



# BRING ON THE

# COLORS

Spring style for the equestrian-apparel industry means fresh fabrics and bright hues.

By Amy Seigel

**L**ong before April showers, May flowers or any other visible signs of the season, apparel retailers from the hip boutiques of Paris to the western warehouses of San Antonio must begin thinking about the new looks, fresh colors and hot trends for spring.

To give you a head start on this spring's equestrian trends, we spoke with several manufacturers of both English and western apparel for the low-down on all the hot looks, from schooling duds to show-ring styles.

### Discipline-Crossover Looks

This spring, many major apparel trends aren't discipline- or gender-specific, but represent elements of style and function that will be important regardless of whether your customers are dressage queens or cutting cowboys.

Integrated technology—in the form of sun-protection and insect-repellent finishes, moisture-wicking, breathable and stain resistant fabrics—will surge as riders continue to value hard-working attire.

This season will be all about “wickable, breathable and durable performance fabrics with longevity,” explains Kerri Kent of Kerrits Equestrian Apparel. “As consumers continue to grow savvier, people really want their fabrics to perform. And they’re looking for fabrics with performance built right into the weave of the fabric.”

Adds Chris Corn of Ariat International, “It’s also essential that these fabrics are very easy-care. The modern consumer needs a wardrobe that looks great and feels great, is as versatile as their schedules, yet doesn’t require high maintenance.”

Although high-tech sometimes means sacrificing high-style, this season’s performance-oriented fashions effortlessly merge these elements into pieces that are easy-wearing and easy on the eyes.

For Spring 2008, the equestrian-apparel consumer will have “a heightened sense of luxury paired with practicality,” says Corn; and for that reason, the Spring collection from Ariat is poised to feature both “technical fabrics and performance design details.”

Consumers will look for pieces that perform to the highest standard, yet also feature tasteful accents, along with sophisticated weaves and threads that will set them apart from the crowd. For Ariat, these specialty touches will include decorative snaps, Lurex threads, Swiss dots, shadow stripes,

## 3D Belt Jewelry Set

From 3D Belt comes the Silver Strike Jewelry collection. Its latest assortment has equestrian-style baubles that bring the magic of riding straight to the jewelry box. These ornately detailed, fine-silver-plated jewelry sets are sure to please any woman who takes pride in her horse and herself. Horseshoe pendants shown. *Contact:* 979-743-4567; [www.3dbelt.com](http://www.3dbelt.com).

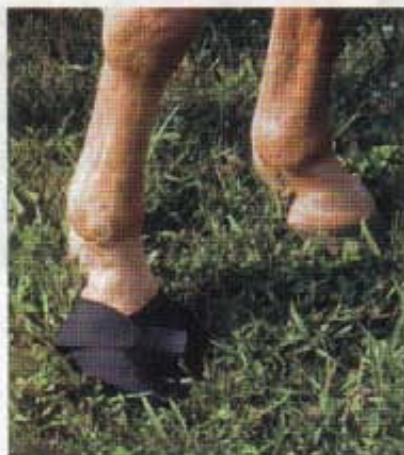


## Kerrits Hoofprint Sweaters

Kerrits new wool-blend sweaters will keep your customers toasty this winter. And they can be worn from the barn to town for comfortable style. Kerrits Hoofprint Sweater is machine-washable with generous sleeve length and an easy-roll-up cuff. It can be worn as a soft layer next to skin or a second layer for added warmth. *Contact:* 541-386-4187; [www.kerrits.com](http://www.kerrits.com).

## Weatherbeeta On Course Breeches

These performance-enhancing, four-way-stretch, poly-blend breeches from Weatherbeeta use all-season fabric to provide ultimate rider comfort. They feature an elastic waistband with rubberized grips to keep the wearer's show shirt neatly in place while riding. They also have synthetic suede knee patches and hook and loop ankle closures. Style: Front zip, side zip, full seat and premier kids' that feature an adjustable waist. *Colors:* Black, beige, taupe and smoke blue. *Sizes:* Regular or long styles from 24 to 36. *Contact:* 732-650-0025; [www.weatherbeeta.com](http://www.weatherbeeta.com).



## Quick Fix for Sore Hooves Hoofwraps

Mossy Creek has introduced Hoof Wraps, an alternative for equine-hoof treatment. The product is a bandage, not a boot, and is made from tough, reinforced 1680 ballistic nylon. It'll help your customers treat such common hoof ailments as abscesses and stone bruises; or they can use the product to protect the hoof after shoe loss. An industrial-strength fastening system provides added grip and security. One size fits most. *Contact:* 877-777-9198; [www.hoofwraps.com](http://www.hoofwraps.com).

## Fashion in a Bag Diamond Mine

Sarah Marr of Episode 39 presents purses inspired by colorful racing silks, with lightweight aluminum horseshoes fashioned into handles and a bowtie adornment. She crafts custom purses in specific silks or colors, and develops and manufactures officially licensed purses in the silks of celebrity horses. *Contact:* 281-538-3072; [www.sarahmarr.com](http://www.sarahmarr.com).





Browns, florals and silk are all making a comeback in spring's western wardrobe (from Wrangler's 20X collection.)



Ariat's capped sleeves, light fabrics and bright colors set the tone for the company's spring collection.



The grass is always greener in spring, and particularly when the fabric is made from recycled materials. Kerrits is launching its GRASS line, which stands for Green Riding Apparel for Style and Sustainability. The line features fabrics made from such earth-friendly materials as bamboo, recycled polyester and organic cotton.

well-done frayed fashion pieces and satin piping. "Spring will be bold, yet tasteful," says Corn.

Coordinating collections also will be big this season. "The mix-and-match concept is something that's building in the equestrian world," observes Nina Depetris of JPC Equestrian. Kerrits and Ariat are working together to coordinate looks. "All the pieces offered within a delivery are designed to coordinate with each other, giving the retailer merchandising ease and the consumer a wardrobe with maximum versatility," explains Corn.

### English Class

In the English show scene, the trend toward European styling will continue, with subtle patterns in traditionally colored coats paired with

show shirts that offer understated accents, such as whipstitch details and velvet trim. These design features are invisible to the judge, but provide the rider with show-wardrobe-building options.

Although the look for show ring will remain traditional, "the details—fabric, design, technical engineering of the garment—are anything but," says Corn. She points to the Cavalry Twill breeches from Ariat's Spring 2008 Collection as an example. "We've taken the attractive good looks of a classic and given it a modern twist," she says.

By pairing leading-edge design technologies—such as four-way stretch, stain- and abrasion-resistant finishes, with small embellishments, such as Clarino trim at the waistband and belt loops—even the

most practical of breeches end up with a designer feel.

Combining tradition with innovation is the name of the game, says Kent, especially when it comes to show-attire shapes and silhouettes. For Spring 2008, Kerrits will offer a Competitors Vest and Jacket that will feature "flattering in-the-saddle styling, combined with the durability and performance of Dy-



Ariat's Legacy Hunt Coat is traditional with a twist: piping on the collars adds a level of panache to this conservative plaid hunt coat.

Men deserve protection from pests as well: Ariat launches insect shield for men this spring. The collection includes stylish shirts and bandanas with Jazz-Off technology.

namic Extreme fabric, that offers four-way stretch for unrestricted movement," she says.

In a similar vein, all of Ariat's hunt coats will feature elasticized mesh panels in the lining to "accommodate a full range of motion and maximum breathability in the shoulder and upper torso. A discreetly folded pleat in the lining expands to accommodate an extended range of motion," explains Corn.

Outside of the show circuit, the looks for English schooling attire will be far from conservative. In fact, "trendy," a term usually reserved for the more adventurous western market, is an apt description of the season's fashions.

Lightweight fabrics that feature moisture-wicking technologies will be the "hot" fabric trend, while colorful breeches paired with bright, patterned tops will coordinate to make for a vibrant palette.

Kent notes that although Kerrits' color scheme will feature more classic, neutral, slimming colors in breeches, they're designed to pair with lively tops in a lighter pastel palette combined with some strong vibrant prints. As far as patterns go, "argyle is still in, along with thin and bold stripes and bright colors," notes Depetris.

Corn has observed a move into pairing adventurously patterned blouses from Ariat's Western Collec-



tion with tailored breeches in a wide assortment of rich colors—from rust to mocha, bark, azure and red, along with the traditional beige, khaki and black.

"Although these shirtings are from our western line, they have a crossover appeal that's evident in the European-inspired florals, plaids and paisleys," says Corn.

Other key trends include updated, French-terry, fleece pieces, frayed details and contrasting flatlock stitching.

Green—the concept, not just the color—is also slated to make a big impression this spring. With mainstream culture embracing the notion of green living, Kent has decided that it's high time for equestrian-apparel manufacturers to incorporate green fabrics and sustainable manufactur-

ing processes into their product lines.

"We continue to see eco-friendly trends in fabrics," says Kent. "For this reason, Kerrits is launching a new division called GRASS, Green Riding Apparel for Style and Sustainability."

Featuring fabrics made from such earth-friendly materials as bamboo, recycled polyester and organic cotton, every single piece of GRASS clothing is 100 percent eco-friendly and includes a hang-tag filled with wildflower seeds for greening-up your customers' own little patch of earth.

For men in the English disciplines, Corn notes that this spring's line is all about enhanced comfort and subtle style. "The men's collection of shirtings not only features Moisture Management Technology and



Left: Detailing, along with lighter finishes, defines Wrangler's womens' collection this spring. Right: Wrangler's Spring Premium Patch Collection for men updates on two perennial classics, the Relaxed 8 and the Slim 77 (shown).

an SPF finish, but also will include full-range-of-motion sleeve patterning, breathable poly mesh at the upper back and underarm gussets with a ventilation system," she says.

### Western "Wows"

While English riders are occasionally hemmed in by tradition, the western market always has been quick to welcome new trends, and this season is no exception.

According to Corn, this season, the female western-apparel consumer will be "looking to incorporate her sense of fashion with her western lifestyle. Color, pattern and versatility are key components to her wardrobe."

Jenny Dubberly of Wrangler International adds that "femme and fabulous" will be the attitude for women's fashions this spring, while the men, "who haven't always followed the trends but instead wanted classic cuts," will want to keep up with the mainstream trends.

For the western woman, bold, spring-appropriate tones, ranging from softly elegant to sophisticated but bold, will dominate the season's

color palette. Vibrant colors with such fanciful names as Cantaloupe, Cornflower, Guava, Canary, Aqua, Starlight Blue and Lichen will be on tap for Ariat's spring collection, while Wrangler's lineup will tend toward the deeper hues. "Look to see brown entering the color scope mixed with deep, sultry oranges, red and khakis," says Dubberly.

When it comes to patterns, Corn notes that European-inspired plaids will be key, with feminine florals, updated paisleys and stripes.

"Floral prints are the perfect announcement that spring has arrived," says Dubberly. "Stylized botanicals are simplified to their pure form. Dandelions and ginkgo leaves form silhouettes against solid backgrounds."

In addition to florals, dots—in every classification and size, from micro to macro—are set to make a big appearance. And while soft and feminine is definitely in, there's still a place for glitz and dazzle, says Dubberly; sequins and metallics are sure to retain their momentum.

Popular items in women's knits include shape-flattering tunics, as well

## Retailer Resources

### Ariat International

Union City, Calif.

800-899-8141

[www.ariat.com](http://www.ariat.com)

### Connoisseur Equestrian Collection

Potomac, Md.

301-830-1853

[www.connoisseequestrian.com](http://www.connoisseequestrian.com)

### JPC Equestrian Inc.

Drums, Pa.

570-708-JPCE

[www.jpcequestrian.com](http://www.jpcequestrian.com)

### Kerrits Equestrian Apparel

Hood River, Ore.

800-274-7946

[www.kerrits.com](http://www.kerrits.com)

### Wrangler Div. of VF Corp.

Greensboro, N.C.

888-784-8571

[www.wrangler.com](http://www.wrangler.com)

as ruching details on the shoulder, sleeve and neckline, reports Corn. Layering will also be a major look. Ribbed tanks and colorful camisoles with flirty details, from pin-tuck stitching to delicate lace and eyelet trims will "accent color and lend vibrancy to any woven shirting," says Corn. Jersey knits—simultaneously sexy and slinky—also are in vogue this season, adds Dubberly.

In women's shirts, the consumer is looking for what Corn describes as "well-tailored pieces that hug her curves at all the right places for a very flattering fit." Design details, such as princess seams, will feature prominently in both western and English shirtings.

Other playful, feminine pieces, such as strappy peasant tops, a hit on spring runways, are now gracing many store windows, says Dubberly. And while these top styles will range from square neck to round, loose to fitted, and sometimes belted, the look always says "summer."



**Bold colors and interesting pocket designs define Ariat's spring breeches collection.**

For men's western apparel, spring's focus will be on enhanced technology, performance and comfort. "This season, all [men's] fancy shirtings are tailored of a cotton-blend fabric that wicks moisture from the body, breathes and has an SPF finish," says Corn.

She also notes that, in addition to the Women's Buzz Off Collection, Ariat also will be launching a Men's Western Collection of Buzz Off appar-

el "designed specifically for the gentleman living a western lifestyle."

Classic patterns, such as checks and plaids, will remain a strong presence in Ariat's spring line. Look for soft colors, such as Sand, Cendre Blue, Butter and Soft Green accented with white and deeper tones, such as Mazarine Blue.

When it comes to men's denim, Dubberly notes that cleaner, darker washes will be the trend, along

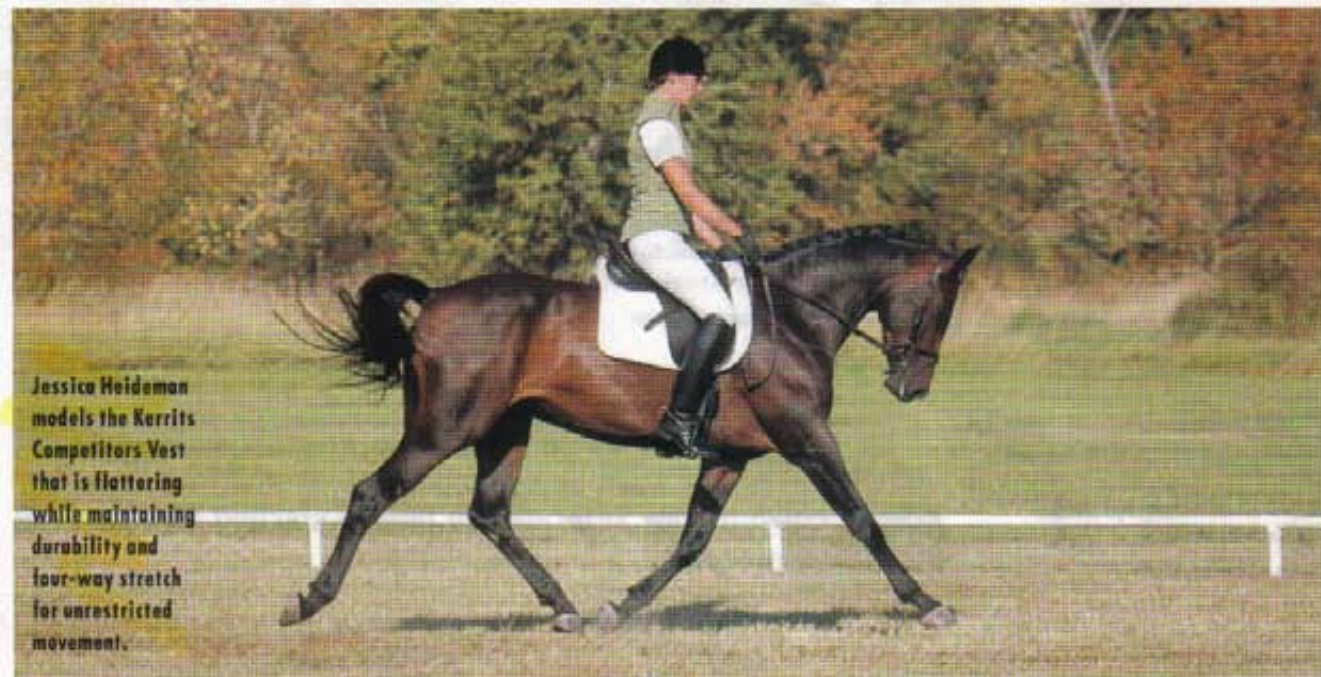
with slimmer silhouettes, straight legs and lower rises. The male consumer is focused on comfort and style more than ever before, she says, and when it comes to fit, "comfort is key." The new 33MWX from 20X by Wrangler answers this demand with a relaxed fit, lower rise, and straight leg.

Men are also looking for hip, contemporary design elements; Wrangler's Spring Premium Patch Collection will meet this demand with updates on two perennial classics, the Relaxed 8 and the Slim 77.

The Relaxed 8, a classic, five-pocket jean that sits low on the waist and features a straight leg, will feature dark washes in Antique Indigo and Destroyed Blue with light abrasions and detailing, says Dubberly.

The Slim 77 is a slim-fitting, boot-cut jean that sits lowest on the waist. Its Worn In, Natural Worn and Vintage Blue washes will "pump up the volume with a slightly more fashion-forward look," Dubberly says. But while fashion washes in Wrangler Premium Patch offer detailed styling, "The finishes are simple and clean this spring," she notes. ■

*Amy Seigel writes about horses, business, dogs and other topics from her home in Madison, Wisconsin.*



**Jessica Heideman models the Kerrits Competitors Vest that is flattering while maintaining durability and four-way stretch for unrestricted movement.**

# Designing women



**The equestrian-apparel industry has been transformed by innovative North American clothing designers who apply their skills to their passions.**

By Amy Seigel

**G**rowing up around horses, the barn was the place my good clothes went when they died. Faded T-shirts and stretched-out sweaters were the staples of my stable wardrobe. These less-than-fashionable duds did have their advantages—I never worried about getting dirty—but they weren't particularly comfortable to move in, nor did they make me feel like what I was: an athlete competing

in a sport with a long tradition of fashion and elegance.

As a dressage rider, buying show clothes meant choosing the lesser of uncomfortable evils (hot, chafing, full-seat breeches and binding top coats), and dressing up for shows was an exercise in stuffiness and discomfort. But while shopping for outfits for my other athletic endeavors, such as rock climbing and yoga, I encountered a wide array of stylish, technically advanced clothes that were obviously made with an

eye to form, function *and* fashion. Obviously, something was amiss.

Sheryl Rudolph, Kerri Kent, Nicola Stauder, Lorna Goode and Sharie Loychuk, have collectively set out to change pure function (and discomfort) into fashion and function. These five "designing women" of the equestrian world have a mission—to drastically alter the way riders think about their clothes.

From European-inspired designs to bright patterns and athletic cuts reminiscent of modern yoga outfits,



PHOTO COURTESY FUN IN THE SADDLE

As a sportswear designer for the likes of Nike, Adidas and Columbia, Sheryl Rudolph frequently wondered why equestrian apparel manufacturers couldn't solve the problem of comfort in full-seat breeches. So Rudolph solved it herself: she invented FITS Performax.

these women are bringing style and cutting edge technology to the world of equestrian attire.

## Tech Trends and Performance Design

### Sheryl Rudolph of Fun In The Saddle Inc.

Sheryl Rudolph is no stranger to the world of high-tech sportswear. In her 25-year career in the apparel design and development business, Rudolph collaborated with "the best of the best athletic designers and brands—Nike, Adidas, Arcteryx, Columbia Sportswear." Along with gaining the experience that allowed her to found her own company, Fun In The Saddle Inc., and develop a groundbreaking line of performance riding wear, Rudolph learned to view design as "as an exercise in problem solving."

As an amateur dressage rider, Rudolph had plenty of experience with the design of standard full-seat breeches—seams that chafe, fabric that doesn't breathe yet bunches up



PHOTO COURTESY KERRITS

**Kerri Kent, of Kerrits, started her career as a competitive ski racer and ski-clothing designer.**

inside tall boots, and a disappointing lack of grip.

So, after years of contemplation, Rudolph decided to design an improved version of the full-seat breech. In 2005, she assembled a top-notch design team for her new company, and together they began investigating all the component parts of the riding pant, from the physics of riding to fabrics, materials and sewing techniques.

"My first product goal was to create a full-seat breech that was comfortable to wear and that actually helped the rider perform better as an athlete," says Rudolph.

In the end, the FITS team produced FITS Performax breeches. The breeches address all of the failings of traditional breeches—and they do it in style. Instead of one piece of leather for the full seat, FITS breeches have segmented panels for freedom of movement, a gusseted crotch with no center seam, and Powernet fabric along the calf to increase breathability and contact with the horse, while easing the task of squeezing into tall boots.

The seat and knee patches are covered with tiny perforations that aid with both grip and ventilation—in other words, the breeches stick to the saddle and not your back end. Finally, Rudolph made sure her creation was fashionable as well as

functional, with a Lycra-and-twill blend that helps camouflage cellulite, and a Powernet four-way-stretch abdominal panel (patent pending) that's both flattering and supportive. Best of all, the breeches are machine washable.

While FITS clothing (it also makes performance tops) certainly isn't lacking in appearance, Rudolph notes that her company is "all about high-tech athletic gear for riding. FITS riding apparel is designed to optimize rider performance through functional design. We look at the physics of riding and the engineering of the human body to create products to enhance the rider's comfort, looks and ability."

### Kerri Kent of Kerrits Equestrian Activewear

For the president and chief executive officer of one of the most successful small equestrian clothing companies in the United States, Kerri Kent of Kerrits Equestrian Activewear, began her design career in a rather unlikely place—the ski slopes of British Columbia. A competitive ski racer, Kent was approached by a Canadian company that wanted input on how to make their product more technical.

"They wanted something that would help people who are on the mountain all day, like ski racers and lift attendants, stay warm and



Left: Nicola Stauder, a professional dressage trainer, turned her love of horses and fashion into Eurofit, which she says is sometimes described as the Ralph Lauren of equestrian apparel. Right: Stauder's designs are characterized by luxurious fabrics and interesting cuts.

withstand the elements," says Kent. "That was my first exposure to design, and I really enjoyed it. But I have no formal education in it."

From there, Kent shifted from competitive skiing to competitive windsurfing, and soon found herself making high-tech, performance-oriented swimsuits and selling them along the beaches of the Columbia River Gorge. "That became my niche business," Kent recalls. "It was called Kerrits, and I did that for 10 years."

Soon, newspapers from the *Portland Oregonian* to the *New York Times* were profiling Kent, her innovative sportswear designs and her love of horses. Thanks to this exposure, Kent was soon approached by Michael Diamond of the On Course brand, and now CEO of English Riding Supply, about coming to work for him as a designer.

"I told him that I always had this dream about calling my product Kerrits and having a package of carrot seeds on every product I make, and he told me that since they had a seed company, they could make that happen for me—but that he really wanted a designer, someone to come work for him and design his On Course brand," says Kent. "So I asked

him what I had to do to get my own brand, and he told me that if I could sell 2,000 pairs of the hounds-tooth pants, he would let me have Kerrits, and if not, I would come and work for him designing On Course." Kent sold well over 2,000 pairs, and Kerrits brand equestrian wear was born.

In keeping with Kent's history of pioneering design, Kerrits' mission is all about optimizing performance through innovation. And Kent's passion has always been performance, whether she's designing ski wear, windsurfing suits or equestrian apparel. She makes sure that her company takes advantage of top fabrics and sewing techniques to make the most comfortable, technologically advanced clothing line possible for each given sport.

Kent pioneered now-ubiquitous elements of equestrian-clothing design, such as gripper elastic around the ankles of riding tights (originally borrowed from the cycling market) and the use of Malden Power Stretch in winter breeches. Bringing new technologies to the market that truly give riders an edge, regardless of their chosen discipline, is what Kerrits is all about.

Kent's company also is a pioneer

## Selling Equestrian Fashion

With so much to offer in terms of ground-breaking design and cutting-edge technologies, these designing women of the equestrian world are poised to truly revolutionize the status of equestrian fashion.

But while it would almost seem criminal to relegate some of these high-fashion, high-tech breeches, vests and coats to a crowded rack in some dark corner of a tack shop, the reality is that many retailers simply aren't prepared to treat riding clothes as fashion rather than equipment.

"When you go to a store in Europe, it's a boutique—you walk in and you're inspired, says Kerri Kent of Kerrits Equestrian Activewear. "You go to a tack store here, and you see a rounder rack of clothes and some stuff hanging off grid-wall. It doesn't have that 'Oh, I have to have that outfit' look."

Kent also suggests that it's the designing women of the equestrian world who must stick together as a group to educate retailers as to how better to sell fashion-forward lines. "I'd love to see a group of designing women work with our retailers to help them buy better fixtures, and develop the retailers so that they can be more successful with our product and with their businesses in general," she says.

With equestrians demanding more and more of their riding attire, both in terms of performance and fashion, Kent's wish is sure to become a reality.

in another way—Kerrits, based out of Hood River, Oregon, is a fairly small company made up entirely of women. In addition, more than 90 percent of Kerrits clothing is manufactured in the United States.

"My goal is not to go public or do any of those types of things, but rather to have a nice, balanced lifestyle, and a company that performs and has good ethics," Kent explains.

### Fashion-Forward Equestrian Fashionistas

#### Nicola Stauder of Equi-Imports Inc. and Eurofit

For many years, Nicola Stauder's favorite pastime also was her job. As

## Designing Women Speak Up

We chat with designing women Sheryl Rudolph of Fun In The Saddle Inc., Kerri Kent of Kerrits Equestrian Activewear, Nicola Stauder of Equi-Imports Inc. and Eurofit, Lorna Goode of Goode Rider and Sharie Loychuk of Arista.

**Equestrian Retailer: Who tend to be trendsetters in the equestrian community?**

**Rudolph:** All the disciplines have their trendsetting strengths. The eventers seem to be very quick to pick up on new technologies that will help them with their riding. [and] are starting to express their individuality more and more by using their own colors in bolder and brighter ways. Dressage riders tend to bring elegance and a bit of glitz to the market. They're not afraid to finesse the traditional. Hunter/jumper riders are the most traditional in my opinion and have very strong brand loyalty to some very old companies. Since this group doesn't tend to break away from the old standards in their core clothing, they tend to break out of the box with accessories, such as colorful ribbon belts and fun sportswear shirts for schooling.

**Kent:** In terms of evaluating performance, our team riders from the eventing world really give us great feedback on durability. They certainly test products in a wide range of environments and over a longer period of time than most other disciplines. I think for fashion trends, styling and color, each discipline is starting to develop its own individual look.

**Stauder:** I think Eurofit is—gosh, every time we come out with something new, we get copied! For me, that's the best compliment I could get. All in all, I think dressage riders care about looks and style—the sport almost dictates that.

**Goode:** That depends entirely on the item.

**Loychuk:** I think each discipline has its own distinctive look and feel. It seems to be more the individual who's the trendsetter than the discipline. [Riders] seem to be willing to take more risks and enjoy the idea of being "well turned out" more than ever.

**Equestrian Retailer: Is the United States or Europe more trendsetting?**

**Rudolph:** In my opinion, the United States leads in performance advancements, and Europe more for the fashion aspects.

**Kent:** What's acceptable in the U.S. market is driven by the [American] people—it's not that influenced by Europe, though I wish it was. Europeans have, I think, a better sense of style and a better look, and it's really interesting, but it doesn't necessarily translate that well to the U.S.

**Stauder:** Europe, for sure.

**Goode:** I believe the world is shrinking, and I don't think Europe is ahead any longer, although it used to be. Right now, we have several companies in Europe that are wanting our line.

**Loychuk:** I'd say Europe is the leader in the trends, but believe that gap is getting smaller and smaller.

**Equestrian Retailer: What are some new trends on the horizon with respect to equestrian apparel?**

**Rudolph:** The bar is being raised all the time for products to be technically more advanced, to perform better, thus allowing the rider to perform to the best of their ability. Another interesting growing trend is the crossing over of riding wear into other sports. For example, I've heard from numerous sources that our breeches are great for

cycling and Pilates/yoga.

**Kent:** The issue right now is rises—low rise, high rise, slope rise—everyone is talking about the fit of the rise of the breech. The other thing I've noticed is that random sportswear pieces and outerwear pieces that aren't riding specific—that don't help you ride any better—are very difficult for retailers to sell. Now, riding apparel has to either express your passion for horses, or provide a distinct advantage for you in the saddle. It really has to be something that makes customers go, "Oh yeah, I'm going to go to my tack store and get that because that's going to help me ride better."

**Stauder:** I think people are looking for a more sporty look with twist. Clothes have to feel good. I think as far as trends go, it really depends on the discipline. Right now, fall colors are in, back to classic combinations, and we're getting heavy into plaids in our vests. Nothing better than a black pair of breeches with a beautiful plaid vest—wow!

**Goode:** The equestrian market is finally starting to follow the fashion market a little closer. One of the biggest trends has been lower rises and more technical fabrics. As far as upcoming trends go, for fall, we see a major comeback of muted earth tones. Olive greens, chocolates and charcoal gray will be huge colors. (We're coming off of very bright colors.) There's also a big military influence, which you'll see in some of the details of our fashion.

**Loychuk:** I'd say yoga clothing has been very influential for many lines, with bolder colors and more fitted silhouettes. I believe the new trend is going to be "green" type fabrics and more focus on environmentally aware products for horse and rider.

a dressage trainer living and working in Germany, she spent her days riding, training and coaching, but soon became weary of the way her passion had morphed into her full-time job.

As Stauder contemplated careers outside the professional-riding world, Stauder began to wonder if there was a way to combine her equestrian expertise with her love of fashion. "I always loved fashion and always had a hard time finding breeches that I liked and fit," Stauder recalls. "That's pretty much how it all started. I found a great manufacturer—that I still work with—

and it all went forward from there."

Along the way, Stauder founded Equi-Imports Inc., a company dedicated to offering riders "quality apparel with trend-setting styles." Eurofit, Equi-Import's signature line, is designed exclusively by Stauder.

"I treat it a little bit like a fashion line," Stauder notes. "So I'm constantly changing fabrics, coming up with new products and always trying to keep it interesting. Eurofit products last forever, so the design aspect is very important to us."

And, while Stauder is open to the possibility of using more high-tech

fabrics in her line, she's careful to point out that Eurofit is more concerned with classic style and function than cutting-edge technologies.

"I once heard Eurofit described as the Ralph Lauren of equestrian wear," says Stauder. "So I'm always very careful when it comes to ultra high-tech. To me, certain high-tech fabrics feel way too much like wearing plastic—I try to choose fabrics and ingredients that allow for a stylish look, but when you wear them, you want to keep wearing them."

As far as inspiration goes, Stauder finds herself drawing both from