

# Memo Received



2010: It couldn't have been a better day. Erica Hughes, my scribe, and I judged the Tack Room Competition at Upperville Colt and Horse Show on a balmy and bright Tuesday, June 8. Tommy Lee Jones, horse show manager, must have gotten the memo. Waiting for me at the office was not just a golf cart, but a large, comfortable and clean Kubota. Even more appropriate for this important competition, the Kubota was designed in camouflage. Stealth is a ploy upon which we secret judges rely.

We visited over 60 tack rooms in 3 hours; most were neat, workmanlike and pulled together by the show stable's primary colors, matching trunks and coolers. Even tack rooms that weren't fancy had ground poles defining the stables' space, mulch, hanging baskets, artwork and nice signage. Impressively clean bridles and saddles were displayed on traditional fixtures. Dogs were sleeping in every tack room.

The 2010 clear cut winner was *Eight Oaks*, Kitty and John Barkers' corner tack room near the main ring. Abundant landscaping of young trees, leafy shrubs and ornamentation, created a haven right off the busy main thoroughfare. The bubbling water fountain looked and sounded refreshing and gave the tack room an intimate feel. Small statuary placed on the perimeter and around the corner of the stall area extended the tack room. It looked the perfect spot for morning coffee while reading the *Wall Street Journal* on Kindle or iPad.

Second place went to *Belle Grey* on the jumper side of Rte 50, the John Mosby Highway. The location of the tack room meets strong sun all day long. The owners put together a cool looking space with console table, metal sculptures and bushy shrubs separating the sun-drenched field ring from the relaxing respite of the tack room.

In third place, *Windy Hill* showed great style. Facing the hunter schooling ring, a three panel mirrored screen was the back drop for a tall pottery urn fountain. Pretty flowers, tall plants and benches kept the space simple, open and welcoming.



In all, we looked for a cool space where a rider could step out of the sun and recharge before the call for the next class.

The horse show is like a reunion. Familiar faces from the Upperville Fire Department attended the food concession. Helen Wiley and Claudia Young manned the Fauquier SPCA beer trailer. Janet Hitchen was on the grounds shooting for clients while official show photographer Teresa Ramsey was busy at every ring. We saw Betty Oare, Jane Gaston, Betsee Parker, Kitty Barker, Tony Workman, Liz Callar, Wendy and Paul Mathews and Judy Gilman. Anne Garnett had a perfect stable location. Denise Perry had a festive tack room. Jay Golding was walked by a large fluffy white dog. Jessamy Rouson showed us her nice young horse. Jonelle Stern told us her new boots fit beautifully. Rosemarie Bogley was at her usual ringside space. My scribe drove around the rings several times so I could say hello to everyone and have a 2 minute catch-up conversation every few feet.

At three o'clock, Ginny McCarty, show secretary, was tapping her foot when we turned in the judging card and the Kubota. Tommy forgot to mention he commandeered (that's akin to theft to a woman) the show secretary's *official* camouflaged Kubota for the day. "I told you not to leave the keys in the ignition, Ginny!" I overheard Tommy Lee respond to Ginny's huff and puff. Erica and I scooted to the ice cream stand. Chocolate and vanilla twist cone in hand, satisfied with our job well done, we headed back to Horse Country in Warrenton to watch the Upperville Hunter Ring live stream on the Internet.

See you soon,

*Marion*

Horse Country, Warrenton, VA



***Horse Country will again judge the Tack Room contest at the 158th Upperville Colt and Horse Show on June 7, 2011. Our hats go off to the show committee and sponsors for adding all-weather footing to the perimeter of main ring.***



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