

Photo by Rebecca Walton



Paige Cade making a picture perfect promotion.

RUTLEDGE FARM BRINGS ELITE CLINICIANS TO HISTORIC MIDDLEBURG VIRGINIA

It's no secret that Middleburg, Virginia is one of the top equestrian havens in the United States. Tucked away there, in the hills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is Aleco Bravo-Greenberg's Rutledge Farm—an equestrian oasis stretching across more than 120 acres that's been in the Bravo-Greenberg family since the 1980's.

After growing up in Washington, D.C. followed by a decade spent in Los Angeles, Aleco has settled into farm life in the heart of Virginia's horse country and after a two-year renovation, Rutledge Farm is a dream destination for equestrians.

Built in 1740, and rooted in equestrian tradition, his parents bought Rutledge Farm in 1985 and turned it into a world-class thoroughbred breeding facility. Rutledge Farm has a history of producing top racehorses. Most notably, Rutledge produced the winner of the 1993 Belmont Stakes, Colonial Affair. Julie Krone was at the reins: the only woman ever to win a Triple Crown race!

After officially relocating to Rutledge Farm in 2015, Aleco took ownership of the property with the goal of eventually opening up the facility for local and regional equestrians to enjoy. Aleco saw

the potential in Rutledge Farm after the countless hours that his family put into it. Today, after an extensive two-year renovation, the historic property boasts five barns, an all-weather outdoor arena, a spacious indoor arena, and both a grand prix and polo field.

In August of 2017, Aleco invited his childhood friend and 2008 Olympic team gold-medalist, Will Simpson, to host a boutique show jumping clinic at the farm. "The idea to start a clinic series was born after the renovations were made to the farm in 2017," Aleco explained. "Will [Simpson] is a good friend of mine, and we have known each other since we were kids. We decided to bring Will here to host a clinic here at Rutledge Farm for riders in the area, and everyone loved it! The clinics have only grown from there."



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Just one year after Simpson’s clinic, Aleco officially launched the annual “Rutledge Farm Sessions” clinic series in June 2018. Kicking off with style, Aleco invited two-time Olympic gold-medalist McLain Ward for a masterclass clinic. Ward touched on various aspects of training during his clinic, emphasizing the importance of simple, classic training, and slowly building upon basic skills. Ward said, “It was a wonderful experience. Aleco is an extremely enthusiastic and professional gentleman to work with, and his facility is first-class it’s really quite spectacular here!”

As a four-time Olympian and three-time Olympic medalist for the United States, Ward is consistently one of the top ten riders on the Longines FEI World Ranking list. Shortly after his clinic, Ward was a member of the triumphant gold-medal team at the 2018 Tryon World Equestrian Games (WEG). Ward’s clinic was a unique and rare opportunity for Middleburg locals to partake in, confirming Aleco’s decision to run the clinic series.

“McLain is an icon,” Aleco said. “Here at Rutledge Farm, we always want to be first-class and work with the best of the best that’s how we present ourselves. And with that in mind, McLain was a natural fit. He’s a great clinician, and he was able to teach in a way that was very concrete, understandable, and important.”

Following Ward’s clinic, Rutledge Farm

continued the clinic series by bringing back Simpson in August of 2018. Of the Rutledge Farm Sessions, Simpson said, “Everything here is just first-rate. My experience here at Rutledge Farm has been top-notch. Aleco is doing a great job orchestrating these Rutledge Farm Sessions and I am really honored to be a part of it.”

To round out 2018, Aleco brought in two more Olympic gold medalists, international eventing champion Phillip Dutton and show jumping legend Leslie Burr-Howard. “We were thrilled with the turnout for the first official year of the series,” Aleco said. “I think everyone really enjoyed having these clinicians come to Middleburg. It is an invaluable experience watching the country’s top professionals share their wealth of knowledge, and at Rutledge Farm we are proud to play a role in being able to offer that.”

This year, the Rutledge Farm Sessions clinic series is slated to feature even more clinicians, with an expansion into new disciplines, offering something for everyone to enjoy. In addition to bringing in new clinicians for show jumping and eventing, Rutledge Farm is now offering clinics for equitation and dressage riders.

Aleco said, “My vision for the Rutledge Farm Sessions has always been to actively support the development of U.S. equestrians and to provide them with access to these elite-level athletes, right here in Middleburg. By expanding the series



McLain Ward having a good time instructing at Rutledge Farm

to more disciplines, I look forward to being able to open our doors to even more people that would like to learn from the best.”

He added, “It is also a really unique opportunity for eventing athletes, professionals and amateurs alike, to take advantage of multi-disciplinary training. There is something here for everyone to hone their skills.”

Rutledge Farm’s exciting 2019 series stepped off in June with Olympic gold-medalist Peter Wylde. Looking ahead, Simpson and Dutton plan to return as clinicians in August and October, respectively. New to the series, three-day eventing champion Boyd Martin joins Rutledge Farm’s list of elite clinicians this fall.

In addition, dressage enthusiasts are in for a treat as Olympic bronze medalist and U.S. Dressage Technical Advisor and Chef d’Equipe, Debbie

McDonald, comes to Middleburg in September. In addition, Olympic dressage bronze medalist Ali Brock will host a two-day clinic in October. To conclude the year, revered equitation trainer, Stacia Madden, will host a two-day equitation-focused clinic.

On the future of the series, Aleco said, “I am thrilled to continue welcoming both new and returning clinicians to Rutledge Farm. We’re dedicated to bringing the country’s top athletes to Middleburg and promoting education within our community. The series that we have developed here is unlike anything else in the country, perhaps even the world, and I look forward to watching it continue to grow.”

For more information about Rutledge Farm Sessions, visit www.rutledgefarm.com.

