

Cedarhill Farm

Barn Buzz

A little history about Cedarhill Farm ...

The original Cedarhill Farm was founded by Nora Cooke in the 1960's and was located on the north side of Highway 51. Andrea Karns Guzinski and her then boyfriend, now husband, Brian purchased the business in 1988 and moved the operation a little south of where the farm is located today. Sadly, in 1991 that farm burned to the ground. 8 horses were lost as well as all the equipment, tack, and the home that Andrea and Brian shared. In a great show of support and trust the Cedarhill families affected by the tragic fire came together in support of Andrea and her vision. Not only did the Cedarhill families back the loan to purchase the current property but weekends and evenings were spent building fences, laying concrete, painting walls, planting flowers, etc. In true Cedarhill spirit the clients came together with a shared passion towards a common goal creating a facility that has been enjoyed ever since its completion in 1992.

What makes Waxhaw an ideal location for your barn?

Horses are a big part of Waxhaw. The community supports all disciplines of the sport and the equestrian community is very friendly and supportive of each other.

What is a "hunter/jumper"?

The best way to describe hunter/jumper is in comparison to figure skating and speed skating. The hunters are about the grace and accuracy of movement under saddle and over fences. The jumpers are about efficiency and power (how fast can you go without lowering the fence height).

Caroline: The hunter/jumper world is what I was exposed to first. I use many dressage techniques in my teaching and training. You cannot have a fit horse without dressage. As far as eventing goes, bottom line is I'm a chicken! I like the jumps that fall down if you run into them!

Andrea: Although initially game for any discipline of riding as long as it was done well, I was exposed primarily to hunters/jumpers and equitation in college. When I took over the hunter/jumper Cedarhill Farm, it stuck.

A little history about Caroline Foto and Andrea Guzinski ...

Andrea: I started riding when I lived in Costa Rica at the age of 6. In Costa Rica horses are not used for sport or hobby, but as a means of transportation. The saddles were so big in order to carry grain and groceries (including live chickens!) that I learned to ride bareback. It wasn't until I moved to Canada, at the age of 14, that I first took formal lessons. I had broken young horses in Costa Rica and could ride anything bareback but I had never posted or jumped. As I learned more about formal hunt seat riding my passion grew and I moved into teaching. I started a small lesson farm in Redding, CT. I took advantage of any and every opportunity to learn whether it was hunt seat, dressage, or eventing. I continued my own formal training at Windcrest Farm with Martha and Armand Chenelle. After two years with them and graduating from UCONN I headed south, bought Cedarhill Farm, and the rest is history!

Caroline: I had my first lesson at Cedarhill Farm in 1986 and I have been here ever since! Andrea took me from walk/trot to the Amateur Owner Hunter's and introduced me to the Jumpers. I have always been a barn rat. I never wanted to be anywhere but Cedarhill Farm. I would ride, clean, watch, anything to be learning and be around the animals. I began teaching summer camps when I was 16 and I went to College close by at Davidson so I could keep my horses with Andrea. I drove

back and forth to ride and met Andrea on the road for horse shows. After graduating from college, Andrea approached me about a full-time position as a rider and trainer. It was a job I thought would last for a year or two and almost 14 years later I still love it! I really enjoy sharing my passion with young equestrians. To start them in their first lesson and see them grow as riders and individuals into national competitors and young men and women is awesome.

Some fond pony memories ...

Andrea: My first horse was a gelding that my parents got me in Costa Rica. In Spanish the word to describe a chestnut is "colorado". My parents thought it would be funny to call him Denver. My dad, not knowing any better, wanted me to have a young horse that could grow up with me. Luckily he was taken advantage of and Denver was at least 15, maybe 20, when he came to us. A perfectly seasoned, and kind, gentleman so long as I didn't put an additional rider behind the saddle! If I did, he bided his time before bucking the unfortunate second rider off.

My second horse; Red Devil was younger, and fast. Together we were undefeated in the yearly San Juan race in Puerto Jimenez. After reading a book showing exercises on strengthening legs and improving equitation, I decided that I knew better (I was about 12 at the time) and rode Red Devil with my heavy new western saddle without a girth. I measured my progress by how little the saddle shifted after I raked my legs on his sensitive sides and urged him to rear before taking off at a dead run. On a quiet evening I was sitting side saddle on him while chatting to my friend. For whatever reason he picked his head up from grazing and took off. With my left foot stuck in the stirrup and my right foot over the horn, my saddle was quickly sliding back. In an attempt to jump over the horn of the saddle to reach the lost reins, and get my left foot unstuck from the stirrup, I kicked that foot. Instead of coming free, I irked Red Devil who bucked, launching me in the air, still with the saddle between my legs. It was more than three months in a cast that covered my chest and arm connected with a broom stick to heal that mistake ...

Caroline: My first pony was Touch A Grey (Tag). He was a grey medium pony but when he got wet you could see he was actually a pinto. Tag was an incredible teacher. When I did my job, he did his. When I failed to ride to my ability he would take advantage. He taught me that it was important to ride all the steps in the course not just the few in front of the jumps. I learned repeatedly (usually in finals classes!) that if I let my nerves get the best of me and quit riding - my horse would quit too. He gave me my first lessons in what it meant to be part of a team.

If you could offer one piece of advice to a young rider, what would it be?

-Take responsibility. It takes a village to get a horse and rider to the ring - trainer, parents, vets, farriers, etc, but bottom line - the rider is responsible for their own success. The riders who point fingers and direct blame at everyone but themselves never reach their potential. The humble hard working students rise to the top, find themselves in the ribbons, and with more opportunities for advancement.

When a rider starts to show, is there any advice you would offer?

-Showing is NOT about the ribbons! It is about putting your skills to the test and recognizing what you need to work on. It is about the conversation you have with your trainer when you exit the ring. Did you execute the plan? How can you improve? If you get rewarded with ribbons - Great! If not, pat your horse or pony, keep your head held high, and continue to work towards your goals.

What are some ideal traits you look for in your hunter jumpers?

-Obviously flashy looks, good movement, and a fancy jump are nice, but it always comes down to brain and heart. It doesn't matter how beautiful a horse is if it isn't willing to help you out. This

sport is a team effort between animal and rider. If one half isn't willing to work, the end result does not come together.

What makes Cedar Hill horses special?

-The school horse herd at Cedarhill Farm is an amazing bunch of horses and ponies that have taught horsemanship, riding, and passion to many generations of Waxhaw/Charlotte riders. Even with the fancy show horses we have on our property the school herd will always hold our hearts!

-Rossi, otherwise known as Osa Remembered was a super, kind, classy mare that showed in the Green Conformation hunters with Danny Robertshaw. With her we went (and won!) in Palm Beach, Devon, Harrisburg, Washington, Madison Garden, as well as the more local shows, such as the Middleburg Classic, Blowing Rock, Duke, Kentucky, Atlanta etc. She was a wonderful mare; I once took her on a three hour trail ride at the Pisgah National Forest between the model and her over fence classes in Asheville. I got some strange looks by other trail riders since she had a braided mane and tail in anticipation of her later classes. We hope her last born, Henry, becomes half as special as she was! Henry is a handsome young horse about to embark in his first pre-green show. The verdict is still out whether he will be as special as his dam.