



New horse selling/buying endeavor brings outside tech into the equestrian arena.

by Kim F. Miller

It didn't take long for rising Grand Prix jumping star Mavis Spencer to sign on with start-up company The Equine Platform. She didn't know much about the thriving luxury car marketing companies Donny Gath operates, but she recognized the equestrian world applications of his expertise early in his call to recruit her to the new company.

The Equine Platform is a business-to-business online service out to streamline the horse buying and selling process. Open only to professionals who meet EP's approval, the web-based service begins with collecting and providing extensive details on for-sale horses. Buyers enter their criteria and are automatically sent a match as frequently as a "robust database" finds them. If the prospective buyer wants to proceed to the next step and try the horse out, the EP becomes a concierge service to assist with all aspects of the sale—from a trial ride or trial period to arranging vet checks and finalizing a sale contract.

"We've been one of the few industries that doesn't have technology to help us," Mavis explains. "I immediately liked the idea of using technology to make the buying/selling process more like it is in real estate." Existing horse listing services are "more like browsing for something on Craig's

List,” she notes. Whereas the EP’s database enables buyers to search within specific parameters: a 1.4M horse that’s under 12 and within a certain price range, for example.

The site has been up just a few months, and the EP team has already exceeded launch hopes of having 100 training barns on board: they have 300, plus about 100 professionals using the “ISO” (in search of) function to look for their ideal horse, Mavis relays.

The Equine Platform purports to market the seller’s horse well beyond a trainer’s typically limited sphere of influence and to take over the time-consuming aspects of marketing a horse and seeing through its sale. Three percent of the horse’s final sale price is EP’s fee and there are no restrictions on offering the same horse for sale through other channels. The approval process for using the EP involves steps verifying that the prospective user conducts a professional business with some track record of buying and selling horses. Weeding out the looky-loos at the outset is one of several steps to streamline the process for professionals.

The Equine Platform also buys horses.

Along with Mavis, the EP team is comprised of junior rider Kendall Gath; an ambitious jumper rider and Donny Gath’s daughter; Samantha Rivera, formerly the Southern California saddle specialist for Voltaire Design; and Patrick Pellin, the Gaths’ private trainer. Patrick hails from Brazil and has ridden for Enrique Gonzalez and Eduardo Menezes’ E2 Stables for the past several years.

The team is based in Southern California and is focusing on the West Coast initially in terms of pitching the service to clients. The website is open to all and long term plans include expanding throughout the country and globally and to extending beyond the hunter/jumper market to represent horses in dressage and other disciplines.

The EP’s current physical homebase is the same privately-owned Rancho Santa Fe facility where E2 Stables is based for part of the year. The team will be at HITS Thermal starting this month and throughout the whole circuit.

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For more information, visit www.theequineplatform.com.

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