



WORDLEY MARTIN

Continuing to Revitalize HITS Horse Shows

WORDS: JUMP MEDIA

HITS HORSE shows have undergone a stunning reinvention over the past two years. Wordley Martin has been a crucial partner in the process, leading the renovation of riding arenas at the HITS Post Time Farm in Ocala, FL, and at HITS Hudson Valley in Saugerties, NY.

With two-phase renovations at both venues, Wordley Martin has installed more than 942,000 square feet (or 21.6 acres) of footing to renew 18 competition and schooling arenas. Wordley Martin is a leading developer

of equestrian properties and premier riding surfaces, offering full-service bespoke equestrian facility planning.

In addition to new grading, underbase, footing, and irrigation, the founding partners of Wordley Martin—Sharn Wordley and Craig Martin—helped the HITS team create a new look for both venues. That work included raised berms, fencing, landscaping, design, and layout, and most crucially, they also oversee the maintenance of the arenas as part of a multi-year partnership to ensure the quality and safety of the footing is upheld following installation. In Ocala, Wordley Martin also had an arborist trim the mature live oak trees throughout the property, safeguarding the special atmosphere of North Central Florida.

"Our crew pre-blended 6,000 tons of footing in conjunction with building the arena, completing the whole project in an amazing 24 days," says Craig Martin of the most recent renovation in Ocala, which was completed in December 2024. "It was a great team effort by all of the crew plus our office staff managing the logistics. We are grateful to the HITS team for their help and support."



The Main Hunter Arena at HITS Post Time Farm in Ocala, FL (top left)

Craig Martin and Sharn Wordley at HITS Post Time Farm in Ocala, FL (top left);

Paul O'Shea and Oilly van't Elgento in the renovated Grand Prix arena at HITS Saugerties (top right);

HITS Saugerties has undergone two phases of arena renovation by Wordley Martin to rave reviews (right)



Read on to learn more from HITS Chief Customer Officer, Joe Norick, about his perspective on the mutually beneficial partnership with Wordley Martin:

1. Why did you choose Wordley Martin to renovate HITS Ocala, even though they weren't known for horse show footing?

It was an easy decision to partner with Wordley Martin. I've known Sharn Wordley and Craig Martin for many years. I've seen their product firsthand, and we discussed it both from a professional point of view as a horseman, and as a horse show operator. They felt confident they could deliver the highest quality but also be able to handle commercial use.

2. What sets Wordley Martin apart as a commercial partner?

One of the things I find really interesting about Craig and Sharn is that both of them ride and show horses at a high level, so they understand how it should feel when the hoof touches a surface and what is best for the horse's comfort and safety on the footing. They look to deliver that feeling of security for horse and rider

across the board on a commercial scale, which not everybody can do.

3. Why did you decide to make one giant, flexible space instead of separated arenas at HITS Ocala?
Personally, I am a fan of very large arena spaces that can be separated to create the best possible size arenas for competition. Utilizing a massive space like the six acres we developed this way worked perfectly for the HITS Post Time Farm property and created the flow that we wanted to achieve.

4. What is your favorite part about working with Sharn, Craig, and their team?

One of my favorite things about Sharn is he always returns my phone call or answers the phone! Craig comes up to Ocala and Saugerties regularly to make sure everything is going smoothly, and their office keeps all of the moving parts organized.

5. What sort of feedback have you gotten from riders and trainers about the new rings at HITS Post Time Farm?
The success of the new competition area design has been overwhelming. The

trainers, the riders, and even other horse show professionals have all looked at it and said, "Wow, this makes sense." It puts HITS Post Time Farm where it needs to be for today's horsemen and horse professionals.

6. How does Wordley Martin's long-term maintenance approach benefit HITS?

One of the main reasons we chose Wordley Martin is that they agreed to sign multi-year agreements to help us maintain the footing year-round. If someone says to me, "There's a problem," Sharn and Craig are always there to answer any questions.

7. What are future plans for HITS venues in partnership with Wordley Martin?

As we expand into other venues, I always consult with Sharn and Craig about what they think we should do for the footing and what they recommend as the correct mix. Wordley Martin is, without a doubt, our primary strategic partner, especially on the East Coast. From a show organizer's perspective, nobody is more qualified to advise on these critical issues, and we look forward to continuing to benefit from Wordley Martin's expertise. 🐾

As Grand Prix-level riders, Wordley Martin co-owners Sharn Wordley and Craig Martin fundamentally understand the requirements for a modern equestrian sports venue. They have used their extensive experience and knowledge to design and install hundreds of arenas, including for Olympics, with their world-class surfaces.

Wordley Martin is more than just a footing installer, helping clients through every stage of the process of realizing their dream facility, from the initial designs, through site work, construction, and maintenance. They help clients map out and build full facilities and work as part of the Equine Design and Development Collective (EDDC) to provide a variety of additional services for equestrians and their farms. Learn more at www.WordleyMartin.com.