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Todd Minikus and Ultimo Van Ter Moude win the \$25,000 Ariat Grand Prix at HITS Saugerties

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PRESS RELEASE
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SAUGERTIES, NY(June 13, 2008) -- Todd Minikus and his ride Ultimo Van Ter Moude cruised past the star-studded field of 38 starters to secure \$7,500 in prize money in Thursday's \$25,000 Ariat Grand Prix at HITS Saugerties.

Course designer Doug Russell sliced the large first-round field to 12 for the jump-off, making it a very competitive race over fences. "I think he was looking for eight to 12 riders to advance to the jump-off," said McLain Ward, who was 10th aboard Suzy. "He got 12 and that was on the larger side of that, but all in all it was a great class." "I was happy to have 12 come back for the jump-off," said Russell. "To be honest with you, I thought we had the right 12 come back. None of them got scared and they all walked away confident." First to go in the jump-off were Jonathan McCrea and his mount Costa. The combination had eight faults and finished in ninth place. Second to challenge Russell's route were Minikus and his first mount to compete in the jump-off, Romy. They finished with 12 faults and ended up in 11th place. "With riders like McLain Ward and Hillary Dobbs behind me, I wanted to take a shot early on Romy," said Minikus. "Everyone was trying to make it a fast jump-off." Rebecca Johanson-Hofmann and her mare Corona were third to go in the jump-off and dropped an unlucky rail midway through the trip to finish in fourth place. Hofmann, who has been at HITS Saugerties all spring, has competed in every Grand Prix and has grabbed a share of the prize money in all of them. In total, she has won more than \$18,000 in prize money for Blue Hill Farm and sits tenth in the USGPL Standings. Hillary Dobbs rode into the ring next aboard Quincy B. Dobbs and her mount had four faults in the jump-off and finished in fifth place. "With 12 in the jump-off, I wanted to take a shot early," said Dobbs. "The square oxers coming off some very sharp turns seemed to do a lot of people in early. The bogey jump was definitely the inside turn by the Statue of Liberty Island in the middle of the ring."

Patty Stovel and her mount Shandor 41 were next to take a shot at going clear and also had a rail down to finish in eighth place. New Jersey's Callan Solem brought her first of two mounts into the ring next. Solem and Allison had four faults and finished in seventh place. Danielle Torano and Marlo were seventh in the jump-off. The combination also dropped a rail and finished with four faults to grab sixth place. Ward and Suzy were

eighth to try to pass Russell's test, but the pair had two rails down and finished in 10th place. Dobbs and Marengo were next coming off a second-place finish in last Sunday's \$50,000 Waldorf=Astoria Collection Grand Prix. The combination navigated the course clean stopping the clocks in 38.840 to set the Great American Time to Beat. They would eventually finish third in Thursday's feature class. "Marengo has shown some great progression," said Dobbs' trainer Missy Clark. "When Hillary first started to show him, he was a little nervous and suspicious of water. It seems like he has gotten over that fear."

"I took my time on Marengo because I wanted to make sure we went clear," said Dobbs. "I couldn't be happier with my horses. I gave Corlett the day off, but I have three great Grand Prix horses." Minikus was next aboard Ultimo Van Ter Moude and had the advantage of watching Dobbs go one trip earlier. The seasoned veteran had a clear round time of 35.590 to take a lead that they would not relinquish. "Hillary was very fast but, when I watched her, I saw she was a little wide to the oxers so I knew I could make up some time there," said Minikus.

Solem came back in the last-to-go spot and went clean aboard Mianta in 37.391 to grab second place. Judy Garofalo Torres withdrew from the jump-off and took 12th place to round out the list of money winners.

"The old man's still got it," joked Jimmy Torano after the class. "He may be a little long in the tooth...but he's still got it." "It was a great team win for us," said Minikus. "When I say team, I mean not only me, but Purina Mills and Falkirk Farm." With the win, Minikus earned some valuable points for the \$100,000 USGPL Invitational Grand Prix to be held during the USGPL Finals at Commonwealth Park, in late September. The top 30 riders in the Marshall & Sterling League National Standings (based on money won by the qualified horse/rider combination) will be invited to participate in the Invitational. In addition, one Wild Card slot will be allotted. The rider may elect to ride any horse of his or her choice, but may ride only one horse in the Invitational. All Grand Prix events at HITS Saugerties and HITS Culpeper are qualifying events for the Invitational. To view the current standings, please click [here](#).

For more information and a complete schedule of classes and events, visit www.HitsShows.com.



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Todd Minikus and Ultimo Van Ter Moude win the \$25,000 Ariat Grand Prix at HITS Saugerties.



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Todd Minikus and Ultimo Van Ter Moude are congratulated after winning the \$25,000 Ariat Grand Prix at HITS Saugerties by Melissa Hill and Lucy

Husar of the Tack Shelter. The Tack Shelter operates the Ariat Store at HITS-on-the-Hudson.