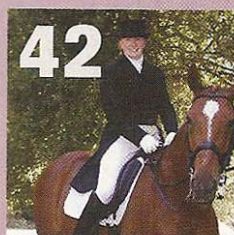
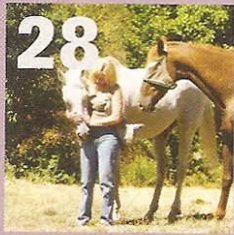


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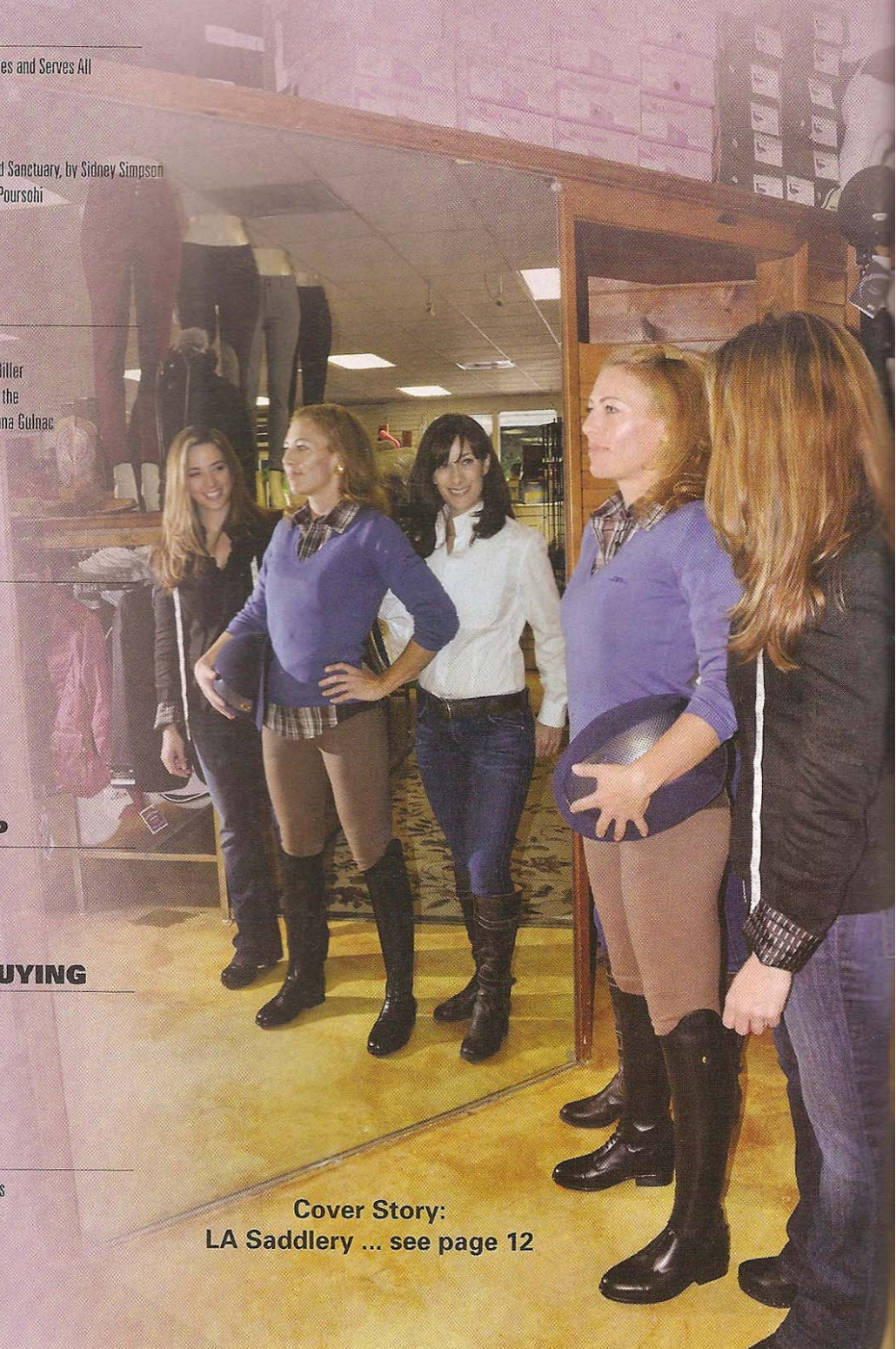
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Two Of A Kind

California Junior Novice riders share their perspective on the American Eventing Championships.

Introduction by Donna Gulnac

As I'm sure is the case for many riding stables, Mill Creek Equestrian Center in the Malibu area's Topanga has always been a place for building lasting friendships and two of the closest friends at the barn are 14-year-old LuLu Shamberg and 12-year-old Jordyn Horwitz. This meant it was particularly exciting for them when they found out that both had qualified for the American Eventing Championships at Chattahoochee Hills in Fairburn, GA in early September this year.

Both Jordyn and LuLu are currently riding at the Junior Novice level and have spent their whole riding careers at Mill Creek. LuLu started riding when she was 7 and Jordyn at age 6. I often take photos at Mill Creek horse shows and local horse trials and I must have dozens of photos of the two of them together on their ponies, Merry Go Round (LuLu) and Apollo (Jordyn). For example, I have photos of them in pairs classes at the Mill Creek show, the warm up ring at Shepherd Ranch and the Pas de Deux demonstration they performed at a Mill Creek dressage clinic.

LuLu and Jordyn are exceptional riders and have adorable, honest and talented ponies, so it was no surprise they placed third and fourth respectively

at the Championships with double clear rounds in both cross country and stadium jumping, ending on their dressage scores. There were 59 competitors in their division!

In addition, LuLu's Merry won the 2010 Junior Novice Mark Phillips Best Placed Pony Award. Mill Creek's owner Cory Walkey, who accompanied them to the finals as their trainer, said each of them rode "textbook and picture perfect" in all three phases at AEC. She continues, "It wasn't luck; they won fair and square and made no mistakes ... I am so proud."

When I started on this article, I emailed LuLu and Jordyn with a few questions and asked them to send me a paragraph or two about their AEC experience. Within a few hours, each one sent a lovely and impressive full-page essay! I thought, "Who better to tell their stories than the girls themselves?"

Before I turn the story over to them, I'd like to give a rundown of their accomplishments for the year, so you have the full picture of just how successful their year was and how close they are as competitors, as well as friends. On the national eventing level (US Eventing Association), they ended up with the same number of points, so tied in every division: 2nd place Junior Novice Rider; 6th place Novice Horse; 1st place pony overall in any division. For USEA Area VI, Jordyn and Apollo stand in first place Junior Novice and LuLu and Merry are in 2nd place. In addition, LuLu was featured in the "How's My Position?" column of the July/August issue of *Eventing Magazine*, where the author said: "This little rider has a great position ... She's one to emulate!"

Jordyn and LuLu: I know that once your parents read your AEC accounts here, they will be even more proud of you for your sportsmanship and graciousness than they are of your successful show year! Congratulations!

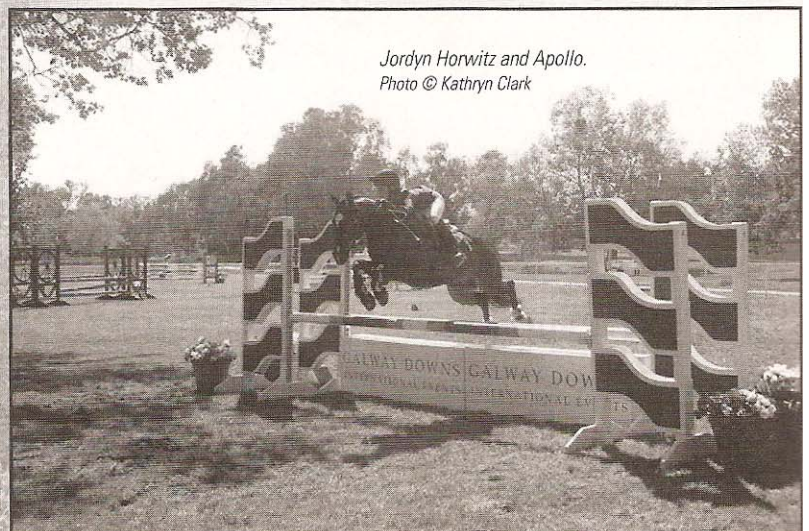
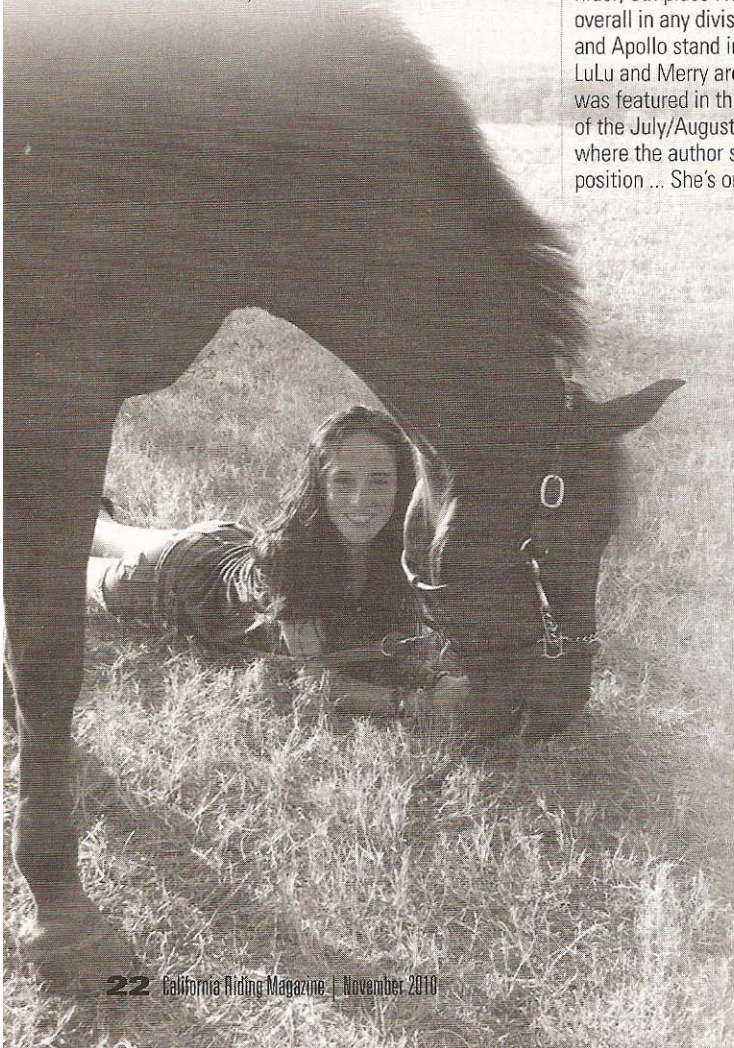
LuLu Shamberg

It was the beginning of summer 2010 when I found out that I was going to the American Eventing Championships, with my 13-year-old Appendix Quarter horse pony, Merry Go Round. To get ready, I spent most of my summer at Mill Creek working hard on my dressage. The AECs were at the start of my freshman year in high school, which meant that I would have to work hard to keep up with my school work in the week when I was gone for the Championships. When it was finally time to go, I boarded my pony on a trailer and myself on a plane. As soon as we pulled into Chattahoochee Hills, a beautiful lush venue, I knew that this was everything I had ever worked for.

Coming from California, Merry, Apollo, Jordyn and I were at a bit of a disadvantage—we had never ridden on grass before and the ponies had never eaten Georgia hay and, of course, had never traveled this far. This didn't seem to bother the ponies one bit and they were fantastic. When it came time to compete, I was tense and nervous, but I just remembered to focus on what I had practiced at home and went into the dressage ring with a positive attitude. Merry was a very good girl and we walked out of the ring very pleased. Soon we found out I had a dressage score of 32 and was standing in 8th place out of 59 competitors in my division! The pressure was definitely getting to me.

I went into cross country thinking that going clean was everything. We ran a double clean round, which moved us up to 6th place. It was the most challenging course I have ever ridden at Novice. The course was full of questions an average Novice course would not have asked. Last, but certainly not least, was stadium jumping. Both my pony and I were tired but we knew that we had

LuLu and Merry Go Round.



Jordyn Horwitz and Apollo.
Photo © Kathryn Clark

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to put in our best. I walked into the ring thinking that no matter what happened I had gotten this far. After show jumping a clean but tense round, the stress was over and all we had to do was wait. Moving up from 8th to 6th and then finishing in 3rd was more than I could have ever asked for.

The entire AEC experience was phenomenal; the only thing I could complain about was the heat. Sharing the experience with one of my best friends, Jordyn Horwitz, topped it off. Not only at the barn, but also around the town and at the hotel, we had a blast. We trampolined, swam, people jumped and, of course, rode. Jordyn, too, was very successful at the show and it made the journey well worth it.

I would like to thank my trainers, Cory Walkey, Lindsay Smith and Robyn Fisher. Also, I am very appreciative of the undying support of my parents, Carla and Michael Shamberg—without them, none of this would be possible. Last but certainly not least I would like to thank, what is in my opinion the most amazing pony in the entire world, Merry Go Round. The three years I have spent with her have been the best ever and she has changed my life in ways I could have never imagined. She taught me how to ride and made me confident. I love you Merry!

Jordyn Horwitz

I show and ride my 11-year-old, 13.1 hands Connemara/Welsh/Thoroughbred Pony, Apollo. He is the most amazing thing that's ever happened to me in my life. I got Apollo from Northern California almost four years ago. This 2010 show year has been extremely memorable. From winning our first event of the show season at Novice to going to the American Eventing Championships. I qualified by placing well at four shows this year at the Junior Novice level. We decided we were going to make the trip to Fairburn, GA for the AECs in early June of this year. All summer was spent preparing and working hard to earn success at this year's nationals.

By the time late August rolled around and the school year started back up, things were chaotic, but we pulled through. Apollo boarded a trailer and set off on what would be the longest journey he had ever taken. After a full week of traveling, Apollo arrived at the show grounds a day after our plane landed in Atlanta. As usual for eventing, the first day we competed was dressage day. It was overwhelming and stressful going into dressage. There were two judges, which I wasn't used to, and tons of cameras and people. We ended up having a great ride and were in a tie for 9th with a 32.3 score. I was so pleased with my pony, who really put on a great test for me!

The following day was cross-country and after our course walk with Boyd Martin and our trainer Cory Walkey, I felt nervous but prepared. Apollo was fresh in the warm-up ring, but fantastic on the course. We ended up going double clean. I felt extremely proud of myself and my pony for completing such a challenging course.

Finally, we had stadium jumping the next and last day. It was a hot day in Georgia and the competition was tight. I had broken my tie for 9th

and moved up into 7th place standing overnight, since I didn't add any additional penalties to my dressage score after cross country. Going into show jumping I was super nervous, but we pulled it off and had a great ride finishing double clean! I finished 4th place Junior Novice at my first national championship and we marched into the ring for the victory gallop. It was by far the most fun week of my riding career.

To top it all off, I was there with one of my best friends, LuLu Shamberg, and her pony Merry Go Round, who qualified at Junior Novice, as well. The whole experience would not have been half as fun without her. We swam, played on the hotel trampoline, and most of all shared and embraced the wonderful journey together. I would not have gotten half this far without my loving and greatly supportive parents; they have provided me with unconditional love, resources and support to help me succeed in this sport. I also owe a big thank you to my trainers, Cory Walkey, Lindsay Smith and Robyn Fisher. They've taught me everything I know and it's because of them I even made it to the AECs. Most of all, I would like to thank the most amazing pony in the whole world: my pony, Apollo. He's taught me more than just riding, but also responsibility and horsemanship. He's an amazing pony and I love him more than words can describe.

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