

## Can The Dominican Republic Be Ready For The Pan Am Games?

*The equestrian facility wasn't finished in late June, but it looks as if the basics will be in place this month.*

Tania Evans

Dr. Cesar Tavard, technical director for the Dominican Equestrian Federation, drives his truck along the pitted dirt road to the back entrance of the equestrian facilities for the Pan Am Games, which are being built north of Santo Domingo, the country's capital city. The rough lane is only 900 meters long and enters through the south wall, closest to the city.

The main entrance is on the north side, the termination of a just-finished, six-mile road from Santo Domingo to the new Palmajrejo Equestrian Center. The long road runs wide and straight through sugar cane fields that lie fallow due to a declining world market for cane sugar, one of the Dominican Republic's main exports.

"The back road will not be improved," said Tavard philosophically, "but riders will use it because of its convenience."

Like many educated Dominicans, Tavard's English is perfect. His French grandfather arrived here with the U.S. military during the 1920s to run the commissary in the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

Tavard knows everything and everyone in the Dominican horse world. He is "a straight guy who tells it like it is," said Enrico Canobbio, director of the equestrian center at Casa de Campo, echoing many Dominican horse people. For the Games, Tavard will act as liaison for the organizers, owners and riders, as well as troubleshooter.

The road to the equestrian site symbolizes a strategy that perplexes many Dominican horse people. While there were existing facilities in the city that only needed upgrading and that were certain to be used after the Pan Am Games are over, the committee chose a new site far from the city's center that required everything from electricity and sewage to roads.

But the site offered great design possibili-

ties for architect and former rider Leonardo Macarulla, a Dominican designer for many of the Pan Am facilities. And some said the equestrian events needed a new, modern facility with a grand entrance.

Driving through the wall, Tavard reveals a breathtaking view of the facilities and the mountains beyond. The circular area is a sea of golden-red sand, dotted with gigantic earth-moving equipment and white buildings. Beyond the wall lies a great sweep of banana trees and sugar cane that rises into the hazy, purple mountains.

The facility's design is gentle and balanced. It offers an elegant, slight slope on the right to the clubhouse and main arena, with warm-up rings beyond. On the left is the stable complex.

On June 26, the buildings' walls were beautifully whitewashed and glistening, but they had no roofs. The arena wall is a precise curve of white and red rock, but there was no footing inside and no bleachers for the spectators. The clubhouse invitingly hugs the main arena, but it lacked doors, windows and a roof. Two hundred meters to the left lay the beginnings of an indoor arena, with gray cement, but unfinished walls.

**The main arena at the Palmajrejo Equestrian Center was little more than a gaping hole in late June. The building on the left will be the clubhouse; warm-up rings will be on the right.**



(Tania Evans Photo)



(Tania Evans Photo)

An interior view shows the stables at Palmarejo are spacious and well-ventilated.

Walking through the isolation area, Tavad points out the stables, feed rooms, groom quarters, surgery and clinic, several quarantine stalls, and the courtyard onto which all open. Inside one of the roofed stables, large stalls line both sides, cool and calm.

The surgical clinic is being built almost exclusively for the benefit of the Pan Am Games horses, because equine surgery is an extravagant gesture in this Third World country. It's only done in one place in all of the Dominican Republic, and there is no such thing as arthroscopy.

new on trial, and some borrowed.

► **One Man's Influence**

The Dominican world is an easy-going one with great wealth and great poverty sitting close beside one another like friendly

This clinic is being built under the supervision of American Jack Snyder, an associate member of the Veterinary Commission for the Games. Like all the other buildings, in June the clinic had no roof, no electricity or water, no finished floor, no doors or windows. But, again, Tavad promised that all the needed equipment would be there—some donated, some bought used, some



**NATURAL INGREDIENT FLY & MOSQUITO SPRAY**

**Safe for you and your horse to breathe**

**SUMMER DEFENSE MARIGOLD HORSE SPRAY**

*The Horse Journal*, after running exhaustive tests on natural ingredient fly sprays, reported that the bottom line and best product for horses with sensitive skin, young horses and horses that don't wear fly masks is **EQyss Summer Defense Marigold Spray**. They also found it to be the gentlest and best smelling product tested, so gentle in fact, that they did not worry about spraying the horse's face with Marigold Spray.

**So make it your first choice – it is amazing GUARANTEED!**

**Can be sprayed safely on the face and ears • Will not burn the horse's eyes**



**1-800-526-7469**  
**www.eqyss.com**

Available at your local tack and feed store and catalog house. Call for product information or a store near you. Visit us on the web for other unique products.

COTH-0803-8

cousins in the best of times and the worst. Right now the economy is suffering from more than the worldwide economic malaise. A high government official was recently discovered to have embezzled what amounts to half of the entire country's annual budget. So the funds to finish the Pan Am facilities are hard to come by.

The bid for this facility construction was won competitively by the firm of Jose Manuel Ramos, president of the Dominican Equestrian Federation. His company's engineers are involved with horses and have a historical connection to the Games.



(Tonia Evans Photo)

### Facts About The Dominican Republic's Pan Am Games

- Competition days for dressage and jumping are August 7-16. Aug. 7—Prix St. Georges; Aug. 8—Intermediaire I; Aug. 10—Intermediaire freestyle; Aug. 13—show jumping speed leg; Aug. 14—Nations Cup; Aug. 16—individual show jumping final.
- Palmarejo Equestrian Center, 12 miles from Santo Domingo city center. Approximately 185 acres. Capacity: seating for 1,000 people for the Games, 4,600 when finished; stables for 145 horses.
- Jim Wolf, the U.S. Equestrian Team's assistant executive director, who is coordinating much of the U.S. team's travel to the Pan Am Games, said that dressage horses will leave by plane on Aug. 3 and return on Aug. 11. The show jumpers leave on Aug. 8 and return on Aug. 18. Both teams will fly directly from Newark Airport (N.J.) to Santo Domingo, although the show jumpers may return to Spruce Meadows (Alta.), where they'll compete next, for their one-week return quarantine.
- Christopher Columbus discovered Hispaniola in 1492, an island of 29,800 square miles. The western half of the island is the country of Haiti; the eastern half is the Dominican Republic.
- Santo Domingo, main site of the Pan Am Games and the country's capital, was founded in 1496 by Columbus' brother, Adelantado Don Bartolome Colon. His house can still be seen in the Zona Colonial. City population is 2.5 million.
- The equestrian facility is on the city's northwest edge, 25 minutes by cab from the main hotel strip on the Caribbean promenade on the city's south edge.
- Mountains dominate about half the island, making for outstanding whitewater kayaking, mountain biking and hiking, even snow skiing. Superb coffee grows on small farms in the foothills.
- The north coast is among the top 10 for windsurfing worldwide and the kite surfing world capital.
- Casa de Campo, on the southeast coast, boasts several Pete Dye golf courses, one rated No. 1 in the Caribbean.
- Many equestrian centers on the island offer riding lessons, rental horses, and competition in which to participate or observe. Santo Domingo boasts four of these centers. In season, there's also polo.
- 80 percent of the cultivated land is in sugar cane.
- Paso Finos are the main horses of village and farm transport and are an industry in themselves.
- Cattle and horse ranch work is done by horses that are part Morgan, Criollo and Tennessee Walker.

### Permanent stables will offer safe accommodations for the Pan Am Games horses.

For example, the grandfather of Jose Manuel Ramos, bearing the same name, was a force in the 1930s behind introducing horse sports to the Central American Games. His son became president of the DEF in the 1980s, and now his grandson is president.

His sister, Diana Ramos, a member of the Dominican dressage team and of the Pan Am organizing committee, explained, "My brother was responsible for building the equestrian facilities for the 1986 Central American Games held here.

"The key factor in making these facilities ready by August is that my brother has put his own money into the project," she added. "We are a poor country. The money doesn't come so easy. He did this because he has double responsibility."

### ► Better Like It Hot

Because the Dominican Republic is a tropical environment, great care must be taken to isolate the horses from diseases. Grain and hay will be imported from North America, because native hay might harbor ticks that carry parasites and viruses. There will be no grass anywhere in the isolation area for the same reason.

Grooms will have access to horses only through a guarded gate and not from their own quarters. Their quarters are attached to the feed rooms. There is no temperature or humidity control in the grain rooms, but the short time they will be used, plus their natural cooling structure, is sufficient to maintain feed quality.

August temperatures in the Dominican Republic are anywhere from the normal 82 degrees to as high as 100 degrees. The humid-



(Tonia Evans Photo)

A typical street scene in the Colonial Zone of Santo Domingo, founded in 1496.



Image by ©Tony Stromberg



**BACK IN THE SADDLE**

*Unique & Unusual Gifts and Apparel  
for Horse Lovers*

Order online or request a catalog [www.backinthesaddle.com](http://www.backinthesaddle.com)

Call or write:

Back In The Saddle  
120 North Meadows Road, Dept. C3  
Medfield, MA 02052  
1-800-860-3745

*(Outside the U.S., please send \$2 for postage.)*

ity will be 85 percent. Said Tvard, "If it rains a few days before the event, the temperature will drop during the competition. But if it rains during the event, the air will literally steam."

Diane Ramos said the weather will resemble the usual summer weather at the U.S. Equestrian Team Championships in Gladstone, N.J.

Although August and September are high hurricane season, the storms aren't common in Santo Domingo. The last major hurricane was in 1998.

But even if one hits, it would probably be only an inconvenience. Since that 1998 event, telephone lines have been laid underground, and many hotels have installed satellite communications.

**Where Dominicans  
Learn To Ride**

While many Dominican urbanites rode as youngsters on their family ranches, many other riders who went on to be international riders or breeders first put their feet in stirrups at one of the three main equestrian centers in the capital—Feria Ganadera, Las Colinas or Marismas—or at nearby resort Casa de Campo in La Romana.

For example, Hector Florentino, a Dominican jumper rider who will compete

**The clubhouse will give patrons a good view of the arena.**



(Ivonne Evans Photo)

in the Games on Ittersum, rode at Feria Ganadera. He also later rode at Las Colinas, a top-notch facility focused on jumping and open to the public.

Dressage team member Diana Ramos is based with the rest of the team at Marismas, a private equestrian center owned by teammate Ivonne Losos de Muniz.

Feria Ganadera is like a great state fair-ground. It is the site of rodeos, jumping competitions, Paso Fino exhibitions, reining clinics, and anything else to do with horses, cows, goats, sheep and livestock. And during the Games, it will be the modern pentathlon site. This complex also boasts an open-air market with luscious carrots.

Tavard has taught riding camps, clinics and lessons at Feria Ganadera for 30 years. Florentino is a graduate of them. Tavard, also a medical doctor, rode in 1986 for his country in the Central American Games, winning bronze medals in dressage and jumping.

Marismas is a successful, private center for boarding and training. De Muniz and Inatana las Marismas won two individual gold medals and a team bronze at the most recent Central American Games in El Salvador. She spent last winter preparing in U.S. competitions for the Pan Am Games, and she regularly won or placed well on the Florida dressage circuit.

The three-member Dominican dressage team, which has paid all its own training and competition expenses, will be competing on Dutch-bred horses: de Muniz on Inatana las Marismas, Ramos on Nienke, and George Fernando on Jorias Las Marismas.

Most Dominican riders maintain personal businesses as well as riding careers. Since the country is an island, riders must travel abroad to compete, and very few riders and horses travel to Dominican competitions.

The equestrian centers and clubs around the island host monthly competitions. Each discipline sponsors from four to 10 events a year.

Normally, internationally ranked judges and course designers are imported for these events. For example, for a June jumping competition at Nitram, a modest complex on the north side of the city, with classes from 2'3" to 4'6", the course designer was Jose Maurer from Mexico, brought in specially to do this competition. He rode for Mexico in the 1990 World Equestrian Games and the 1992 Olympics.



**When it comes to hoof care, we don't mess around.**

Revolutionizing hoof dressing as you know it, HOOF STIX™ is the only product on the market that allows application with no mess or hassle, saving you time and money. Our triple-protection formula with all natural rejuvenating botanicals — offered in a convenient "brush bottle" applicator — glides on and enhances the health of your horse's hooves through dry and wet seasons.

**Hoof Stix™ unique "no-mess" bottle makes application quick and easy.**



Visit our website, [www.riovistaproducts.com](http://www.riovistaproducts.com) or call 800-248-6428 for a dealer near you.

**Ask for HOOF STIX™ at your local tack store!**

