



Twin Rivers

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Twin Rivers' 2020 Vision

April's inaugural Spring International CCI4-Long marks a milestone in California organizers' intent to support the region's riders.*

Jan. 28, 2020: Paso Robles, California. The Baxter family had a vision back in 2001 when they laid eyes on 500 acres of fallow farmland in Central Coastal California's Paso Robles. Connie was an experienced eventing competitor. Jeff had earth moving expertise as the owner of Whirlwind Excavating. And their daughter Andrea was already a talented eventer who now competes at the 5* level.

On April 9-12 of this year, the vision of staging top flight eventing competition is fully realized with the Spring International's inaugural CCI4*-L. One of only six CCI4*-Ls in the United States, this division stacks with Long formats in the 2* and 3*; Short format 3* and 4*; and Beginner Novice through Advanced divisions that have drawn close to 500 exhibitors to the competition in recent years.

"The biggest thing is creating something our riders need," explains Andrea, a member of the organizing committee along with Connie and Jeff Baxter. She speaks from her own 5* experience readying for successful competitions at Burghley, England, and Land Rover Kentucky last year. The 2019 recipient of the Rebecca Broussard \$50,000 International Developing Rider Grant, Andrea knows the many drawbacks of having to go East for the experience, exposure and qualifying finishes needed for team consideration or foreign competition invites.

Thanks to the preparatory capabilities of Twin Rivers and a handful of other West Coast competitions, Andrea is one of several elite riders in the region who've been able to attain peak form without the wear, tear and cost of cross-country travel. Pan Am Team gold medalist Tamra Smith, Canadian Olympian Hawley Bennett-Awad and Puerto Rican Olympian Lauren Billys are others. A roster of talented young riders has caught talent spotters' attention without

leaving the West, thanks to Twin Rivers and other venues providing a suitable stage for their development.



Broad Benefits

It's not only the elite horses and riders who benefit from Twin Rivers' considerable investment in meeting the standards required for hosting a 4*-L. Continual cross-country course changes and improvements expand into new territory and terrain that will also give Preliminary and Intermediate horses good tests for their future. Unique features including a tunnel and a bigger quarry element are among much-anticipated additions. These and other new obstacles maintain Twin Rivers' reputation for fresh twists on the foundation set by a great course building team. They provide ample options for new upper level course designer, Hugh Lochore, and lower level designer, Marc Grandia.

Good sandy loam footing that handles rain well, permanent show stabling, a covered arena, multiple rings, brightly colored new stadium jumps and fan-friendly viewing enhancements add to Twin Rivers' appeal.

Most of all, a welcoming family atmosphere and a beautiful wine country and close-to-the-coast location combine with quality competition to make Twin Rivers a top destination for those within and well beyond the region. "We love welcoming everyone to our home to enjoy the new course improvements and great competition for the weekend!" states organizer Connie Baxter.



Catering to Exhibitors' Interests

As owners, the Baxters enjoy the unique opportunity to do whatever they feel is in their exhibitors' best interest. Connie brings a lifetime of equestrian passion and, along with earth moving muscle, Jeff brings deft bartending skills to the party. And we do mean "party" when it comes to the Spring International's Saturday night exhibitor get-together.

Veteran show manager Christina Gray of Gray Area Events has a seasoned hand on the helm and Margie Davis takes the reins from Twin Rivers' much-appreciated volunteer coordinator of the recent past, Asia Vedder. The Spring International's presenting sponsors have been critical to making it a circuit fixture: APF Pro; Professional's Choice; and Riding Warehouse.

The town of Paso Robles is increasingly popular with wine and equestrian enthusiasts – often one and the same! Wineries, vineyards and olive groves dominate the area's rolling landscape. The Mission San Miguel, the Paso Robles Pioneer Museum and the Estrella Warbird Museum are great side-trips for non-riding family members.

Along with competition, Twin is home to Andrea Baxter's Estrella Equestrian training program, plus Area VI Young Rider and Adult camps, in June and August. Year-round membership to Twin Rivers Ranch offers everyday access to the cross-country course, arenas and vast acreage for schooling and conditioning. Multi-week stabling is available for out-of-area horses taking advantage of the region's nearly year-round show circuit and great weather.

Twin River's secure place on the national eventing map came about fairly fast. The Baxters purchased property in 2001, staged their first event in 2004 and their first International competition in 2005.

The Spring International anchors an exciting year of activity. It's preceded by the Winter Horse Trials Intro through Advanced Feb. 28- March 1, and an April 4-5 Combined Test that doubles as fundraiser for ongoing improvements. The July 4th weekend starts with a July 2 day of schooling rounds, a Derby, and a qualifier for the USEA Young Event and Future Event Horse championships. That's followed by the July 3-5 Summer Horse Trials, Intro to Advanced.

The Twin season concludes in September with FEH Championships, Young Event Horse qualifiers and Fall Horse Trials with Intro through Advanced, and 2*-3*-4* Short format divisions.

Having a grand vision is one thing. Sheparding it to reality is quite another. As the Twin Rivers crew readies for an ambitious 2020 season, the Baxters' vision manifests as a big benefit to horses and riders throughout the West and beyond.

Entries for the Spring International open on Feb. 24 on www.useventing.com. For more information on all of Twin Rivers' competitions and events, visit www.twinrivershorsepark.com and follow "Twin Rivers Ranch, Equestrian Events" on Facebook and "TwinRivers2020" on Instagram. Volunteer sign-ups are welcome or www.eventingvolunteers.com.