



## ***TWIN RIVERS SPRING INTERNATIONAL RECAP***

### **A Confidence-Boosting Event at the Twin Rivers Spring International**

April 13, 2025

By Jonathan Horowitz

*Paso Robles, CA* — The Twin Rivers Spring International showed that there isn't just one right answer when preparing your horse.

The CCI4\*-S served as a qualifier in the US Equestrian Open of Eventing, but before the \$200,000 finals at Morven in Virginia on October 9-12, seven of the 11 horses were competing in their final prep before the approximately 2,300-mile haul to Lexington for the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event in two weeks.

James Alliston swept four of the top-five placings, led by his Kentucky five-star hopeful Karma (Escudo II x Travita), as he went for speed on cross-country.

On the other hand, Bec Braitling chose to complete just part of the final phase of cross-country on Caravaggio II (Vangelis-S x Courtesan) before retiring—"just ran the top field to give him a little sprint and pulled up, so he's ready to go," she described.

Both riders were pleased with their plans as they look ahead to a return to Kentucky after both horses made their five-star debuts there last year.

Other highlights in the FEI levels included:

- Marc Grandia and the young 8-year-old Levino (Lint x R-Cora II) had a successful move-up to CCI3\*-L and were the only pair at the level to finish on their dressage score.
- Erin Kellerhouse and Bon Vivant GWF (Banderas x Power Point) won the CCI3\*-S, returning to glory at the level they won at the 2023 Twin Rivers Fall International.
- LS Crown Royal (Comte x Estefania) made his FEI debut with Jordan Linstedt a winning one in the CCI2\*-L.
- Coco Chanel (Cascadello I x U-lotti), who competed up to two-star in Europe, won the CCI2\*-S for her third win in three starts since partnering with Kaylawna Smith-Cook in the United States this year. They previously won at Training and in the CCI1\*-S at events at Galway in Temecula, California.
- High Five DF (Herald 3 x Columbia BF), who has shown at Twin Rivers since Future Event Horse competitions as a yearling in 2018, won an FEI event for the first time with Jennifer McFall in the CCI1\*-L.
- The 70 entries across the CCI4\*-S, CCI3\*-L, CCI3\*-S, CCI2\*-L, CCI2\*-S, and CCI1\*-L levels was a record for an FEI event held at Twin Rivers Ranch in Paso Robles, California.



*James Alliston and Karma in the CCI4\*-S at the 2025 Twin Rivers Spring International.  
Atalya Boytner Photography*

Karma was champion in a CCI4\*-S at Twin Rivers for the second time, having previously been victorious at the 2023 Twin Rivers Fall International. The 11-year-old bay Oldenburg mare that has represented the United States at Boekelo in the Netherlands and Aachen in Germany was the only horse to finish inside the optimum time on the four-star cross-country track designed by Morgan Rowse. She added just 0.8 time penalties on William Robertson's show jumping course to her dressage score of 36.4 for a finishing score of 37.2.

"It felt good," Alliston said. "I was maybe a little rusty with her. I need to ride her a little better in two weeks, but she's an awesome horse."



*James Alliston and Cora in the CCI4\*-S at the 2025 Twin Rivers Spring International.  
Liz Corkett for Atalya Boytner Photography*

Alliston was also second with Cora (Commissario x La-Montana), the winner of the CCI4\*-S at the 2024 Twin Rivers Fall International. Plus, he was third Irish Pop (Inliner x Norma Jean) in the horse's four-star debut and fifth with his previous Kentucky five-star mount Paper Jam (Paparazzo x Reely Jamin).

“It was good to get them in the heat of battle and see what they look like,” Alliston said. “The faster you go, the harder it is, so just making sure I’m sharp and going at a competitive speed and the horses are used to that as well. It’s sort of a toss-up. Obviously, you don’t want to hurt them and take risks, but what I’ve done over the years is don’t go mad but go quick enough so that it’s a fitness run and equivalent to what you’re going to do in two weeks.”

The Twin Rivers Spring International was also the first event in almost two years for Nemesis (Novalis x Sara’s Muse) since the chestnut Canadian Warmblood gelding was the youngest horse in the Kentucky five-star field in 2023 at 9 years old. He made his comeback at Intermediate after dealing with foot troubles from a digital flexor tendon.

“I’m excited,” Alliston said. “I wasn’t sure he’d ever return to the level, but now I’m a little bit more optimistic that he can have a future.”

After the weekend, Alliston has chosen Nemesis and Cora as his mounts for the Cosequin Lexington CCI4\*-S.

“It was good to do that to narrow it down,” Alliston said. “For sure, Cora was looking good. Irish Pop is talented but green. Nemesis has had so long off, just making sure he’s sound enough to do it.”

The Twin Rivers Spring International was the first four-star of the season for Alliston’s growing stable of four- and five-star horses, whereas Braitling had a full run and won the CCI4\*-S with “Ernie” at Galway at the end of March.

“I ran Galway pretty quick, so for me, I thought two weeks, two weeks for back-to-back four-stars was probably too much,” Braitling said. “A little gallop before we left [for Kentucky on Tuesday] was needed, so that was my thought process.”

The Australian international rider who’s based at Twin Rivers Ranch was able to fine-tune Ernie’s dressage while balancing the perhaps-ironic challenge of showing him at home, saying, “He’s always going around looking at everything, like, ‘Why is that there?’”

“Overall his dressage is a lot better; it was definitely his best he’s done here,” Braitling said. “It’s always hard for him to show here tension-wise. He’s always a little more excitable here. He always overreacts to everything at home, but other than that, he was really good.”

Tamie Smith used a similar strategy with Kynan (Envoy x Danieta) to prepare for the four-star in Kentucky and did an abbreviated cross-country after posting the top dressage score of 32.6 at the level and having a double-clear show jumping round.

“My plan was always to stop midway through, which is hard when you’re winning,” Smith said. “It’s always hard to stop, but producing that horse for the long game is super important. I’m really excited. It’s been a lot of work getting him to not be a big brute, but I think we got it all dialed in.”

Smith said she calls Kynan “Travis Kelce,” comparing the 10-year-old bay Dutch Warmblood gelding owned by the Kynan Syndicate to the Kansas City Chiefs’ all-pro tight end.

“He felt like a million bucks, so I’m really excited,” Smith said. “I feel like he has a real solid chance of getting a top result [in Kentucky]. I feel like all three phases are really solid and coming together.”



*Erin Kellerhouse and Bon Vivant GWF in the CCI3\*-S at the 2025 Twin Rivers Spring International.  
Atalya Boytner Photography*

In the CCI3\*-S, Kellerhouse and Bon Vivant GWF finished on their dressage score of 29.0 and followed up on their win at Intermediate at the Twin Rivers Winter H.T. She and “Pierre” started competing together at Beginner Novice when the bay Oldenburg gelding was 4 years old in 2019.

“Last year was a bummer; it was just one of those seasons,” Kellerhouse said. “I never really had one like that, so I guess I was due. It actually does make everything a little sweeter when you rise up from the ashes a little bit.”

After what she described as “really consistent” dressage and how “he’s an easy horse to go fast on because he doesn’t pull at all” on Adri Doyal’s three-star cross-country course, Kellerhouse said her goals are the CCI3\*-L at The Event at Rebecca Farm in Montana in July and the CCI3\*-L at the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill in October.



*Marc Grandia and Levino in the CCI3\*-L at the 2025 Twin Rivers Spring International.  
Atalya Boytner Photography*

In the CCI3\*-L, Grandia and Levino took the next step in their journey that began when Levino made his USEA-recognized debut at Novice in 2022. Grandia credits Amber Birtcil for bringing the dark bay Holsteiner gelding to the United States and the Full Gallop Syndicate for their support over the past decade.

“He might be our fourth horse we’ve gone through,” Grandia said. “Each time we buy one and we find out what the horse is made of and what it wants to do. We’ve been able to upgrade as we go along.”

Grandia says Levino has been “quite a blast” as “he keeps checking off the boxes.” Levino has been particularly suited to the long FEI levels. He has made time on cross-country in each of his two longs, while not making time in any of his six shorts. He won Twin Rivers’ CCI3\*-L on a dressage score of 31.7.

“It’s so nice to have this event for his development and be able to run around past 8 minutes on cross-country and develop their fitness and training,” Grandia said, noting that Twin Rivers hosts the only CCI3\*-L in the spring west of the Mississippi. “The highlight is obviously coming through the end finishing on your dressage score. I’m really happy to have this event to produce our horses on the West Coast.”



*TOP LEFT: Jordan Linstedt and LS Crown Royal winning the CCI2\*-L. Sally Spickard for Atalya Boytner Photography*  
*TOP RIGHT: Kaylawna Smith-Cook and Coco Chanel winning the CCI2\*-S. Atalya Boytner Photography*  
*BOTTOM CENTER: Jennifer McFall and High Five DF winning the CCI1\*-L. Elizabeth Ruiz for Atalya Boytner Photography*

The full list of winners from the 2025 Twin Rivers Spring International:

CCI4\*-S: James Alliston and Karma (37.2)  
CCI3\*-L: Marc Grandia and Levino (31.7)  
CCI3\*-S: Erin Kellerhouse and Bon Vivant GWF (29.0)  
CCI2\*-L: Jordan Linstedt and LS Crown Royal (30.2)  
CCI2\*-S: Kaylawna Smith-Cook and Coco Chanel (30.9)  
CCI1\*-L: Jennifer McFall and High Five DF (31.3)  
Open Intermediate: Tommy Greengard and That's Me Z (28.6)  
Open Preliminary: Tommy Greengard and MBF Google (26.8)  
Preliminary Rider: Caterina Ritson and This Lad Is Gold (30.3)  
Open Modified: Anna Weston Smith and Kinda B Dazzle (35.0)  
Modified Rider: Sophie Stocks and Rosco (33.0)  
Open Training: Tommy Greengard and EWSZ Java (28.9)  
Sr. Training Rider: Teresa Harcourt and Csongor (26.1)  
Jr. Training Rider: Salma Kuhlmann and Rayito de Sol SE (30.8)  
Training Amateur: Lorilee Hanson and Mosaique (28.6)  
Training Horse: Amber Birtcil and Newton WW (25.0)  
Open Novice: MaryBeth Young and Juliette (27.9)  
Sr. Novice Rider: Lindsay Connors and Never Alone (24.8)  
Jr. Novice Rider: Olivia Harris and Checker Can (30.6)  
Novice Amateur: Valerie Ferraro and Whats That Sportsfield (30.6)  
Novice Horse: Greylin Booth and Remonta Fiador (26.5)  
Open Beginner Novice A: Chloe Smyth and King Kamehameha (26.8)  
Open Beginner Novice B: Leah Yacoub Halperin and Come To Me (25.4)  
Sr. Beginner Novice Rider: Annie Desmond and Little Elf (27.7)  
Jr. Beginner Novice Rider: Lacey LoPiccolo and Paint Me a Picture (35.8)

**Links** [Results](#) | [Twin Rivers Website](#) | [U.S. Equestrian Open](#)

## **Sponsors and Volunteers**

Twin Rivers was proud to host the 2025 Twin Rivers Spring International with generous support from sponsors.

Presenting sponsors for the season include: [Auburn Labs](#), manufacturers of the adaptogenic APF Formula for horses, people and dogs; [Best Western PLUS Black Oak](#), which offers exclusive discounts for exhibitors; [Professional's Choice](#), manufacturers of sports medicine boots for equine athletes; and Whirlwind Excavating, excavating contractors in San Luis Obispo County.

For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Christina Gray of Gray Area Events at [Christina@grayareaevents.com](mailto:Christina@grayareaevents.com).

Volunteers play a major part of events at Twin Rivers. Twin Rivers' generous volunteer incentive program includes vouchers for show stabling and credits for schooling between events at the beautiful 500-acre venue. That is in addition to the genuine appreciation of the Baxter family and the entire Twin Rivers team. To sign up, please visit [www.twinrivershorsepark/volunteer](http://www.twinrivershorsepark/volunteer).

## **Connect with Twin Rivers**

**Location:** 8715 N. River Road, Paso Robles, CA. 93446

**Email:** [info@twinrivershorsepark.com](mailto:info@twinrivershorsepark.com)

**Website:** [www.twinrivershorsepark.com](http://www.twinrivershorsepark.com)

**Volunteer:** [www.twinrivershorsepark.com/volunteers](http://www.twinrivershorsepark.com/volunteers)

**Show Photographer:** [Altalya Boytner Photography](#)

**Facebook:** [Twin Rivers Ranch, Equestrian Events](#)

**Instagram:** [TwinRivers2020](#)