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Ellen Veil (Poland Farm)

Horse Lover

Continued from A-1.

Poirier's work took a knowledge of civil engineering, architecture and "common sense."

With 25 to 30 years in research and development, Poirier has become highly skilled at handling projects in isolated places. He has traveled a great deal and now sitting in the president's office at Derby Meadows, says with conviction, "This is home!"

'Mr. Poirier's Livery'

Entering Derby Meadows, one is immediately aware that this is for the horse-oriented, with signs warning motorists to yield to horses, drive slowly, and that "horse drawn carriage has absolute priority."

On the left is a colorful, life-size equestrian statue of Joan of Arc in armor in the center of a small lake. The statue is anchored in concrete and is near the show arena named after France's most famous equestrienne and patron saint.

Because of the dominance of women in America supporting the horse and riding industry, the riding arena of Le Manège at Derby Meadows was named for Joan.

"Mr. Poirier's Livery" says a sign near the development office — a former milk cooling shed which has been completely and artfully redone and displays some of the Civil War artifacts from the property such as an old bayonet found under a manure pile.

Poirier enjoys relating stories of "Confederate Joe" — the "one active ghost" in residence — before showing the twin silos which have been interestingly restructured to form offices for the horse show secretary and the manager of the equestrian center activities, Pat Alton.

Alton and five instructors provide hunt seats, combined training, dressage, pleasure and trail riding lessons where they cater to the individual.

"I've been very fortunate to have had really class acts," says Poirier referring to such activities as clinics by Bruce Davidson, 1984 Olympics Gold Medalist and Michael Matz, Pan American Games Gold Medalist.

Both are world champions.

The developer personally takes part in a portion of the horseback riding courses taught at the center for Northern Virginia Community College and George Mason University explaining the differences in management of breeding herds and riding herds.

"They're completely different," says Poirier whose favorite horse is an Arabian, the one he rides with the Bull Run Hunt when it meets at Derby Meadows.

"We don't prohibit any horsemen on the trails," he says, though pedestrians and motor vehicles are discouraged. "If they're not on a horse, they're trespassing and we do patrol."

As a child, Poirier had a pony named Colorado.

"His only distinguishing habit was when he used to deliver newspapers, he always pulled into driveways regardless of speed."

This was okay with Poirier on Sundays when he delivered the Sunday paper but "no good the rest of the week," he recalls with a laugh.

Spectacular Trails

While planning and land sales take up the bulk of his time, Poirier rides all the trails before they are built. Spectacular sights of wildlife can be seen from the trails as well as wild geese, swans, and heron.

Poirier intends to fence off a portion of the peninsula near the lake and seed it with special grass as a habitat for migrating waterfowl.

He takes great pleasure in going out for a ride on the trails with visitors."

Poirier used to sell and break horses. The idea of an equestrian community came to him when people "used to complain about losing traditional trails."

"You have to want to do it," he says of the \$3.5 million project.

"It's not like putting in a subdivision." He is confident it will work and has highly qualified people to help him, people "who believe in the same things," like his engineer and chief forester who mapped out original trails in Reston.

Poirier and his wife have five children who help with trail selection, bookkeeping and public relations. His two oldest are the most interested in the horses.

The Joan of Arc arena has a fiber surface mixed with masonry sand for all weather riding. An indoor arena is used for night lessons and a much larger one is planned for the Loudoun side.

A riding camp is scheduled for this summer. All horse activities are open to the public, and although the riding center is separate from the community, they "go hand-in-hand," according to Poirier.

"I think this is going to be a good year for construction," says the horse lover who hopes to finish the project in three years.

He wants Derby Meadows to be "an equestrian community large enough to give an independent life style unaffected by sprawling suburbanism.

"It's going to be super elegant," he says, explaining that "the average family gets in here for \$17,000 down and the ability to pay \$500 a month until they build, and then it's \$1,800 to \$2,000 a month."

After building, owners will have a beautiful home and stables with over 10 acres fenced and all valued at \$250,000, plus several million dollars worth of trails to use, something that would cost them "three times as much anywhere else," according to Poirier.



Bernard W. Poirier

Nancy White—The Journal Messenger

Home for Horse Lovers

By NANCY WHITE
JM Special Writer

Bernard W. Poirier speaks fondly of Derby Meadows, his 1,200-acre equestrian estate community with 16 miles of interconnected trails nestled in the corners of Prince William and Loudoun Counties.

Derby Meadows is being developed for horse lovers by Poirier, a native of Rhode Island who came to this area 25 years ago following a career in planning and research.

Under development are 70 to 75 small farms ranging in size from 10 to 17 acres. All parcels have new post and board horse fencing and require a minimum of 2,700 square feet of heating space for principle residences. Some owners who have bought farms have already put up stables and moved in their horses before they begin construction on their homes.

In addition to the equestrian community is Le Manège, the main equestrian center located on the Prince William side of Derby Meadows on Route 701, east of Route 15. It is currently providing year round horse activities and events.

Traveled Extensively

"I've always been at the leading end of

technology," notes Poirier (pronounced Pwah-ee-ay) whose career took him to Europe, Africa, Alaska and the Middle East.

The first American at the management level for International Telephone and Telegraph in France, Poirier's mission was to open new research frontiers for his French group. With an office in Paris and a branch office in Montreal, Poirier traveled a great deal, crossing the Atlantic three times a month.

Prince William Profile

"Research was always my thing," notes the one-time assistant to the chief scientist who developed the Polaris submarine. Prior to the Polaris program, Poirier worked in the Navy Comptrollers Office.

He put the first audio visual network for education in the villages of the Sahara Desert something that "affected everyone's life-style."

After leaving ITT, Poirier went to Canada and Alaska. "When the pipeline hit and that controversy hit, we had to design whole towns," he says.

See "HORSE LOVER" on A-3.