

From Horseback Magazine (formerly Texas Horse Talk) Breaking News

Slaughter Bound Jamaica Named 2008 Horse of Honor --Could Become USEF Horse of the Year



No Unwanted Horses

Ocala, FL (JRPR) -Jamaica, the 17-year-old combined driving horse that helped his owner Chester Weber win a silver medal at the FEI World Championships in The Netherlands, has made a place for himself in history as a rescue horse who has gone on to do great things. Fans of the horse with the "rags-to-riches" tale will be pleased to know that Jamaica has received another honor that will make rescue organizations everywhere proud - Jamaica has been chosen as one of five Horses of Honor for 2008 by the United States Equestrian Federation.

Being named a Horse of Honor for 2008 isn't a recognition often earned by horses that were once headed to the slaughterhouse, and is an honor Jamaica will wear proudly. Now, the quirky but talented horse has the chance for an even grander title - he could be named the 2008 USEF Farnam Platform Horse of the Year.

Each year, USEF members are called upon to vote for one of the five horses awarded the Horse of Honor title and the horse with the most votes becomes the USEF Farnam Platform Horse of the Year. Last year that title went to another remarkable equine, the small but mighty Theodore "Teddy" O'Connor.

Rescue organizations and fans of Jamaica are banning together to vote for the bay gelding with the white star and snip, a horse who has become the unofficial "poster child" for all unwanted animals. Winning the title of USEF Farnam Platform Horse of the Year would be a boost for horse fans everywhere - proving that no matter what kind of start a horse or pony has in life, they can achieve a "rags-to-riches" story.

Jamaica's story started years ago in Europe where as an unwanted animal he was headed for slaughter. Fortunately for Jamaica, he was rescued and trained as a tourist carriage horse. His humble beginnings as a carriage horse were cut short, however, because he wouldn't stand still. Jamaica's antsy attitude didn't bode well for carting tourists from one location to the next - but that attitude would serve him well after Weber purchased him. Re-trained as a Four-in-Hand driving horse, Jamaica has become a valuable horse on Weber's world-class team and not only helped Weber capture a Silver Medal at the FEI World Championships but also helped the team win the Four-in-Hand National Championship title - six years in a row. Pretty impressive for a horse originally headed to slaughter.

Being named Horse of Honor for 2008 by the USEF does give Jamaica's story an even better fairy-tale ending, and fans of the horse will also be glad to know that he has a forever home with Weber. When Jamaica's competition days are over he will retire to Weber's Live Oak farm in Ocala to live out his days romping through the fields, with no thoughts of the slaughterhouse that was once his dismal future.