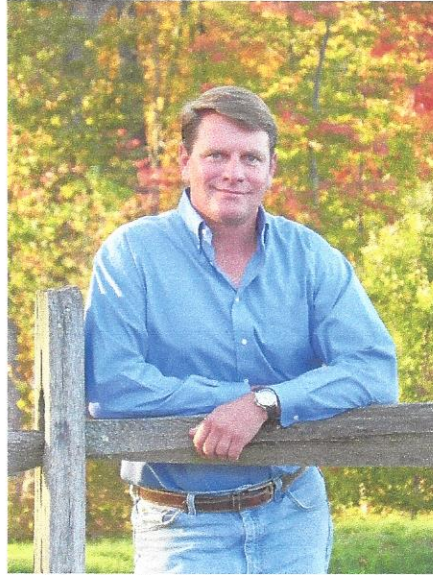


# The Bernardsville News

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## Essex Horse Trials returning to Far Hills



*Morgan Rowsell, owner of Rowsell Equestrian Design in Long Valley, is serving as co-chair of the Mars Essex Horse Trials, which is scheduled from June 24-25 at Moorland Farms in Far Hills.*

**FAR HILLS** – This is one event in which the “where” may be as exciting as the “what.”

After a 19-year absence, the Mars Essex Horse Trials, one of the top equestrian competitions, returns with a weekend of outdoor family-oriented events in the Somerset County countryside at historic Moorland Farm on Route 202 in Far Hills from June 24-25.

The picturesque 230-acre property provides a breathtaking setting in which attendees get can up-close-and-personal with nearly 200 horses and riders and be able to stroll the grounds throughout the weekend. It won't be open to the public again until the annual Far Hills Race Meeting in October.

“If you're from this area, you've probably driven by and wondered what's behind these gates besides a glimpse of the lush green lawn,” said Morgan Rowsell, co-chairman of the Essex Horse Trials. “And if you've never been here, this is a great opportunity to explore this beautiful part of the state.”

The two-day Mars Essex Horse Trials features “eventing,” often referred to as an “equestrian triathlon,” a competition that combines the elegance of dressage, the thrill of cross-country and the precision of show jumping.

There will also be a classic car show; The Farmstand, offering fresh farm-to-table food from local markets and specialties from artisan vendors; The Essex Market, offering a wide range of shopping from saddles and riding boots to jewelry and artwork; and a children's activity center sponsored by The Willow School of Bedminster.

Rowsell, owner of Rowsell Equestrian Design in Long Valley, has designed a course that will please riders, horses and attendees alike. The more than 100-year-old turf is considered to be among the finest in the country and he's laid out the grounds so attendees can walk the entire

park and get right up to the rails and rope lines to see the horses in action during all three equestrian events.



*Moorland Farm on Route 202 in Far Hills will host the Mars Essex Horse Trials, a top equestrian competition, from June 24-25.*

“Moorland Farm is the perfect place to bring back Essex,” said Rowsell, who designs 17 different horse shows each year. “There are not many venues in the country that have this setting. The infrastructure is in place, the course will naturally lead the riders and horses, depending on their level, across more than 3,000 yards and 28 obstacles and through a spectacular 125-foot-wide water jump. The farm is beautifully landscaped and maintained and 95 percent of the course is visible from the hillside.”

A former arborist by trade, Rowsell combines his hands-on experience as a competitive event rider with an innate understanding of trees and landscaping construction.

And he can always look home for support – his wife, Virginia, won the Essex Horse Trials in 1994 as a two-star champion during its original run at the U.S. Equestrian Team headquarters in Gladstone.

“We are very excited to have this event return to the area. It is a great opportunity for young riders to participate in a competition at such a beautiful farm in front of a big crowd with lots of atmosphere. It will be a real test for them,” said Virginia Rowsell.

General admission is \$10 in advance and includes admission for both days.

The Hoopstick Club offers a VIP experience with ringside seating adjacent to the Show Jumping arena and overlooking the water complex with additional vistas of the cross-country course. The hillside area provides tailgaters panoramic views of the entire event.

Proceeds will benefit the Greater Newark LifeCamp, which provides an enriching day camp experience for about 300 Newark-area youths per day for six weeks during July and August.

Tickets are available at all Peapack-Gladstone Bank locations and online at [www.essexhorsetrials.org](http://www.essexhorsetrials.org).