

EQUUS FILM FESTIVAL TOUR STOP AT THE TRYON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

By Diana De Rosa



The Tryon International Film Festival.



Beau Menetre and Kirk Gollwitzer

"It's all about the horse" was the theme of this year's Tryon International Film Festival (TRIFF) in North Carolina, October 27-29. With that in mind, it only made sense to bring horse films in as a part of what was shown. Known for its love of horses, Tryon and the surrounding towns have always been enamored by the horse, whose history in this area spans the gamut of just about every discipline in both the English and Western worlds.

The seed that planted what is now the Tryon International Film Festival was the Polk County Film Initiative. The forces behind this annual event are Beau Menetre and Kirk Gollwitzer, two dedicated patrons who put their heart and soul into what was clearly a huge success.

Started just three short years ago, to add horse films as part of what it offered to the surrounding community, the Tryon International Film Festival partnered with the EQUUS Film Festival, an all horse film festival which will showcase its fifth edition November 17-19 in NYC.

Since TRIFF is known for its artistic culture, adding horse films into the mix was a no brainer, giving another way to display what this town has to offer. Small but mighty, Tryon is a quaint town which has an interesting array of things to do from the many galleries, restaurants, shops, and walking tours, to the easy access to the Blue Ridge Mountains and the many equestrian events.

"Coming off the heels of a very successful film festival weekend, it is important to look back and realize the importance of a strong partnership and collaborative relationship between EQUUS Film Festival and the Tryon International Film Festival. Tryon prides itself on our local equestrian culture, and feel we have only scratched the surface on what we can accomplish working together," commented Menetre.

Helping Equines Regain Dignity

In support of the horse, the "cause" that was supported by TRIFF was *Helping Equines Regain Dignity* (or HERD), which is all about saving one horse at a time. This non-profit all volunteer equine rescue group is based in the foothills of North Carolina and focuses on saving equines in dire conditions or from going to the slaughterhouses. And it's not just about saving them but includes vetting, feeding, training and giving them a chance for a happy future through its adoption program.



The HERD Horses

Just one-year young, HERD is still formulating a plan but for now dedicated locals house some of those horses. One of these supporters and a sponsor of this year's festival was Edge Brewing Barcelona, a company that thinks of its contribution as adding "fun" one beer at a time to wherever it goes.

Christian and Kim Oliver, owners of Edge Brewing, brought awareness to HERD by bringing in some classy entertainment known as KYB Dressage, which provides equestrian theatrical performances all over the country. KYB is the creation of Yvonne Barteau, producer of the kick-off VIP party film, *Into the Spotlight*. Adding this to a wide array of films of every type made this weekend extra special.



Christian and Kim Oliver



KYB Dressage



Kayla Barteau with her horse.



KYB horse parade led by Yvonne & Kim Barteau with Boater.



Yvonne Barteau with one of the exhibition riders.



The KYB performance team of riders and horses.



Q&A with the riders in the film *"Into the Spotlight."*



Yvonne Barteau doing a hands on clinic.

Bringing Fun to Tryon

In total, there were 72 films projected in six separate venues over a span of three days. In addition to the 22 horse films was a broad spectrum of documentaries, human rights, features, shorts and student films, as well as educational breakout sessions, cocktail parties, clinics and a KYB horse parade through town.

The weekend started on Friday night, October 27, with Barteau, her husband Kim, her daughter Kayla and her crew parading their talented steeds for the perfect picture op and kick-off to what was coined, "*A Red Carpet Affair*," and was held at the lovely Tryon Fine Arts Center.



The evening began with hors d'oeuvres, music and the chance to mix and mingle with filmmakers, judges, family, friends and guests before the special screening of *"Into the Spotlight,"* which was seen in the Veh Stage Theater. *Into the Spotlight* is about the making of a movie horse, among them even some rescue horses. It starts with their journey of being chosen and trained until ultimately making it to the live stage. This feature length documentary gives you a true sense of what it takes to be a theater horse. The film also shines a light on horse rescue and unwanted horses and how their lives can change in an instant.

What made the evening extra special was that all the KYB riders/trainers seen in the movie followed with an in-person presentation and question and answer session with the audience. Then the following evening they headed to the Tryon International Equestrian Center (home to next year's World Equestrian Games) and showed what it means to be in the spotlight. In front of a welcoming audience three of the riders performed to the *Lion King* followed by a Liberty performance of the Friesian stallion Boater by Kim Barteau.

It was a wonderful addition to the culmination of TIEC's summer season.

A Chance to Network and Learn



Left: Julianne Neal & Bruce Anderson



Above: Frank Calo and Steven Esteb.



Beau Menetre & Kirk Gollwitzer in the center with friends.



Left" Bruce Anderson's film the Edge was supported by friends and students.

Julianne Neal, producer of The Edge, speaking to the audience.

Films and more

Into the Spotlight was one of many horse films that were screened over the three days, everyone with a powerful message. Some other special features included *Unbridled*, a film which zeroes in on the pairing of an abused girl with an abused horse and their journey to redemption and healing.

A Sunday Horse, *American Cowgirl*, *The Edge* – Bruce Anderson *Natural Humanship*, *Li'l Herc*, *Out of the Wild*, *Finding Fortune*, *The Caravan Film* and so many more hit the silver screen over the weekend revealing unknown truths and inspiring stories to those in attendance.

Workshops were another focus of this year's event and were presented by two of the top film aficionados. Frank Calo is an independent producer and director who is best known for winning the Grand Jury Prize with his film, *The Believer*, starring Ryan Gosling and Billy Zane, at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival. That film won all the festivals that year including The Berlin Film Festival. His film, *Here & There* with Cyndi Lauper and David Thornton won the Best NY Narrative In World Competition 2009 at Robert DeNiro's Tribeca Film Festival in NYC. Calo presented a workshop for producers, writers, directors and production crew members.

After attending this year's TRIFF with the addition of horse films, Calo commented, "Great things happen when two positive film festivals combine and support each other like the way the Tryon International Film Festival, based in North Carolina, and the EQUUS Film Festival, based in NYC did this year."

Steve Esteb's workshop was focused on what it takes to be a screenwriter. Esteb is an award winning filmmaker who has worked as a Hollywood screenwriter. He has also directed features, commercials and more. Many of his films have gone on to gain major worldwide recognition. He teaches both film and screenwriting at Loyola University New Orleans.



Melrose Inn was where people gathered.



The Tryon Theater representatives.



Meeting new friends at the Tryon International Film Festival.

The Tryon International Film Festival Continues with movies and more.

Saturday was the kick-off of the remaining 71 films, starting at noon, and viewers came from all over selecting the films they wanted to see throughout the day. At the end of the day Tito's Vodka sponsored an art focused party where those in town could have another fun meet & greet.

Sunday was when the last of the films were shown culminating with the high point of the weekend, the presentation of the awards. Of special note was the unique design of each trophy thanks to Beau's wife, Ashley. Her artistic creativity shone through loud and clear as each sculpture had a horse theme.

During the week many of those behind the scenes and guests stayed at a nearby Melrose Inn, walking distance from everything. It became the place to gather in the mornings and evenings and a chance to meet people from all over the world. It was a mix and mingle of filmmakers, judges, guests and potential filmmakers and was a wonderful collaboration opportunity.

KYB at the Tryon International Equestrian Center



KYB Dressage performer Kayla Barteau at the Tryon International Equestrian Center.

KYB Dressage performing at the Tryon International Equestrian Center.

Liberty performance with Kim Barteau and his Friesian stallion, Boater.



The Awards are Presented



Levin Cuddihee



Sunday night was the grand finale when the winners were named as follows:

Best Feature: "Three Days In August" by Johnathan Brownlee

Best Documentary: "A Great American Tapestry" by David Weintraub

Best Student Film: "Memoire" by Collin McAtee

Best Short: "Limit" by Javad Daraei

Best Tryon's Overall: "Bound" by Daljit Kalsi

Best Human Rights & Dignity Documentary: "Resilience" by James Redford

Best Human Rights & Dignity Short: "Hooray for Hollywood" by Raven Kaliana

Best Equestrian Film Winners (EQUUS Film Festival – Tryon Tour Stop)

Best Documentary: "True Appaloosa" by Conor Woodman

Honorable Mention Best Theatrical Feature Length: "Out of the Wild" by Paul Krizan

Honorable Mention Best Short: "Dancing with Mustangs" by: Josh Wilkinson and Melia Gore

The awards were created by Ashley Menetre.



In Conclusion

In addition to Edge Brewing, a special thank you to New View Realty, Pinnacle Sotheby of Lake Lure, Tito's Handmade Vodka and the Town of Tryon for their support of the Tryon International Film Festival.

When it was all over it was Gollwitzer who said it all.

"This year's festival exceeded our expectation in content, execution, ticket and merchandise sales. It was wonderful having the EQUUS Film Festival as part of our program and we look forward to at least another year's partnership. While it is not our intent to become an equestrian film festival, given the sheer uniqueness with our horse community, an equestrian category of competition is a must. The beautifully curated collection of fine films from EQUUS makes us realize that we simply must work together with them in the future."

The Grand Finale



"Bound" won Best Tryon's Overall.



Kirk Gollwitzer, Beau Demetre, Lydia Juenger and Robyn Rosenberg.