

Lusty Month of May

MAY IS TURNING OUT TO BE a powerhouse edition for us. There are two major features in this edition that you will not want to miss. The first is our annual Best of the Best Equine Industry Awards. This year, we have selected four individuals and companies who stand out as leaders in our industry, not only for their obvious success, but because they care deeply about the industry as a whole.



Our Best of the Best—English Retailer is Rick Wills. Many of you know Rick. He operates four English shops in eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Rick and his staff scour the world (literally) to find the best products for the customers, and then use those items to stock some of the best-looking shelves in the industry.

You'll enjoy Rick's insight on the industry, particularly regarding the recent upheaval in the trade show sector.

Our Best of the Best—Western Retailer is also someone many of you know. Doug Lammler and I met five years back when I attended my first Denver Market and we've had many good times since. Doug is an astute businessman. All you have to do is look at the list of awards he's won this past year to know he's worthy of our award. We could have written a book on Doug and his business.

This year, we combined our Best of the Best English Manufacturer and Western Manufacturer into one award. Pino and Anna Blangiforti began Leather Therapy in their home, and over the past decade have rapidly built the business into an equine industry powerhouse. Their "corporate" headquarters is still their home in Old Wick, N.J. You'll enjoy their thoughts on how a business grows, survives and thrives in our industry, especially in a highly competitive sector.

You may not recognize the name of Best of the Best—Sales Rep, but if you do, it will surely bring a smile to your face. Peter Ottowitz is probably best known in the industry for his many years of work with Bickmore; however, in the past year, he's taken on a new role—chief salesman and representative in the United States for Al Fares Dubai, a trade show held every two years in the United Arab Emirates. You'll enjoy reading the about the challenges Peter has faced convincing American firms to bring their products to the trade show, as well as an abundant splash of his traditional good humor.

The second do-not-miss feature of this edition is our annual survey of our readers. This is our attempt to chart trends in the industry and to try to make sense of those trends.

This year, a record number of readers returned surveys. Thank you to one and all for making this a very successful feature.

And finally, our appreciation to everyone who contributed to this edition in any form or fashion. It is, indeed, a group effort, and if you had a hand in it, accept our gratitude for being part of the team. 📧

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