

# A perfect pair to carry on 'the breed'

By Sadie Fowler

**Jessica and Richmond DeHart** both grew up in the horse industry, both equally successful as young riders in their own rights; thus it's no surprise that together, united through marriage and a business partnership, they are unstoppable.

Both Jessica and Richmond are second generation horse trainers, with Jessica being the daughter of Mayo Moctezuma and Nealia McCracken and Richmond being the son of Wyatt DeHart. After marrying in 2016, Jessica and Richmond created their dream facility, Hathaway Farm LLC, in 2017. In addition to succeeding by way of starting young horses as well as putting amateurs and junior exhibitors in the ring, the DeHarts have also excelled with the breeding aspect of their business.

"Besides training horses, we are very passionate about our breeding program, along with spending time with our family and pups," Jessica said. "We are both, plain and simple, horse crazy people ... I was bred to be a horse trainer and I love every minute of it. I can't imagine doing anything else."

Richmond feels the same; he's had the horse bug in him his entire life and feels blessed to be doing what he loves. The fact that he gets to share his passion with Jessica is icing on the cake.

"The best part of what we do together is just that — doing it together," Richmond said. "We are life partners and although there are ups and downs, we love what we do and we love doing it together."

## BETTER TOGETHER

Jessica and Richmond met at a horse show, not surprisingly, and actually dated for a brief time in 2005. Neither was really able to forget the other and in 2011 their hearts once again merged. They've been together ever since.

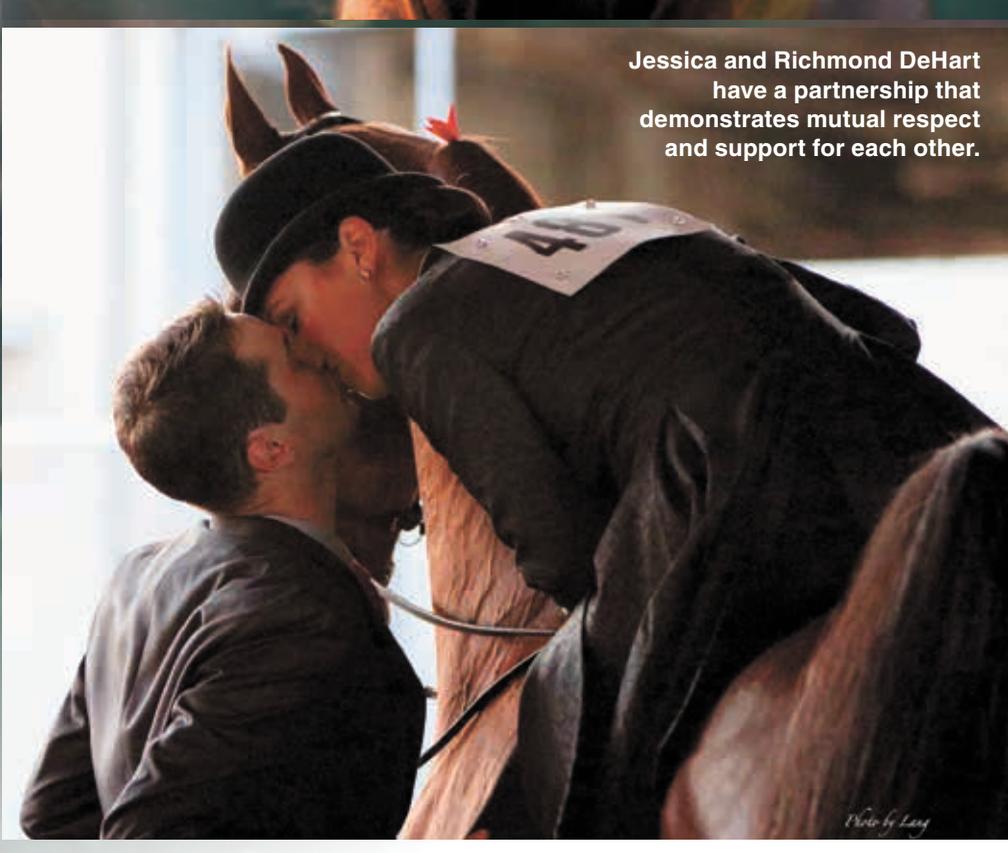
"We feel really lucky that we can do what we love with each other," Jessica said. "We balance each other out along with strengthening each other's weaknesses. We cannot imagine life without each other."

After dating for a few years, there came a time when both Jessica and Richmond were ready to take things to another level. At this time Richmond moved to Illinois where he began working with Jessica's dad Mayo. After five years of working



**Noble Braveheart, bred at Hathaway Farm LLC, stands tall and proud.**

*photo by  
Howard Schatzberg*



**Jessica and Richmond DeHart have a partnership that demonstrates mutual respect and support for each other.**



Richmond describes *The Hathaway Man* as being a blast to ride.



Jessica celebrates one of her many wins during her days as an equitation star.

together there, Richmond and Jessica decided it was time they start their own business, and Hathaway Farm was born.

"The name Hathaway came from a horse we trained, *The Hathaway Man*," Jessica explained. "Hank' is out of one of our special broodmares and we felt it was the perfect name for our show barn and would be a great representation of our breeding program."

Richmond added, "The *Hathaway Man* is a grand horse. He was a great horse to show and train. He always gave 100 percent every single day and he was a blast to ride."

## A PROPERTY OF PERFECTION

Located in Clinton, Wisconsin, Hathaway Farm LLC can easily be described as horse heaven. Upon arriving, visitors will see a beautiful tree-lined driveway with plenty of green pastures for their broodmares and babies. The facility features 35 spacious stalls with a 180 x 74 indoor arena and an even larger outdoor arena. A beautiful creek runs through the property on the backside of the barn.

"It really is the perfect horse property," Jessica said. "Owning our own business has not been easy, but it has been 100 percent worth it. We have had a lot of help and advice over the course of our first year and we are so thankful to all those who have helped us every step of the way."



The Linzmeier family along with the DeHarts celebrate one of their wins together.



As a young professional, Jessica put herself on the map with many great rides, including wins at Louisville, on Kiss My Cuervo.

Both admit the administrative side of things, the office duties, are most the most challenging part of running a business, but thanks to QuickBooks and a great accountant they are managing to figure that part out as well.

Jessica and Richmond share all duties when it comes to chores at the barn. They both clean, work horses and give lessons equally, demonstrating that it truly takes teamwork to make something succeed.

Going back to the basics, Jessica says horses have been a dominating force in her life ever since she was a small child. Growing up as the daughter of two divorced horse trainers, no one in Jessica's family ever had vacations or weekends off from the call of duty at the barn.

"Being that both my parents were trainers, it took a village to raise me," laughed Jessica. "The plus side is that I got to ride and show many different horses in all different divisions and I loved every second of it."

Jessica credits her mom for teaching her the basics of riding. Her mom operates Northwind Stables and Saddlebred Rescue and so whenever Jessica wasn't at school she got to work horses and ride rescues. At quite a young age, Jessica knew how to equitate a horse as well as finish one.

Jessica's father, of Moctezuma Stables, taught her how to break young horses as well as teach young and green horses the basics.

"With both of their teachings, I was able to learn how to start and finish a horse from the ground to the saddle," she said.

## EQUITATION STAR

Throughout her years as a young rider, Jessica acquired countless titles. She could ride anything, in any division, but she really starred in the equitation division. She loved equitation, especially the pattern work it required.

"I still to this day love judging them," she said. "I know what it takes to do a perfect pattern and I feel as much joy as the rider does when that happens."

Equitation is a vital skill in terms of learning to ride well. Jessica believes it's the most important thing you can teach a rider, as it teaches them how to control their body, communicate with their horse, and plan and think about their next move.

In reminiscing about the many great equitation rides Jessica had over the years with a variety of great equitation horses, Jessica says there are three that stand out to her as being a little extra special as a result of her having taught them and finished them as equitation horses. All three of them went on to carry other riders to multiple wins in the equitation ranks.

"Callaway Royal Request was the horse that started the equitation bug," she said. "He was wild and fun and was a true show horse that taught me how to ride. He was with me for my first reserve world's championship title in equitation and we were top three in country pleasure, in the adult class, at Louisville many years later. We created such a bond and he would do anything for me. Royal taught me that no matter how much



Growing up, Jessica (then Moctezuma) showed in equitation as well as many other divisions, often catch-riding for various owners and trainers.

you feel like the underdog, having a big heart and working hard in the end will put you ahead.”

The King’s Talent, the horse Jessica won her first world’s title with, is another equitation champ that stands out among the equitation greats. Jessica laughs as she describes “Orlando” as being perhaps the slowest learner of the bunch, but she says once he did finally learn something, he learned it for life.

“He turned into a push button horse that people fight over,” she said. “When I go back to visit my mom, I always ride him bareback. He has the kindest soul. Orlando taught me that, just like people, not all horses learn from the same teaching program or strategy. He taught me a lot about patience.”

## THE BEST NIGHTMARE RIDE

Top Beat was the hardest horse Jessica ever had to equitate, but she said she had the most gratifying rides of her life with him. He was her final horse as a junior exhibitor and he was a gaited horse until the time they bought him.

“We bought him and we only had the winter to equitate him,” she said. “‘Elvis’ and I went through a lot together and we both had a lot of pressure on us. We had great classes, like the time we won the championship at Lexington. I still remember that feeling of how in sync we were and how far we had come together to earn that blue. But we also had some not so great classes together, where we could barely get through a pattern.”

Nonetheless, it was with Elvis that Jessica has perhaps her most meaningful memory of all, the senior equitation championship one year

at Louisville. Jessica said they had a great class together and had made the cut for the pattern portion of the class.

“While waiting to do the pattern, Elvis was losing it,” she said. “He was rearing, leaping, trying to jump over the rail — pretty much everything an equitation horse should not do.”

Jessica remembers feeling sick with nervousness, worrying that they wouldn’t be able to do the pattern at all since the horse, at that moment, couldn’t even walk a straight line.

“Somehow, when it came time for us to do our workout it was near perfect,” she said. “I am still to this day not sure how we did it. We had a standing ovation for eighth place, but to this day, it felt to me like we wore the roses. Elvis taught me to stay strong when times get tough. He taught me to never give up.”

## THE BEST CATCH (RIDER)

In addition to loving equitation, Jessica loved anything she had a chance to compete in, although if she had to pick a couple favorite divisions, she says five-gaited and western stand out the most.

“I know they are two completely opposite divisions but actually similar in a way,” she said. “They both require riders to have so much control but make it look effortless at the same time. These two divisions are the hardest I’ve ever shown in but the most gratifying to me. Going fast is fun, but you can never go wrong with sparkle either.”

Though western and five-gaited are, in a general sense, Jessica’s favorite divisions, her favorite catch-riding experience of all time was in a different division, and this time speed was a factor.

“It’s really hard for me to choose just one favorite experience, because I have been so blessed to have done that for many owners and trainers, but I will say there is one ride that does stand out,” she laughed. “It was when I was catch-driving my brother’s road horse, world’s champion Detonator. It was a feeling I never had before or after that day. I felt like I was borderline out of control but having a blast at the same time. Maybe that’s why I only got to do it once.”

Jessica describes her extensive roles as a catch-rider to be both exciting, but also nerve-wracking. She remembers often worrying about potentially disappointing the owner or trainer for whom she was riding.

“The hardest part of catch-riding for me was trying to ride like that particular trainer wanted me to ride and knowing their terms,” she explained. “The horses are the easy part, the people, not so much in every case. But with all my catch-riding, I learned that keeping a horse happy and getting it to work with me is key. You can have a great horse and you can be a good rider, but if you are not a team with your horse you will not get the results you want.”

Overall, Jessica looks back at her childhood with gratefulness and fondness. She’s ridden horses that have taught her life lessons and met people who have impacted her life.

“It was all amazing,” she said. “I know I have a God-given talent and I’m so grateful to get to use it every day ... I may be the only professional trainer to say this, but winning today and winning 20 years ago, it all feels the same ... I’d say the only thing that’s changed is that I’m less proud for myself today and more proud of my horses.”

Jessica says, today, watching her horses grow up before her eyes and seeing them achieve greatness makes her feel like an overjoyed parent.

## ‘WYATT’S BOY’ ... AND BEYOND

Like Jessica, Richmond journey in the horse business began many years ago and has had many bends and turns, like a long and windy road. Growing up “Wyatt’s boy” was a lot of fun, but also a lot of work.

“There was always something to be done growing up on a farm,” he said. “I would be at the barn before and after school most days and I was the extra hand at all the shows. Dad really put in a lot of work with me and helped me realize I wanted to be a horse trainer.”

Richmond says he’s loved every bit of his journey and can’t imagine what he would have done if he had not chosen the path that led to training horses. He loves every minute of what he does.

After they started dating seriously in 2011, Jessica and Richmond got married in 2016.



One of the babies the DeHarts raised was *Triumphant Memories*.



After graduating from high school a semester early, Richmond went to work for Tre` Lee for two years. Lee taught Richmond a lot about the ground work of a young horse. From there, he worked for Peter Palmer at Carl Fischer's Meadowlake Farm, which is the first place he had his own string of horses that he worked from start to finish.

He was there for two years and then landed a job with Brian Chappell as his assistant at Ricky Cook's Roselane Farm.

"Brian was an amazing teacher and taught me a lot about technique and finding a way to get along with multiple horse personalities," Richmond said. "After two years at Roselane it was time for Jess and I to make a major move in our relationship so I moved to Illinois and started working with her and her dad."

Richmond gives credit to all of those who influenced him during his years leading up to the present, saying he's grateful to all their contributions in making him the horseman he is today.

## THE HATHAWAY WAY

Coming back to the present, the DeHarts have experienced great success as professionals during their short time together, having a program that's appealing to amateurs, junior exhibitors as well

as honing in on the young horse world of the American Saddlebred, by way of their breeding program.

In just a short time, they've already accumulated memories that will last a lifetime. One highlight for the Hathaway banner came this past year at Louisville. Richmond describes the moment Pola's Vortex and Dena Lopez won as being one he'll never forget.

"I showed him last year at Louisville and was third in the Futurity after he was only in training for six months and I then sold him to Matt Shiflet, who had him all winter and then sold him to Dena this spring," Richmond explained. "Knowing that we played a part in turning him into what he is today is a great accomplishment. It gives us joy watching him continue his great career."

Looking ahead, the DeHarts say some of their goals are to continue to produce great horses and prepare their amateur and juvenile riders for successful show ring performances. This is no small task; they say this is one of their biggest goals, and also biggest challenges.

"Getting a horse ready for someone to show and be successful can be stressful, and it takes time," Richmond said. "But when your time and effort pays off it's a great feeling — a sense of accomplishment."

## FOR BETTERMENT OF THE BREED

The DeHarts are firm believers in supporting the industry and growing the American Saddlebred as a breed. Both agree the Saddlebred is special for its beauty and power, but what makes them most appealing is their versatility. Whether its showing, driving, trail riding or simply brushing them, the Saddlebred is a horse that is able to easily connect with their human partners.

Loving the breed as a whole, Jessica and Richmond have a particular fondness for their breeding program, which is off to a fantastic start.

"We take great pride in breeding our mares," Jessica said.

Richmond added, "We feel so lucky to have had such wonderful horses in our career and we feel it's important to give future riders the same opportunity. Our favorite part about breeding is making future show horses, and the possibility of breeding a world's champion."

As with anything, there are always challenges and Richmond says, regarding the breeding aspect of the industry, the biggest obstacle of breeding in the future will be having horses with a variety of pedigrees.

"So many people are breeding the same lines and eventually we will run out of horses to breed that are not related," he said. "All of our mares we breed are different and in a way rare. We are trying to breed to that stud that can help the future and avoid this problem."

As most horse trainers know, it's a busy life that doesn't allow for many other hobbies, which is why it's great news that, for the DeHarts, they say are proud to have been able to turn their passion for broodmares and colts into a hobby.

## A 'ROYAL' WRAP

In terms of the immediate future, Jessica and Richmond have their eyes set on the American Royal, where they will hopefully wrap up a successful show season. They are excited for their three-year-olds to compete in the UPHA Classic Championships.

"Also, we have a very special western horse that Rocco Litrenta shows," Richmond said. "We are just excited to see all of our exhibitors compete at the national level."

Just around the corner as well, Hathaway Farm will be represented at the Arabian National Horse Show for the first time. They have two half-Arabs in training and the DeHarts are excited to be preparing them for this prestigious competition.

Once the season wraps up it will be the off season, where both Jessica and Richmond will be working hard to continue the momentum they've created in putting Hathaway Farm on the map as a must stop for any potential Saddlebred enthusiast.

"We just want to continue to improve and expand our versatility and compete in more and more divisions as time goes on," Richmond said.