



This trend is no longer unique to Wellington. As land becomes more expensive and harder to maintain, many new buyers are finding it very difficult to put the puzzle pieces together, so they can have an Equestrian Facility that makes sense both economically and can function well for the owners needs and horses safety.

One of the nicest new farms recently built in Wellington accomplished this objective extremely well on one of the smallest equestrian lots available. Only 1.84 acres and right across the street from the Winter Equestrian Festival, this property was overlooked by many buyers for years, however, last spring Patricia "Trish" Hurter, an avid equestrian from Massachusetts, partnered up with experienced custom builder Derrick Gale from Gale Construction and together they created a "dream farm" on this small well positioned lot..

After renting a condo for her family and stalls for her horses for several years, Trish decided she really needed to build a place so her horses could be comfortable. First and foremost she wanted a "horse friendly" 7-8 stall barn with lots of turnout and since she was a jumper, she needed a large ring at least 100 ft x 200 ft, or more. In addition, her kids wanted a pool (with a Jacuzzi for recovering from unscheduled dismounts) and she needed a groom's quarters for her help. These desires along with the already existing 5000 sq ft house and the town's manure requirements made this an almost impossible challenge for any builder to squeeze together. With the help of Derrick Gale they accomplished everything they set out to do and the result is amazing!

In the interview on the next page, both Trish and Derrick share some of their advice to help others over the hurdles of building BIG farms on small lots.

Derrick Gale
and
Trish Hurter

SMALL FARMS WIN BIG IN WELLINGTON

I was in love with the town of Wellington the first time I came down from Maryland to play polo back in 1994. There were horses everywhere during the winter season and it was heaven to live in a town built around the magnificent animal that I adored. Before relocating to Florida, I had truly felt blessed to have grown up all my life in an area sprawling with 100+ acre horse farms, rolling hills, hay fields and land everywhere, so it was quite a shock to see all the spectacular equestrian farms in this new town, known for its record high concentration of horses, rarely have more than 2 to 5 acres of land. I quickly realized that it was quite an art to design a high functioning equestrian facility worthy of the valuable horses that competed here and soon it became my passion to specialize in this type of real estate.

By Marysue Jacobs



MSJ- Trish, what did you look for when you were choosing a builder?

"I needed someone who could oversee the entire project since I would be up in Massachusetts and couldn't be there very often. I met Derrick 9 years ago when I was renting a room in a house he had remodeled. During the time I was there he was also building a new barn.

The new barn when completed turned out really well and we decided to interview him again for our job nine years later. He was honest and understood what we needed to make the project horse friendly. I needed someone who would listen to what was important to me and make it happen. Communication was essential to make the final product perfect".

MSJ- Derrick, how do you start a project like this one with so many different pieces?

"I get to know the homeowner, by sitting down and listening to all their needs. Then I work with my design team and come up with several options to show the owner. Its how the Custom Build process works"

MSJ- Trish, What little things did you have to take into consideration when building?

"The biggest layout issues were fitting in the absolute maximum number of the largest possible paddocks, since I really like my horses turned out all day. Two of my horses need to move, since I have one older horse and one prone to stocking up. I also wanted two of the stalls to have indoor/outdoor access with small turn-outs. We tried to make the barn as comfortable for the horses as possible, so I put in extras like stall mattresses, a fly spray system, rubber pavers and airy ceilings with fans."

MSJ- Derrick, what was the biggest obstacle you faced in making your plan come together?

"The two biggest obstacles we faced designing on a small lot, were one, making sure there was easy accessibility to all amenities on the farm and two, working with the municipality's setbacks and health department rules and regulations.

MSJ-Trish, what advice would you give fellow Equestrians when buying, building or remodeling a new farm?

"If building find a great builder like Derrick who does really high quality work, has lots of experience with similar projects and knows how to negotiate through the extremely complex permitting process. If buying, the old saying location, location, location is really true. I love being so close to the horse show. I almost bought a farm quite a bit further away that was ready to go and I am glad now, that I changed my mind and took on the project to remodel and design my own.



MSJ- Derrick, what are a few things Equestrians don't think about or realize when you are trying to put together their dream farms?

"Equestrians don't usually think about the drainage issues, building codes, restrictions on building sizes and how their farm will affect the neighboring farms."

MSJ- Derrick, I understand they are very strict manure rules that have caused tremendous problems for all Equestrians particularly in Wellington, what issues do you face to be able to keep the town happy?

"The manure is ugly, stinks and attracts a lot of flies. We have spent the past 3 years designing and engineering a new system that will not only beautify your manure bin, but, will also cut down on about 80% of the flies that manure attracts it exceeds all of the zoning and engineering rules and regulations."

MSJ- Trish, having gone through the process so recently, would you have changed anything now that you look back?

"Not that I can think of, I totally love how it turned out. I'm so happy I took the plunge and my horses seem happy and are jumping very well too!"

MSJ- Derrick, what advice do you give equestrians considering building a new farm or adding on to their existing farms?

"Pick a builder who you are not only comfortable with, but, also one you can work with and one who understands the horse farm industry. One, who isn't spread too thin, can accommodate your needs and treats you as if you are their only customer. It's also good to be open to new ideas and products that are available.



Photos L to R from top down: 5,000 sq ft remodeled home with lots of paddocks; back view of the farm with ring, grooms house and barn; 8 stall CBS center aisle barn with tack and feed rooms; front of 8 stall barn; large jumping ring; side of barn and the new manure bin invention patented by Gale construction.

Patricia "Trish" Hurter – Seasoned Jumper riding at WEF. Senior VP for 4 years at Vertex Pharmaceuticals
Derrick Gale – President of Gale Construction, 30 years experience in building equestrian farms and estate homes 561-248 -9939

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