

Photo: Kiley Bates



HORSE ADOPTION DAY 2018

(LEFT TO RIGHT LYNN COAKLEY, GEORGINA BLOOMBERG, AND VALERIE ANGELI)

DER DAU GOES VEGAN FOR THE EQUUS FOUNDATION

All horses, even champions of the racetrack and the show ring, are only one unlucky sale away from abuse, neglect, and slaughter. Tens of thousands of horses become “at-risk” each year. In 2018 alone, over 81,000 horses were shipped across our borders to be slaughtered. Most were young, healthy, and had untapped potential. These horses need our help in whatever way we can give it. For Joe Der of Der Dau boot fame, that meant developing a line of stylish, functional, durable, and completely vegan riding boots with a generous portion of proceeds going to the EQUUS Foundation.

The EQUUS Foundation (EQUUS) is the only national animal welfare charity in the United States that’s 100% dedicated to protecting America’s horses and strengthening the human-equine bond. At the core of their mission is that all horses engaged in human activities—as athletes, companions, teachers, and healers—are safe, protected, and treated as partners with dignity.

As a 501(c)3 public charity, they are strong proponents for increasing opportunities for all people to engage with horses in innovative ways that will help ensure horses naturally transition from one chapter of their life to the next without risk of abuse, neglect, or slaughter.

EQUUS believes that an updated human-equine model—one based on collaborative relationships—offers boundless opportunities for horses to contribute positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well-being of all people.

EQUUS focuses their efforts on:

- Increasing adoptions of at-risk and transitioning horses, and providing a safe haven for aged horses;
- Vetting and investing in equine charities that undergo a comprehensive and unique verification process to ensure donor confidence in the organizations receiving EQUUS Foundation financial support;
- Inspiring horse lovers to become “horse protectors” by stimulating advocacy and volunteerism; and
- Educating the public on the positive impact horses have on our lives by sharing stories of their amazing achievements and contributions.

HOW DID THE EQUUS FOUNDATION COME TO BE?

When EQUUS Foundation founder Lynn Coakley’s youngest daughter headed off to college, it came time for her daughter’s competitive hunter/jumper career to come to end (or at least a

EQUUS FOUNDATION
FOR THE LOVE OF HORSES

THE HAMPTON CLASSIC

Where America's Horses Go Next is Up to Us!

Hampton Classic Animal Adoption Day!

MONDAY AUGUST 26, 2019

Adoptable Horses
Presented by the EQUUS Foundation

HUNTER RING 2
12 NOON TO 1 PM

MEET & GREET
Omega Horse Rescue
ReRun
Rising Starr Horse Rescue
HEART Equine Ambulance Tours
& More!

Georgina Bloomberg, Hampton Classic Animal Adoption Day Sponsor, with her son, Jasper, and Teddy, adopted this year!

The EQUUS Foundation is the only national animal welfare charity in the US 100% dedicated to protecting America's horses and strengthening the bond between horses and people.
Contact us : mail@equusfoundation.org | 203-259-1550 | Visit us: www.equusfoundation.org

hiatus). That also meant it had come time for her beloved horses to transition to their next chapters.

While Lynn was fortunate to provide her daughter's horses with a comfortable and safe environment to enjoy the remainder of their lives, the process of exploring options taught her that many horses in transition find themselves at risk of abuse and neglect when their owners can no longer care for them.

This eye-opening experience inspired Lynn to establish the EQUUS Foundation in 2002 to provide financial support to a handful of equine charities in Connecticut and New York. The program expanded from there.

WHERE DID THE IDEA FOR VEGAN BOOTS COME FROM?

Many years ago, Valerie Angeli (EQUUS Foundation Vice President of Engagement and Special Projects) started ruminating on the idea of developing vegan boots. As a long-time equestrian and horse owner, and a lifelong vegetarian by her own choice at age five, Val struggled with all the leather tack and gear required for a life riding horses. She wished there was an alternative.

But, when leather alternatives first appeared on the market, they didn't seem to have the look or functionality that a discriminating equestrian would require to even consider buying. Attractive, functional, and high-performance non-leather materials still weren't available.

In the past few years, however, the rise of both faux meat and faux leather alternatives of much higher quality have sprang onto what is now a much more demanding

and trendy market of discerning millennials. Caring about the environment and all creatures great and small has now become mainstream. Designers and entrepreneurs are now busy creating more environmentally conscious and ethical products, some that even give back to great causes—enter the idea for the new #RideForHorses EQUUS Foundation vegan boot line by Der Dau!

OK, SO HOW DID THESE BOOTS ACTUALLY COME TO MARKET?

Valerie had seen Der Dau boots at horse shows for many years and was impressed by their beautiful tailoring and stunning styles. She had long admired #EQUUStar Georgina Bloomberg's taste, and her choice of Der Dau custom tall boots was quite an endorsement. Val kept wondering what those boots would look like in faux leather. So last winter, at the 2019 Winter Equestrian Festival—after rescuing a cow (and unbeknownst to them, a calf) from slaughter together—Val asked for Georgina's thoughts on high-style Der Dau boots made of faux leather that would also benefit horse welfare through the EQUUS Foundation.

Georgina loved the idea, but she was understandably doubtful that functional and durable boots could be made to her taste level out of non-leather materials. Val's rebuttal was that she'd already spoken with Joseph Der about this very idea, and he was intrigued and up for the challenge. He had a few R&D requirements though. First, he had to find the right materials. Second, Georgina and other #EQUUStars would help him design them to their exact specifications. And third, as elite riders, the #EQUUStars had to test them.

Photos courtesy of Joe Der



Joe developing a vegan masterpiece at his shop in Brooklyn, New York.

Once the plan was in place, Val's idea was off to the races.

Joe and Val exchanged information about vegan and faux leather materials for months. #EQUUStar Clementine Goutal, who also has a discriminating taste in equestrian style, jumped in to help with the aesthetic decisions and testing. She expressed her desire for the boots' materials to be gentler on the environment than real leather. Adding this extra challenge for Joe, he reworked the boots with fabrics made of paper-thin panels of recycled rubber and other more environmentally conscious fabrics.

Joe then made a prototype that was "mind-blowingly beautiful," but the sizing needed to be tweaked a bit. With that feedback, Joe found the perfect combo of materials that make the boots look and fit like they're painted on. They have all of Der Dau's signature high styling, are completely functional, and wear well—even for full-time competition riders—#EQUUStar approved!

WHAT'S AN #EQUUSTAR?

The EQUUS Foundation has several #EQUUStars who serve as inspirational icons and role models for horse lovers and equestrians. They are top riders who aren't just impressive in the show ring, but who "walk the talk" when it comes to horse welfare—like #EQUUStars Georgina Bloomberg and Clementine Goutal—and understand the importance of taking action. They are compassionate people who help EQUUS promote horse welfare projects and serve as "influencers" of kindness toward horses.

WHY DER DAU?

To put it simply, "... to make sure that it's the best, most comfortable boot someone has ever had." But, for a company that once said, "We only work with the finest leather," this

vegan boot represents one of those big, innovative steps toward animal welfare that EQUUS promotes and the #EQUUStars love.

Der Dau boots are a Cuban family tradition that was "Made in America." After his uncle taught him the trade in Cuba, José Der (Joe's grandfather) came to the US at age 26, started Der Dau boots in Flatbush, New York, and the rest is literally 50 years of history. The company built its exceptional reputation by offering fantastic customer service and using master leather artisans' traditional techniques.

Now, Joe is a third-generation boot maker (if you only count the American generations), and even with the advent of robot-craftsmanship, Der Dau remains passionately dedicated to its legacy of hand building the finest riding boots to the exact specifications of each customer, and there's no asterisk for vegan boots.

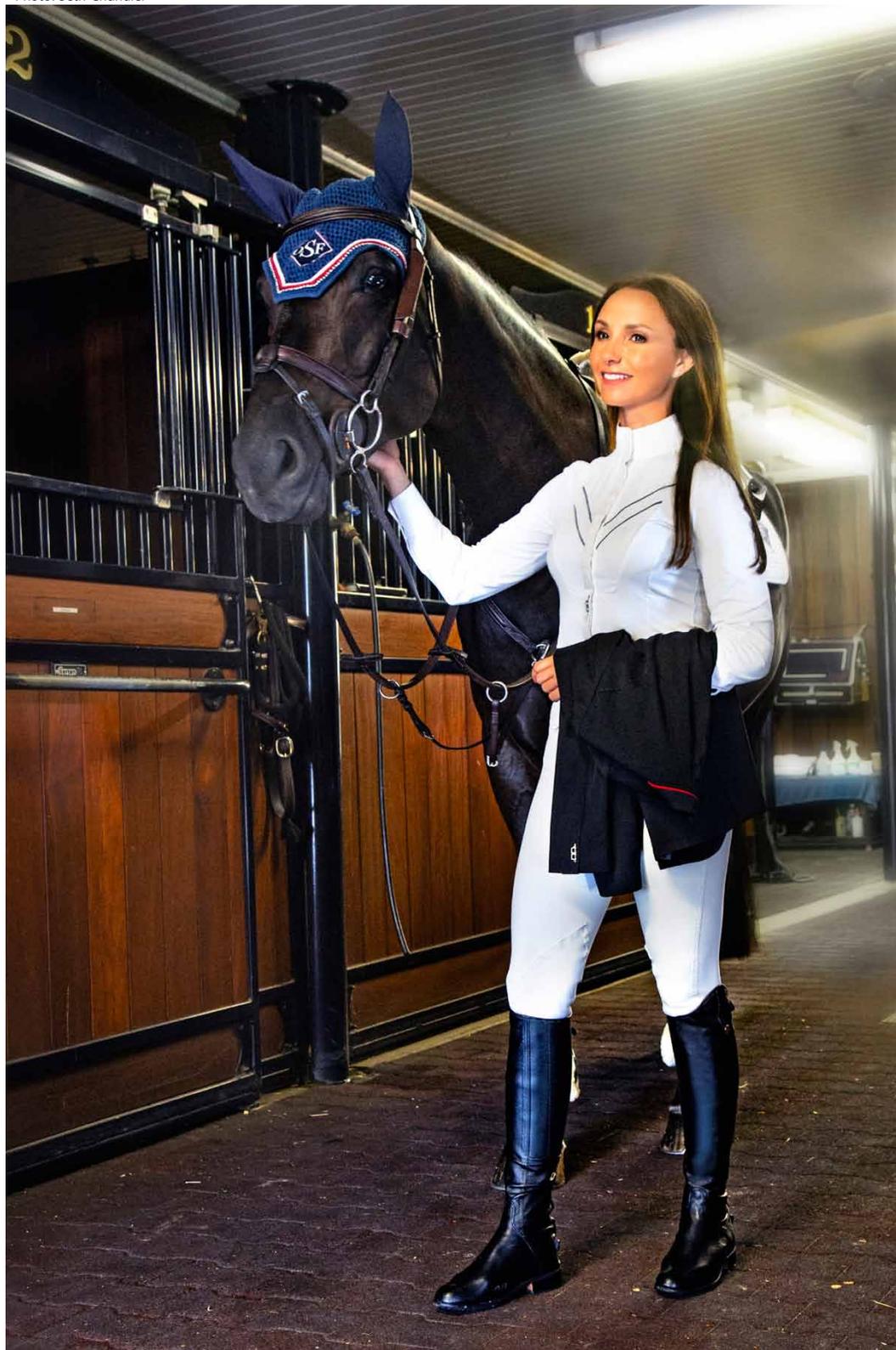
WHERE AND WHEN CAN PEOPLE GET THESE AWESOME BOOTS?

The new "#RideForHorses EQUUS Foundation Vegan Tall Boot by Der Dau" is set to officially unveil during the annual Hampton Classic Animal Adoption Day on Monday, August 26, at 12:00 PM. Der Dau will be taking boot orders and measuring for custom sizing at their beautiful Hampton Classic boutique.

At the conclusion of the Hampton Classic, Der Dau will take orders at their Brooklyn store (1885 McDonald Avenue) and at their pop-up shops at horse shows across the country. Der Dau will give 20% of the purchase price of each pair to the EQUUS Foundation to help at-risk and transitioning horses find hope across the United States.

PS: The "Dau" in the company name "Der Dau" comes from the Spanish tradition of incorporating the grandmother's maiden name as part of the last name. If you're like me, you were wondering.

Photo: Seth Chandler



Conversation with #EQUUStar

GEORGINA BLOOMBERG

Georgina Bloomberg is one of the EQUUS Foundation's original #EQUUStars. Longtime supporter of animal welfare and longtime friend of the vegan boot's impetus, Valerie Angeli, we caught up with Georgina to get her take on the final product.

EQ AM: Can you tell me a little bit about how and why you got involved with the EQUUS Foundation?

Georgina: Absolutely! Valerie (Angeli, EQUUS Foundation Vice President of Engagement and Special PProjects) and I've been friends for a long time. I met her at the Hampton Classic when she was working at the ASPCA, and we hit it off on a personal level. She'd been there for 27 years and was running their equine welfare program. Then, I actually joined the ASPCA as a board member and was on the board for a little while until they no longer had a position for Val. So I left at the same time she did. When she joined up with the EQUUS Foundation, it was just a perfect fit and I definitely wanted to be involved in anything she was doing because I believed in her and her work.

Unfortunately, with the advent of the internet and social media, it's way too easy to be misinformed and misled. It's more important than ever that donor dollars be directed to equine charities that are fully transparent and operating at the highest standards of horse care. Is that where the EQUUS Foundation comes in?

The EQUUS Foundation enables riders to give back to animals that give us so much. We all love these animals and we want to help them, but many of us feel there are few options for riders to do so. And sometimes riders just don't know what issues are surrounding equine welfare. I think the EQUUS Foundation is wonderful at bridging that knowledge gap and giving riders an opportunity to give back. So, on a personal level I would support anything that Val did, but I really genuinely believe in the organization and the work that she's doing with it.

Val was telling me about how you two now have joint custody of cows...

Yeah, we adopted a cow that was headed for slaughter and she turned out to be pregnant, so now we have two, a boy and a girl, and we are co-parenting them.

So you are quite an animal person.

I am an animal person. I am not a vegan, but I try to be animal conscious in all aspect of my life. As a rider though, I do think you need to be comfortable around leather.

What would you say to those people who'd agree with you that riders need to be comfortable around leather, so leather boots just come with the territory?

The horse show world will always be a little bit traditional, and leather has always been a part of that tradition. Everything has always been leather, from boots to saddles to tack. Heading into the future, if there's a way to avoid that, I think that'd be great. Hopefully, as new technology keeps getting better and better it will become easier to avoid.

And, I think any company that helps those who ride do it in the most environmentally conscious and animal friendly way is great. A lot of companies are starting to provide people with different options and are choosing not to go with the norm simply because that's the way it's always been. There's technology now that can give us options, so it's great.

What would you say to people who think, "There's no way these boots are going to be as good as real leather boots?"

I think that it will take some time to develop products that are not real leather that will hold up the way real leather does. But maybe they don't necessarily have to. Der Dau has made my boots for years, and I know that the majority of their products have always been pig skin. Since I have a pig myself, I don't use any pig products, so Joe Der has always made my boots without pig skin. And to be honest, they don't normally last as long as his pig skin boots last for other people, but that's a sacrifice I'm willing to make to be able to keep true to my morals and beliefs. That's not something I'm willing to compromise, and he's always been very conscious of my beliefs and my personal take on things.

What are your regular Der Dau boots made out of?

They're made of cow. But... I know... now I have cows. Yeah.

So this is good timing for Der Dau's vegan boots?

Yes! It's nice that companies are now starting to realize some people who want the look, feel, and quality of real leather don't want to have to kill animals for it. I think a lot of companies are starting to make this great step in the right direction.

What do you think of the quality of the boots that you've received from Joe?

I think they look beautiful. We'll see how long they hold up, but at the end of the day, if it's something that lets you stay true to your morals (and maybe they can figure out

Photo: Seth Chandler



EQUUS IS DOING SO MANY WONDERFUL THINGS WITH HORSES, WHICH HAVE OBVIOUSLY GIVEN ME SO MUCH. SUPPORTING ANY ORGANIZATION THAT IS DOING SOMETHING THAT I REALLY BELIEVE IN REALLY BRINGS ME JOY. **GEORGINA BLOOMBERG**

a way to make them less expensive than real leather boots), than maybe they don't need to last as long.

How do they feel out of the box?

They are incredibly comfortable! They feel very soft. They were easy to walk in right off the bat, which isn't the case with real leather. They are comfy to ride in and felt great on my leg. Given the amount of time that I spend in riding boots every day, comfort has always been a big concern for me. So, that's a bonus with these boots.

You have the rubber panel in the inner calf of your regular boots and these vegan boots. They're made of recycled tire rubber, which is also environmentally positive. I assume the rubber must be great at keeping your leg in place, and then you don't have to use those sticky sprays that have a habit of destroying your tack.

Yes, the rubber inner calf is a great feature that Der Dau offers!

I know Joe's made you some beautiful leather boots.

I remember when we last talked at Washington International Horse Show, you had on some beautifully embossed leather boots. Style-wise, what do you think of their vegan counterpart?

These are just the first design so they're plain black. If you want a plain pair for everything, this would be a great choice. But sure, down the road people might like more personalized ones so we'll see what Der Dau can come up with.

What about those who would rather stick with real leather for the sake of tradition?

There are so many products used in the riding world that are always being made the same way just because that's the way it's always been done. It seems like very few companies ever ask themselves, "That might be the way it's always been done, but is that the way it always has to be done?" If there's technology that can improve products, then I think tradition only goes so far.

Right, especially if the product keeps true to the original style and purpose, than there's no reason not to embrace it.

Conversation with #EQUUStar

CLEMENTINE GOUTAL

Clementine Goutal is an EQUUS Foundation #EQUUStar and a member of the Der Dau vegan boot line's research and development team.

EQ AM: How did you get involved with the EQUUS Foundation?

Clementine: I'm a partner at Upper Echelon Academy in Wellington, FL, which offers academic support to young athletes, so I'm constantly looking for ways to help riders achieve a more well-rounded life. I spoke to Lynn (Coakley, EQUUS Foundation President) and Valerie (Angeli, EQUUS Foundation Vice President of Engagement and Special Projects) a couple of years ago and we all agreed that partnering with the EQUUS Foundation would be a wonderful way to increase awareness among equestrian youth. I've been riding since I was seven years old and I'm a passionate horse welfare advocate, so this was a no brainer.

How did you hear about the new vegan boots?

Val approached me about the vegan boots this Spring and suggested I speak to Der Dau about what I would want them to look and feel like. I was slightly skeptical at first because. Although the cause is laudable, I didn't want to commit to wearing boots that might be uncomfortable or unattractive because I basically live in my boots at shows! But, Georgina (Bloomberg) and I went ahead and gave our stylistic input: classic, elegant boots that junior riders would want to wear even in equitation classes.

Beyond being an #EQUUStar, what made you decide to be an ambassador for these boots?

When I first spoke to Der Dau about them, Joe explained that—beyond being vegan—these boots would be made from recycled materials and could look however we wanted them to. I was blown away! The first prototype I tried on sealed the deal.



How do they look and feel?

I admittedly had never worn vegan "leather" before, which is a shame because it's much softer! They are really luxurious. Because of the soft material, they're even more form fitting and tapered than other boots. They are so flattering because they hug the calf and ankle. These boots are more comfortable than any other pair I've ever worn—and beautiful!

What was it like to ride in them?

The material is paper thin, so you feel very connected to the horse and saddle. I was surprised that the material held up so well—it didn't wear down at all. I ended up using the boots in the high amateurs on the first day I wore them!

Do you think you could spend your whole day wearing them and be perfectly happy and comfortable?

Yes, without a doubt.

Are you proud to wear these boots?

Of course! I'm so proud to do anything that advocates for equine welfare. I love telling people just how special these boots are every time they compliment me on how beautiful they are. I love to see peoples' reactions when they hear that proceeds benefit the EQUUS Foundation!