

### ***Coto de Caza Equestrian Center to undergo substantial upgrades & seek permanent equestrian use.***

South Orange County's Coto Equestrian Center is about to undergo \$1.5 million of enhancements designed to restore it to its former luster. Situated in the exclusive community of Coto de Caza, the 24.2-acre facility will house several new structures and feature extensive additional landscaping with drought-tolerant plants.



Designed by Eddie Milligan, Jr., who also designed the Los Angeles Equestrian Center, in 1969, Coto was the site of the 1984 Olympic Pentathlon, where the U.S. earned bronze and silver medals. Today it is home to several trainers and a base for competitive and recreational riders alike. Getting the Center designated for permanent equestrian use is underway simultaneous with the upgrades.

Capacity will remain the same at about 270 horses as the improvements take place. Among the planned new improvements are a state-of-the-art Plaza Barn, Hunt & Saddle Lounge, Event Lounge and an equestrian office.

Signe Radovich explains that the renovations were made possible first by the non-profit to for-profit transition of the Silver -Bronze Corporation, which owns the recreational properties within the Coto de Caza community. A board of directors member for the corporation and a longtime Orange County horse enthusiast, Signe says the stable's existence was not under serious threat.

The news, however, follows several years of uncertainty regarding the Center's fate and discussions and negotiations between community members and developers. This was amidst the longstanding backdrop of pressure to make the most profitable use of land that exists state-wide and especially in highly desirable residential neighborhoods.



A proactive approach was needed to create the funds required to upgrade then maintain the facility going forward, Signe says. Part of the new plan involved allowing a parcel to be developed as 13 “luxury equestrian homes” called Oak Grove. Another part is creating multi-use capabilities for the indoor arena for weddings, corporate events, etc. Horse shows are also a possibility. “The money derived from that will go directly to future capital expenditures and to maintain the upgrades,” Signe says. The Silver-Bronze Corporation looked at the Menlo Circus Club and the former Brookside Equestrian Center in Walnut as multi-use models as it researched options.

The Corporation is also working with state and county agencies to create an easement and other designations that will ensure the Center’s preservation into perpetuity.

### **Beautiful Place**

The Equestrian Center’s beautiful property is woven through with trees and trails. Architect Leland Stearns says he will use materials that are compatible and harmonious with the rustic ambiance including local river stone for the bases of buildings, old barn wood siding, red windows and doors and galvanized sheet metal roofs. Interiors will feature large wood plank and concrete grouted floors, lath and plaster walls and exposed rafter ceilings. Historic photos and paintings will line many of the walls.

Consistent with the existing natural vegetation, including massive California oak and California sycamore trees, the landscaping will include such drought-tolerant plantings as California sage, ceanothus, rosemary, echium and native cactus.



The recent revitalization of the water wells on the 24.2 acres has eliminated Coto Equestrian Center’s landscaping water needs from the Santa Margarita Water District. The construction of

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Written by CRM

Tuesday, 04 August 2015 22:11

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a water tower will serve as an iconic entry feature and gathering place. The tower also will supply water pressure to an improved irrigation system that replaces the job currently performed inefficiently by a water truck. The tower's perforated design with small holes, appearing as if they were created by shotgun pellets, will allow a small stream of water to fill a large basin where riders can water their horses.

The Coto Equestrian Center is home to several trainers, including dressage trainer and Equine Simulator proprietor Barbro Ask-Upmark, of Always A Good Ride, LLC. The upgrades, she says, "are very exciting."

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### Coto Equestrian Center Trainers

#### **Always a Good Ride**

Dressage and Equine Simulator

Barbro-Ask Upmark • 831-596-4999 • [www.alwaysagoodride.com](http://www.alwaysagoodride.com)

#### **Amber Smigel Dressage**

Amber Smigel • 949-355-5622 • [www.ambersmigeldressage.com](http://www.ambersmigeldressage.com)

#### **Benchmark Farm**

Hunter/Jumper

Marci Mosconi • 949-280-7486 / Emily Trowbridge • 949-292-5543 • [marcim92679@aol.com](mailto:marcim92679@aol.com)

#### **Equine Service International**

Hunter/Jumper

Katie Berney • 949-246-8827 • [ESIJUMPHI@gmail.com](mailto:ESIJUMPHI@gmail.com)

#### **Heritage**

Hunters/Jumpers; Specializing in Equitation

Caroline Bonham • 949-322-1768

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### **Kellogg Equestrian Academy**

Hunter/Jumper, Equestrian Pilates, Equine Bodyworker

Sue Kellogg-Graf • 949-290-1420 • [www.keahorses.com](http://www.keahorses.com)

### **Longwood Equestrian**

Hunter/Jumper

Richard Slocum • 540-270-9994 / David Bustillos • 949-433-4056 / Allison LaJoie • 949-616-2466

### **Scarteen Farms**

Hunters, Jumpers, Equitation, Lessons

Alison Shered • 949-422-9839

### **Shadow Run Farms**

Hunters, Jumpers, Equitation, Lessons, Sales

Michael Croopnick • 949-233-3102

### **Silver Creek Farms**

Western Pleasure, Lessons, Shows, Sales

Diana Good • 949-285-2010

### **Summer Valley Equestrian**

Brittany Maguire • 949-292-3188 / Jacque Parker • 949-922-3950

### **Sun Stables**

Jill LaRue • 714-501-8087 • [jmlarue29@gmail.com](mailto:jmlarue29@gmail.com)

### **Turning Point Farms**

Hunter/Jumper

Theresa Petyo • 949-677-FARM / Amanda Swendseid • 949-235-7988

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### White Horse Training

Dressage

Jennifer Reynen • 949-400-0600 • [jreynen@att.net](mailto:jreynen@att.net) • [www.whitehorsetrainingoc.com](http://www.whitehorsetrainingoc.com)