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EQUINE

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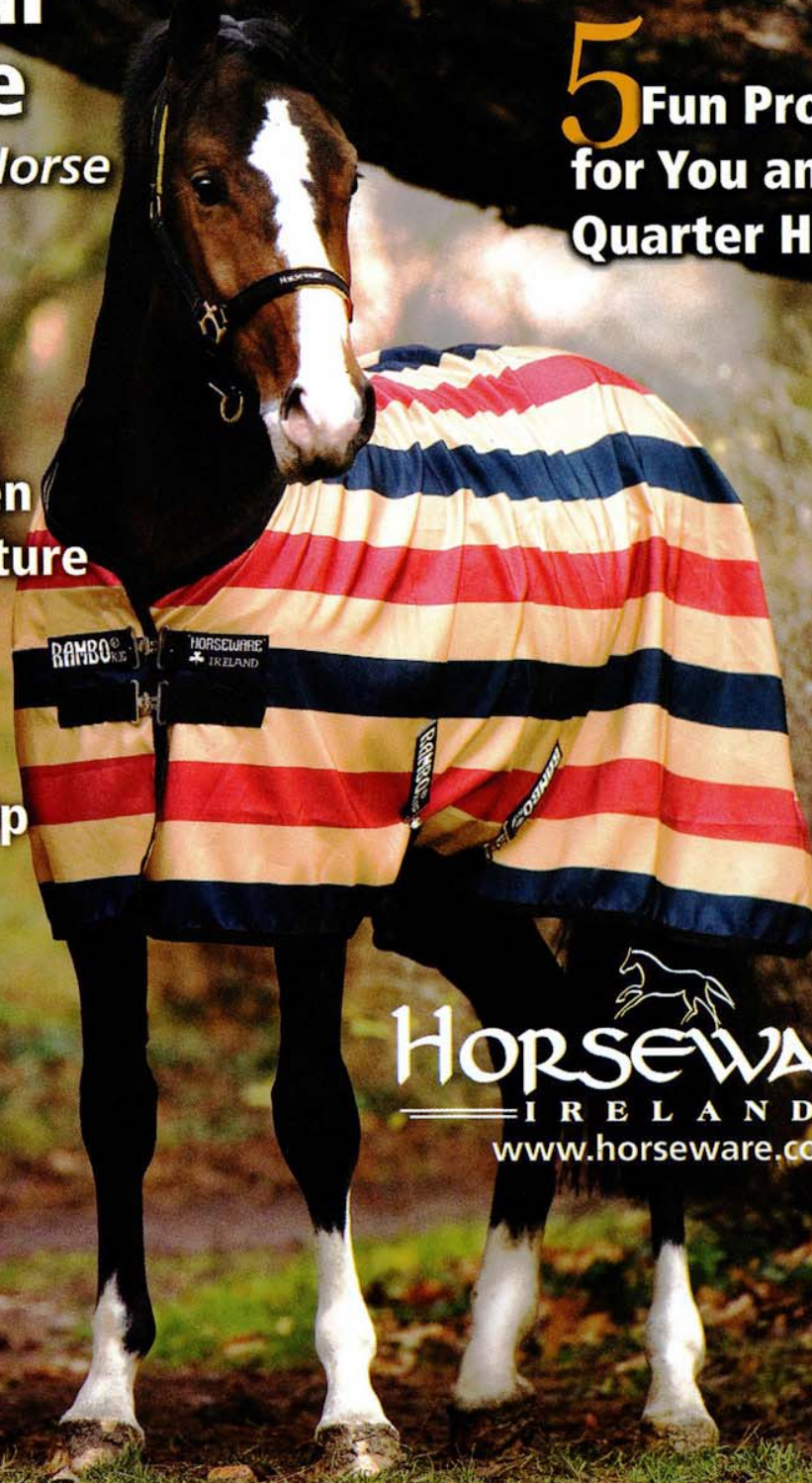
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*Falkirk Farm in
Central Valley, New York
is a privately owned
facility as well as the
summer headquarters for
Olympian Todd Minikus.*

Design

FOR THE EQUINE

By Susan Winslow

At one time or another, we've all heard an exasperated mother cry, "Did you grow up in a barn?" The answer from most of us who love horses would be, "I wish!" To horse owners, the barn is a place where we recharge our batteries and find a much needed catharsis away from the stress and chaos of everyday life. Perhaps it is the order and routine of caring for animals or the simple fact that barns are fun, but the fact is, spending time in a barn is good for the

soul. While most barns are built purely for function, some barn owners have added signature touches and architectural elements that elevate their horses' living accommodations to a whole new level. While it is always enjoyable to check out other peoples' barns, those with an added flair are irresistible to curious horse owners who enjoy touring barns with unique features as much or more than houses with gourmet kitchens.

**Elegance and Beauty
Falkirk Farm, Carla and Wayne Corts,
Central Valley, New York**

In Central Valley, New York, Carla and Wayne Corts have combined a designer's eye and a builder's know-how to create a home that can only be described as a dream farm. Falkirk Farm is privately owned by the Corts family, and it is the summer headquarters for Olympian Todd Minikus. At Falkirk, Carla Corts has recaptured the grandeur of a bygone era with



the restoration of the mansion and grounds at the property once known as Falkirk Psychiatric Hospital, a private sanctuary built in the 1800s for well-heeled clients with psychiatric issues. Carla says, "When we found it, the place had been neglected for years. It was in rough shape, but my husband is a developer, and we could see the potential here. I feel like we have



become the caretakers rather than just the owners of this property, and it has been a rewarding challenge to restore the elegant home and surrounding grounds to their original beauty. It has also become a great horse property."

The Corts' daughter, Tori, is following in her mother's footsteps with her love of horses. Training with Todd Minikus for the past five years, this talented eighteen



year old with Olympic dreams, has risen through the ranks to become a top Junior rider, showing fulltime in the High Junior Jumpers this year with her eye on Grand Prix. To support their daughter's career choice, Carla and her husband built a state of the art facility on the property for Tori and her trainer. She explains, "I visited many facilities and read everything I could get my hands on to plan this facility. Because so much of our family life revolves around our daughter's riding, and Todd has a busy schedule here, I spend a lot of time in the barn. I wanted a facility that would offer comfortable spaces for both horses and people while carrying over some of the architectural features of

the house."

The facility is now five years old, and Carla is pleased that her attention to detail has paid off in a farm that runs smoothly, yet has a unique appeal. Her special touches are everywhere, from the flower boxes and magnificent horse sculpture in the stable yard to the richly textured Oriental rug in the tack room. A high barreled ceiling soars above roomy box stalls trimmed in elegant grillwork, and Doric columns line the stable aisles, paying homage to the architecture of the main house. Wash stalls and grooming areas are conveniently located near the arena and stable area. In the center of it all, the main entrance foyer features starburst pattern pavers, a huge, glass-front trophy case, and walls covered in warm Ralph Lauren tones accented with vibrant Katherine Savage paintings.

Two sets of double doors lead from the foyer into a sprawling 100' x 200' heated indoor arena, awash in natural light from a wall of retractable glass-paned doors. The clubhouse area is done in the same jewel tones as the main house, with a cheery eat-in kitchen, stylish office and a game room resembling an English pub, complete with deep leather chairs, rich wood paneling, full bar and billiards table. Carla sums up her attachment to this special property, "I am blessed to be able to have this farm and such a wonderful trainer as part of it. It is fun, exciting, and it is my life." She offers this advice to anyone wishing to add a personal touch to their barn, "Find the style you are comfortable with and go for it."