

BILTMORE® Equestrian Center

30th Running of the Biltmore Challenge Endurance Ride

Information at <http://www.BiltmoreEndurance.com>

Remembering Anne Ayala, October 16, 1940 – December 27, 2012

**Friday May 1, 2026: 25-mile LD; 50-, and 65-mile endurance;
Saturday, May 2, 2026: 30 mile LD and 55, 75, and 100 mile endurance;
Introductory ride**

75 Mile AERC Young Rider Championship!

100 Mile AHA R12 Championship!

FEI 1*, 1* YJ, 2*, 2*YJ and 3* rides

AERC

SEDRA

SEERA

USEF

FEI

AHA

2026 Anticipated Sponsors:

Skito Saddle Pads

The Endurance Boutique

Colton Groome Financial Advisors

Becky Pearman Photography

Distance Depot / Horse Lovers Outlet

New Holland / West Hills Tractor

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Taylored Tack

The Biltmore Equestrian Center located on the grounds of George Vanderbilt's historic Estate in Asheville, NC, will host the thirtieth "annual" (except for Covid, floods....) Biltmore Challenge Endurance Ride on May 1 and 2, 2026. Two days of competition will be offered: Friday, with distances of 25, 50, and 65 miles; and Saturday with distances of 30, 55, 75, and 100 miles, with the AERC Young Rider 75-mile Championship and the Arabian Horse Association (AHA) Region 12 100-mile Championship. The 65, 75, and 100 mile distances will also offer FEI 1*, 1* YJ, 2*, 2* YJ, and 3* divisions. All riders will be entered in an AERC event. An intro ride will be offered Saturday afternoon. In addition, we will have team competition in all distances.

Built in 1895, the Estate trails promise a challenging ride through forested areas, vineyards, farm lands, and along the French Broad River. Much of the ride is on rolling hills with many short climbs. The footing is mainly forested trail and dirt farm roads with some gravel. *We recommend that all horses have hoof protection, and potentially pad at the 50, 65, 75 and 100 mile distances.* Breast collars/crppers may be helpful. For maps, check out the ride web site trails page. Once again, we hope to be using trails on the West Side of the French Broad with some excellent views of the House. Each loop will circle back to a central judging area adjacent to the main camping area.

Weather is somewhat unpredictable in early May, but it is usually humid with temperatures in the upper 70s to low 80s.

Length of Stay Passes. As part of the need for security on the Estate, and to provide a more official mode of access for attendees to the Estate grounds, entry will require a name pre-supplied to the gate guards. Entry fees for the ride automatically include the rider and one named crew member for the 'gate list' for each day ridden. **For the 75-mile and 100-mile rides, the entry fees extend to two named crew members on the 'gate list'.** Entry must be via the main gate. On the Estate, including

at the ride site, colored wristbands will be required to be worn as visible proof of permission, and can be used for re-entry. Additional permits may be purchased for \$55 each. Note: Children 16 years old and under are free, but still must be on the gate list and wear the wristbands.

ENTRY FORMS/PAYMENT: Please enter on line at <https://www.biltmore.com/equestrian-center/events/>. Paper entry form can be done, but not preferred. **All entry fees are due by April 24, 2026 (closing date).** That is, any entry not fully paid by April 24 is accepted only at management discretion (not guaranteed, and \$50 late fee will apply). Fees are *fully* refundable if cancelled prior to April 24 close of business; then except for \$50 through April 27, then 50% thereafter (but pre-arrival). After that, at management discretion. You MUST supply Coggins test papers valid through May 3, 2026 in advance (paper, scan, photo, all accepted). Non-AERC members must pay day fee of \$20. Entry and payment by credit card *is preferred – no extra fees.* <https://www.biltmore.com/equestrian-center/events/>.

Questions? Call Cheryl Newman at 828-665-1531 or cherylnewman@charter.net or equestrian@biltmore.com. Also check the web site: <http://www.biltmoreendurance.com>.

Young Rider Championship Qualification (no additional fees):

1. AERC Member in good standing
2. Open to riders aged 14-21
3. Equine must have 300 Lifetime Endurance Miles (no LD mileage will count)
4. Rider must have 300 Lifetime Endurance Miles (no LD mileage will count)
5. Rider and Equine must have *completed* one of the following together:
 - a. One 100 Mile Ride as a Team OR
 - b. One 75 Mile Ride as a Team OR
 - c. Two 50 Mile Rides as a Team with a letter of recommendation from your AERC Regional Director OR AERC International Regional Representative
6. All riders must have completed 100 AERC Endurance miles unsponsored.

AHA Region 12 Championship Qualification (no additional fees):

1. Rider and owner must both be AHA competition members;
2. The horse must be registered with AHA or the Canadian equivalent;
3. Horse must have completed 100 endurance trail ride miles of which 50 may be earned in an AHA Championship Competitive Trail Ride.

FEI (USEF) 1*, 1* YJ, 2*, 2* YJ and 3* divisions (FEES): additional entry and release needed, separate qualifications: check the ride web site for details. Ages of horses by FEI rules. Weight carried per FEI rules.

TEAM COMPETITION: Open to all riders in all competitions across both days. So, form your own team of up to five riders, with time for the top three finishers on each team counting towards awards. This is a good opportunity to practice team riding.... Check out how strategy and opportunities change in this environment! Entry at ride, no additional fees. At least two teams must be formed at a distance to qualify for a team competition.

CAMP: New vetting area: we will be using what has been the Overflow for the main vetting. Main camp field remains a half mile upstream and is primitive in large open pastures. Corrals are limited to 15' by 15'. No camper hook-ups; city water at hydrants; Portajons. Spots are flagged and are first come-first served. FEI has an area reserved in an area before the vetting area roughly by the (new!) finish line for bio-security. FEI 3* entries will go into 'enclosures' (they will get a layout plan). No saving spots for others. Please respect the red flagged areas – NO PARKING. Keep all your 'stuff' between your two flags.

Open fires are prohibited; charcoal grills OK. Dogs MUST be ON LEASH with you or corralled at all times and confined (not tied) when you are riding. On a first-call-to-reserve basis, there are some premium paddocks in the center of all the action available for rent for \$350 for 2 horses for all 3 camping nights, that also includes a prime camping spot near the paddock. There are also 6 pipe pens in the main area with a prime camping spot available for \$150 for all 3 nights, and some event

paddocks that are about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away from the action for \$50 day/horse. The premium paddocks and the pipe pens are only available for reservation for all 3 nights, no individual nights. No stables. The Biltmore Equestrian Center phone is: 828-225-1454.

Nominally, three nights of camping are included in a ride fee, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Camp opens on Wednesday, April 29. If you plan to arrive earlier, please indicate it with your entry and pay extra camping and trail fees. All entry to the grounds will be through the MAIN GATE of Biltmore Estate (open 24 hrs). Everyone will also exit through the main gate. If you have extra vehicle(s) driving with you, please note driver name with your entry. *All entering the Estate must have individual names on the Gate List ahead of time.*

DIRECTIONS TO CAMP: If approaching Asheville from the EAST on I-40, take Exit 50B, US 25 NORTH. Follow signs to entrance to Biltmore Estate, turning right off exit ramp and moving into the LEFT lane to prepare for the turn into Estate Entrance.

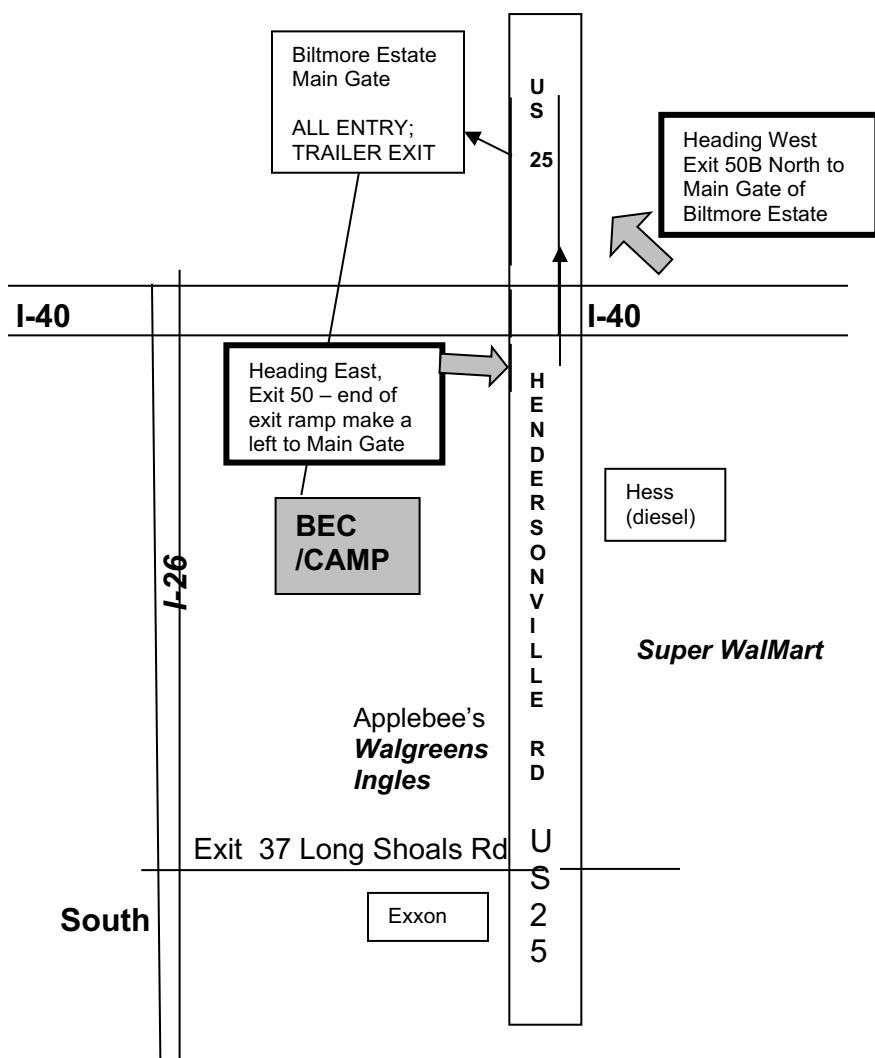
If approaching Asheville from the WEST on I-40, take Exit 50, turn LEFT off the exit ramp at the light, following signs to Biltmore Estate Main Entrance. Stay in the left lane after your merge into traffic.

If approaching Asheville from the SOUTH on I-26, continue to the junction with I-40 EAST. After you get on I-40, take Exit 50 and follow directions as above.

If approaching Asheville from the NORTH on I-26, get onto I-240 EAST to I-40 WEST. Take Exit 50B, and follow the directions above.

Pass through the first archway (Lodge Gate), and go "straight" past the main Ticket Booth. Follow signs to "Horse Event" or BEC making several turns. Watch for oncoming traffic and stay well to the right side of road. Cross the large stone bridge and go straight onto gravel road, which will bear right, allowing turn for large trailers. Signs will direct you to camp area near the outdoor arena. Do NOT try to drive through fields before you get to camp area.

All entry and exit must be through the main entrance to the Estate.



RULES: All AERC rules apply to Open riders. Equines must be at least 72 mos. old for the 100; 60 mos. old for 50/75; 48 mos. old for LD. No Juniors on stallions. Rules regarding courtesy to officials and protest procedures are per AERC Rules and failure to observe them will result in disqualification. FEI rules on ages and qualifications apply to FEI entries.

No ties except for AERC open and limited distance placings (FEI and AHA do not allow ties). A dead heat will be decided by coin toss or rider agreement.

PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR IS REQUIRED whenever mounted. No exceptions.

SMOKING: Smoking is prohibited on trails; OK in camp or at judging check.

WHO'S WHO ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Cheryl Newman

Elizabeth McLean, Rachel Kelly, Melissa Whitehead (Biltmore Equestrian Center)

Stagg Newman – Course Designer; Stephanie Laplante and Annie Markey -- Trails

Bonni Hannah, Rachel Kelly – volunteer coordinators

PLANNED CONTROL JUDGES 2026

Ken Marcella, Head Control Judge

Mike Tomlinson, Foreign Vet Delegate

Heather Hoyns, Nick Kohut, Jennifer Madera, Dennis Seymore

Lynne Johnson, Treatment Vet

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday	April 29	Noon	CAMP OPENS
Thursday	April 30	11:00 AM – 4:00 PM	REGISTRATION
		1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	FEI 1* VET-IN
		2:00 PM – 5:00 PM	AERC OPEN VET-IN
		6:00 PM	RIDER BRIEFING
Friday	May 1	6:30 AM	START 50-MILE and 65-MILE
		8:00 AM	START 25-MILE LD
		1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	REGISTRATION
		1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	FEI 2* and 3* VET-IN
		2:00 PM – 5:00 PM	AERC OPEN VET-IN
		2:00 PM	FINISH 25-MILE LD
		6:30 PM	FINISH 50-MILE
		6:30 PM	RIDER BRIEFING
		7:00 PM	AWARDS FOR FRIDAY 25, 50
		7:30 PM	DINNER
Saturday	May 2	10:15 PM	FINISH 65-MILE
		6:00 AM	START 100-MILE
		6:30 AM	START 75-MILE
		7:00 AM	START 55-MILE
		8:00 AM	START 30-MILE LD
		10:00 AM	INTRO RIDER BRIEFING
		11:00 AM	INTRO RIDE VET-IN
		NOON	INTRO RIDE START
		3:15 PM	FINISH 30-MILE LD
		4:00 PM	AWARDS 30-MILE LD
Sunday	May 3	8:15 PM	FINISH 55-MILE
		12:30 AM	FINISH 75-MILE
		6:00 AM	FINISH 100-MILE
		8:30 AM	All Remaining Awards & Breakfast

JUDGING CRITERIA: Control checks will all be 'gate into hold', with 64 pulse requirement, unless control judge staff determines otherwise. For non-finish checks, the AERC equine must meet this criteria within 30 min of arrival at check or be disqualified; for FEI horses that time is 15 minutes. Horses must be judged 'fit to continue'. Other criteria, including exit exam, may be included and would be announced either in rider packet or at rider meeting if weather is a factor.

Finishing criteria will be Fit to Continue including recovery. For AERC open completion, recovery is to pulse rate of 64 within 30 minutes. As soon as pulse is down, the equine may be brought for the final exam, but MUST be presented within the allotted time to avoid disqualification. For FEI, this time is 20 minutes. AERC equines have up to an hour post-finish line to pass non-pulse. FEI equines present when they pulse.

Cardiac Recovery Index (CRI) may be used, including final vetting and Best Condition.

JUDGE DECISIONS ARE FINAL!

FIT TO CONTINUE: The equine must be metabolically stable. There must be no gait aberration that is consistently observable under all circumstances that results in pain or threatens immediate athletic performance, exam to be conducted at trot (or equivalent), straight out and back, without prior flexion or palpation. Any soreness or wounds that affect equine's ability to go on may be

cause for non-completion.

An equine may not have received prohibited (AERC Rule 13) medical treatment by a vet or layman prior to final exam. An equine must not be in need of medical treatment for a soundness or metabolic problem. An equine that a ride control judge advises should be treated, but treatment is refused by rider or owner, shall be considered in the same light as an equine that has been treated and disallowed completion.

FARRIER: Mountain Farrier Service / Jeff Pauley will be the ride farrier. He or a colleague will be on the grounds during rides Friday and Saturday (til around 6pm). **To make an appointment in advance please call Jeff at 828 712 2343.**

MESSAGE:

Equine: Lauren Lukert will be the equine body worker. She will be on site starting Wednesday. **To make an appointment with Lauren, call her at 828 779 3276.**

Human: Nancy MacDonald will be the human massage therapist on the grounds. **To make an appointment with Nancy, call her at 828 225 5022.**

AWARDS: Completion awards for all riders. 1st-to-Finish Awards in the various divisions; Best Condition (BC); and other awards as sponsored.

FOOD: Friday dinner is likely to be available for \$25 pre-paid. Profits from this meal go to Hope for Horses, the local equine rescue.