



TWIN RIVERS SPRING INTERNATIONAL

Preview: Top West Coast Riders Set to Compete in Twin Rivers Spring International

April 11, 2023

By Jonathan Horowitz

Paso Robles, CA — With the increasing success West Coast eventers are having nationally and internationally, the Twin Rivers Spring International holds an important place on the calendar. It's the first of two FEI events that Twin Rivers Ranch in Paso Robles, California, will host in 2023, with competition taking place April 13-16. It represents the final international event in the United States Eventing Association's (USEA) Area VI before riders based in California head out of state for FEI competitions during the rest of the spring and the summer. The FEI calendar will then resume in the Golden State with the Twin Rivers Fall International on Sept. 21-24.

There are three riders entered in the 2023 Twin Rivers Spring International that will be using the event as a final prep on their four respective horses before the Land Rover Kentucky Three-Day Event later in the month. In addition, the CCI3*-L at Twin Rivers serves as the first Selection Trial of 2023 for the U.S. team that will compete at the 2023 Pan American Games in Santiago, Chile, at the end of October.

The California-based Kentucky-bound riders are: James Alliston with Nemesis (Novalis 46 x Maesy) and Karma (Escudo II x Travita); Tamie Smith with Elliot V (Zavall VDL x Vera-R); and Rebecca Braitling with Caravaggio II (Vangelis-S x Courtesan).



Rebecca Braitling and Caravaggio II winning the CCI4-S at the 2022 Twin Rivers Fall International. Ride On Photo.*

“Twin allows you to either go and decide you want to enter something for a confidence run; it allows you to get a four-short if you need it and need to have a proper run,” said Braitling, who is preparing “Ernie” for both his and her first ever trip to Kentucky. “And, you have the option to run a combined test if you feel like the horse doesn’t need to go cross-country because you really are only two weeks before Kentucky. The great thing is it’s absolutely at the level, but you can choose which part of it you’re actually going to tackle.”

Braitling and the 12-year-old British Sport Horse gelding owned by Arnell Sporthorses won their first blue ribbon together in the CCI4*-S at the 2022 Twin Rivers Fall International and are entered in Advanced at the Spring International.

Alliston, who has used Twin Rivers as his final run before his last six trips to Kentucky—2013 to 2017 and then his return in 2022—has Nemesis and Karma entered in the CCI4*-S, with Nemesis eyeing his first CCI5*-L and Karma the CCI4*-S in Kentucky.

“It was awesome. It’s hard to keep bringing horses through to that level, and it had been a little bit,” he said about returning to the Land Rover Kentucky Three-Day Event last year after a five-year absence. “So, hopefully now I can keep going back with the horses we have coming through. It’s really exciting to be there. It’s what you work towards all through the year but also in your career. You want to be showing at these big shows at the top of the sport, at the pinnacle of the sport.”

Alliston and Nemesis, a 9-year-old Canadian Warmblood gelding, won at Advanced at Twin Rivers and then finished third in the CCI4*-S in Kentucky in 2022. For Karma, Alliston Equestrian’s 9-year-old Oldenburg mare, Twin Rivers will represent her four-star debut before the four-star in Kentucky.

“I hope it’s a good performance in all phases and use the cross-country as a bit of fitness, not go crazy out there, but definitely go quick enough where we spike their fitness a little bit and definitely want to try and go well and be full of confidence for Kentucky,” he said about his approach heading into this year’s Twin Rivers Spring International.



James Alliston and Nemesis winning at Advanced at the 2022 Twin Rivers Spring International. Sherry Stewart photo.

Smith will compete in the CCI4*-S at Twin Rivers with Elliot V, who won at Advanced at the 2023 Twin Rivers Winter H.T., before the 14-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding owned by the Elliot V Partnership tackles the CCI4*-S in Kentucky.

“I’m excited to get over to Twin, and then we’ll head out to Kentucky, and then we’ll go to Tryon, and then figure out where to go from there,” Smith said, as she prepares for her first events outside of California in 2023 following a successful 2022 that saw her compete in both CCI5*-L in the United States, as well as at Badminton in England and at the FEI World Championships at Pratoni in Italy.



Tamie Smith and Elliot V winning at Advanced at the 2023 Twin Rivers Winter H.T. Ride On Photo.

Smith will ride Cheers (Blauer Vogel x Qtrapastree) in the CCI3*-L at Twin Rivers, which is a Selection Trial for the 2023 Pan American Games.

“It’s super important for us, not only for preparing our horses for Kentucky, but also our younger horses, and also it’s a Pan Am selection trial,” Smith said about the significance of the Twin Rivers Spring International.

The other entrants for the CCI3*-L are: Helen Alliston and Flinterro Z (Figaro B x Sara’s Muse); Kayleen Crowley and Whiskey Up (Worthy Opponent x Travita); and Lauren Billys Shady, an international rider representing Puerto Rico, and Can Be Sweet (Candyman x Tres Belle). Helen Alliston won the CCI4*-S with Ebay (Escudo x Komtessa) at the 2022 Twin Rivers Spring International before she and Alliston Equestrian’s gray Oldenburg gelding then went on to capture the \$60,000 Adequan USEA Advanced Final at the AEC at Rebecca Farm in Kalispell, Montana, later in the year.

There are six entries for the CCI4*-S in 2023, the most that have competed at the level at the Twin Rivers Spring International in five years. There are a total of 61 entries across all FEI levels in 2023, including the first-ever CCI*1-L at Twin Rivers. That ties for the most in the event’s history since 2019, the year that the new classification for FEI levels was introduced.

“We’re thrilled with how many top-level riders are making Twin Rivers a part of their show season and look forward to a great competition this year,” organizer Connie Baxter said. “It means a lot that we’re a

Selection Trial for the Pan Am Games. So, it's going to be special to follow riders from Twin Rivers when they go to Kentucky and potentially to Chile.”

With the goal of giving home-state riders the best opportunity for what lies ahead against top competition from around the country and the world, the Baxter family that has owned and operated Twin Rivers since 2001 brought on Morgan Rowsell (FEI Level 3 and USEA “S” course designer) to design the FEI cross-country courses in 2022.

“As far as the standard is concerned, I was impressed with all the riders out there,” Rowsell said. “I feel confident that I can push it a little bit now.”

The team that will design the cross-country courses in 2023 includes Rowsell for the CCI4*-S and Advanced tracks, Adri Doyal for the remaining international levels, and Marc Grandia for the remaining national levels.

“I have incorporated angles and more corners—they built another corner for me—and using the water in a different way, so, yeah, it's been a great experience,” Rowsell said. “I enjoy it out there. It's a good group of people that's dedicated. They've given me some leeway. They have a lot of material to work with. Adri, their builder, is excellent. It's been a very positive experience from my end. I hope the riders keep getting what they want out of it, and so far so good.”

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