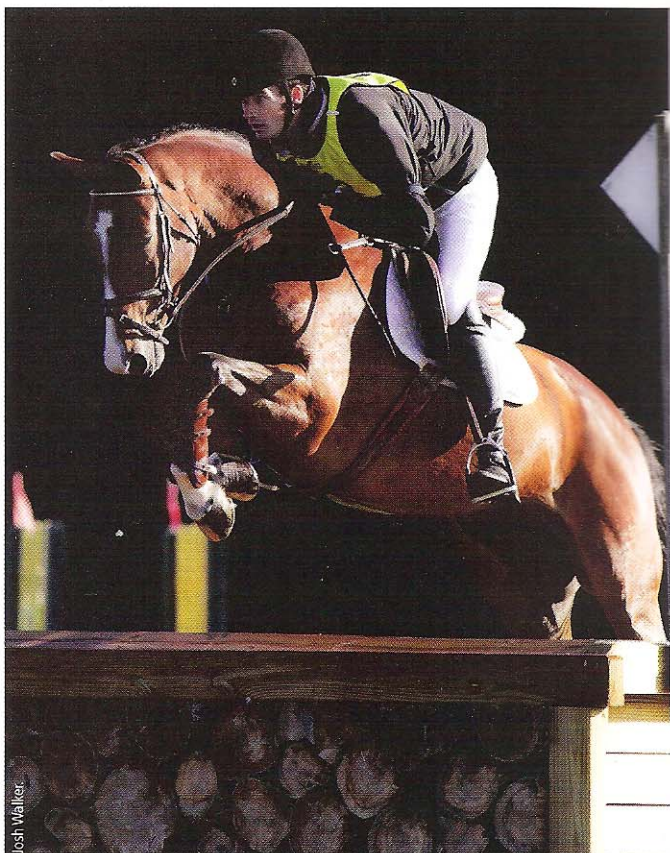
Artesian (Judgement x Shannondoah), a 16.3-hand Dutch Warmblood gelding now owned by Lucia Strini and Plain Dealing Farm, was shown last year with much success by west coast rider, Robyn Fisher. While Strini, 23, of Scottsville, Virginia, will ultimately become Artesian's primary rider, Coleman has recently managed the reins to help develop the young horse, with future international potential for Strini, who is recently out of college and also rode in the CCI2\* division at Fair Hill this year.

"He will hopefully be a good horse for Lucia," Coleman said.

"He's definitely a talented horse; scopey, powerful, and careful. He's got all of the raw ingredients, but is still a little green. He doesn't quite know what to do with all that power yet."

The Young Event Horse classes are composed of three phases: Conformation and Type, which is worth 15 percent of a pair's overall score; Dressage, worth 35 percent; and Jumping, worth 50 percent. Artesian scored 12.80, 29.75, and 41.25, respectively. His Conformation and Dressage marks were the highest of the division.

TOP LEFT: Will Coleman and Artesian accept the 2010 Five-Year-Old East Coast Spalding Labs/USEA Young Event Horse Championship. TOP: Artesian presented the best combination of style, jumping ability, learning ability, gallop, and overall general impression throughout all three phases of the competition. ABOVE: For a second consecutive year, Stephanie Baer's Rhicochet earned the Safe Harbor Award, given to the young horse who presents the most easy-going and rider-friendly performance of the competition.



ABOVE: "He's a fantastic mover and an awesome jumper," said Matt Flynn, rider of the Four-Year-Old Champion Boateng, a talented Dutch Warmblood gelding owned by Tyler and Bess Abell.

Coleman commented that a solid training program at home is the key to bringing along a gifted young horse like Artesian. After experiencing the YEH program first hand, he said, "I think the program is wonderful and aims to do the right things. It's a showcase for young horses and a great way to test yourself and see where your horse is compared to other young horses coming up the ranks."

While Coleman is not certain how much longer he'll ride Artesian, he is planning to compete him in some fall horse trials. But in the near future, "you'll be seeing Lucia on him for sure," he said.

Meanwhile, Flynn, who said winning last year's five-year-old YEH Championship helped him start a new program for importing and bringing young horses along, has proven with Tyler and Bess Abell's four-year-old,

Boateng, that his program is yielding positive results.

"He's part of a sales program," Flynn explained of the Dutch Warmblood gelding he imported in April from England. "But I want to bring him along further; he's pretty special. He's a fantastic mover and an awesome jumper, but, of course, he's still figuring everything out."

The pair earned the second highest dressage score of the division with a 27.65 in less than ideal conditions, as Thursday mimicked the relentless rain of last year. But this year, competitors performed in the main arena.

"There's definitely a lot for a young horse to look at in there," he said. "But it's a good setting for this class."

On Friday, the competition moved across the road to the Gallaher course, and the clouds

## YOUNG EVENT HORSE JUDGING CRITERIA

By MARILYN PAYNE

Co-Chairman, USEA Young Event Horse Committee

Editor's note: Marilyn is also an FEI "O" judge who officiated at the Hong Kong Olympics and most recently was President of the Ground Jury at WEG.

The YEH Committee is aware that some confusion exists regarding the way YEH competitions are scored. At the recent East Coast YEH Championship at Fair Hill, questions were raised about the jumping phase in particular, since the Five-Year-Old Champion had a problem with one obstacle but still ended up the overall winner.

Confusion is understandable, since YEH judging standards differ from the more clearcut penalties that are used in cross-country and show jumping at a "regular" event. The criteria are also different in the other YEH phases (conformation, dressage, and the gallop), but in this article I will address primarily the way jumping is scored, since that is the heart of the current concerns.

In the jumping phase, judges are not simply handing out penalties for refusals, run-outs and the like. Instead, they consider the following factors:

**STYLE:** This includes technique, bascule, use of front and hind end, use of neck and back, carefulness, and balance in approach and landing.

**JUMPING ABILITY:** Scope, power, effort, and coordination.

**LEARNING ABILITY:** Intelligence, rideability, willingness, response to aids. How a horse handles a mistake is an indication of aptitude for training.

**GALLOP:** Ease of gallop, ground cover, uphill balance and lightness, desire to go forward.

**GENERAL IMPRESSION:** Potential as a successful upper-level event horse.

The way "Learning Ability" was scored at Fair Hill has been questioned, because the ultimate winner of the Five-Year-Old Championship drifted toward the warm-up area while approaching a fence after a turn; the rider decided to circle and give the horse a better approach. The judges felt the horse was not focused on the jump; when he was clearly presented to it, he willingly jumped it. The judges marked this horse down significantly for "rideability" because of his problem with turning and straightening before the obstacle. Other horses who placed behind him in the final standings had higher scores in this area.

On the other hand, the eventual champion had higher scores for both the "jumping ability" and "gallop". Since the ability to jump and gallop is so essential for an upper level event horse, these two scores each have a co-efficient of two. For all these reasons, when the scores for the entire jumping and galloping section were added up, the horse who won the championship had the highest overall score. The day before, he had also received the highest score both in conformation and in dressage, which were judged by two additional judges. In the opinion of all four judges, he consistently led the five year old group.

If you'd like to know more about YEH and how it works, go to [www.useventing.com](http://www.useventing.com) and click on "Competitions", where you'll find everything you ever wanted to know under the Young Event Horse section—and maybe some things you haven't thought of! We welcome comments, questions and concerns from both owners and riders, so we can continue to clarify the judging standard and improve the YEH program. Please send your thoughts to [wendy@useventing.com](mailto:wendy@useventing.com).



cleared for sunny, if not slightly chilly, conditions. "They did a good job laying [the jumping course] out. It was really nice and flowing," he said. Judges awarded him and Boateng a 38.75 in that phase. Their final score was 78.55, only half a point ahead of Reserve Champions Mara Dean and Orlando.

Flynn also imported three other young horses this year for his program with the help of

the Abells, who he met through boarding at their barn in Gladstone, New Jersey. "They own two of the other horses too," Flynn said, "and they really enjoyed coming and watching. They are awesome owners."

Another familiar face to gain much deserved recognition at this year's Championship was Rhicochet, a five-year-old Irish Sport Horse/Oldenburg mare by Resonanz and out of Rhyme,



who received her second consecutive Safe Harbor Award.

Ridden once again by Stephanie Baer, the Safe Harbor Award is presented to the young horse who consistently exhibits the most graceful and rider friendly performance throughout the competition. The pair finished in fifth place in the five-year-old division with a score of 78.41, and posted the highest score in the jumping phase, a 41.75.



**FAR LEFT:** Owner Dara Brandt accepts Reserve Champion honors in the four-year-old division for her Bavarian Warmblood gelding, Orlando, who was ridden by Mara Dean of Round Hill, Virginia. **CENTER:** Debbie Adams and her own Adirimo, a Dutch Warmblood gelding, took second in the five-year-old division. **RIGHT:** Max McManamy rode her Trakehner gelding, Astro, to a 77.2 percent in the four-year-old division of the West Coast Championships.

## Spalding Labs/USEA YEH Championships: WEST COAST

September 24, Twin Rivers Fall Horse Trials

Paso Robles, California

By FRANKIE THIÉRIOT

As most horses perfected their dressage movements before starting the final event of Adequan USEA Gold Cup Series at the Twin Rivers Horse Trials, four- and five-year-old up-and-coming Eventing stars showcased their potential in the Spalding Labs/USEA Young Event Horse West Coast Championships.

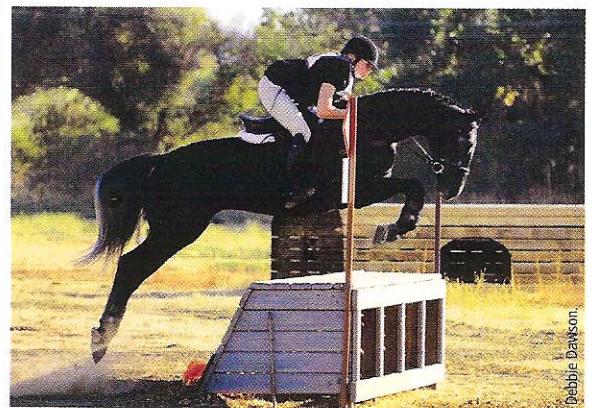
Amongst the group of young talent in the championship division, it was Lorie Fee's handsome dark grey, Good To Go, who brought home the shiny trophy and colorful ribbon in the five-year-old division.

Good To Go (Unbridled Time x Bogus Babe), a 16.1-hand off-the-track-Thoroughbred gelding, is a product of the CANTER (The Communication

Alliance to Network Thoroughbred Ex-Racehorses) program which takes racehorses who are no longer fit on the racetrack and finds them new careers and homes. Owner Lorie Fee had been told of the grey gelding, and after seeing him last April, decided he was the horse for her.

Scoring an 80 percent with rider Robyn Fisher, the lovely young horse looks to be quite competitive in the future.

In the four-year-old division, it was the dark bay Trakehner Astro (Baron Verdi x Astra), owned and ridden by Maxance McManamy and bred by New Spring Farm, who took home top honors. Astro put forth a strong performance in each of the disciplines to score a 77.2 percent.



**ABOVE:** Robyn Fisher and Lorie Fee's Thoroughbred gelding, Good To Go, dominated the five-year-old division in the West Coast YEH Championships winning with nearly six points between them and the Reserve Champion.

Max is no stranger to the Spalding Labs/USEA Young Event Horse Series. In past years, she had great success with her other mount, Project Runway. Project Runway has gone on to prove the validity of the program, having numerous top finishers thus far.

Most recently, he won the CCII\* at the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event. "He's only six, and he really proved himself to me this weekend and felt like a big horse," McManamy said after taking her victory gallop at Galway.