

Online Innovations in Ranch Horse Showing

Meet the Dynamic Duo that conceived a virtual horse show WAY before virtual horse shows were cool!



Photo courtesy of NavaRio Ranch

Amanda Driewer and Amanda Vincent (dubbed “The A-Team”) have been horse-crazy from a young age. They met while undergraduates at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, and volunteers of the Brazos 4-H Equestrian Club.

They have been heavily involved in coaching local 4-H teams and other area equine initiatives for years but sensed there was more that could be done. The A-Team created the vision and established NavaRio Ranch in 2017 and began producing Ranch Versatility horse shows in 2019.

“NavaRio is all about supporting new and beginning riders - giving them a friendly place to come build their confidence while learning about riding and ranch. We keep it pretty low key! But that’s really what got us thinking about having an online show.”

-- Amanda Driewer

What Is a Cyber Ranch Horse Show?

“Love to show but hate to pack up your whole barn for a day of traveling? Then this virtual horse show is PERFECT for you - compete from the comfort of your own arena! Just register, record your run, and you're DONE! Pretty simple right?!”

--navarioranch.com/virtual-show

I stumbled on the Cyber Show just before the submission deadline for the March show. Because the world was just beginning to shut down around the Covid-19 pandemic, I assumed this was offered as an alternative to the regular Ranch Horse Show that NavaRio had been planning.

It was heartwarming to hear Amanda D laugh, and say, “No, although it is a pretty huge coincidence in the timing!”

“The Amandas” brainstormed the Cyber Show concept early in 2020 and began promoting it in February – before the virus began to impact so many people and activities.



Photo courtesy of www.navarioranch.com

Walk/Trot/Lope Youth, Walk/Trot Adult, Novice and Open. Entry fees are \$15 per horse, per division cash prizes will be awarded.

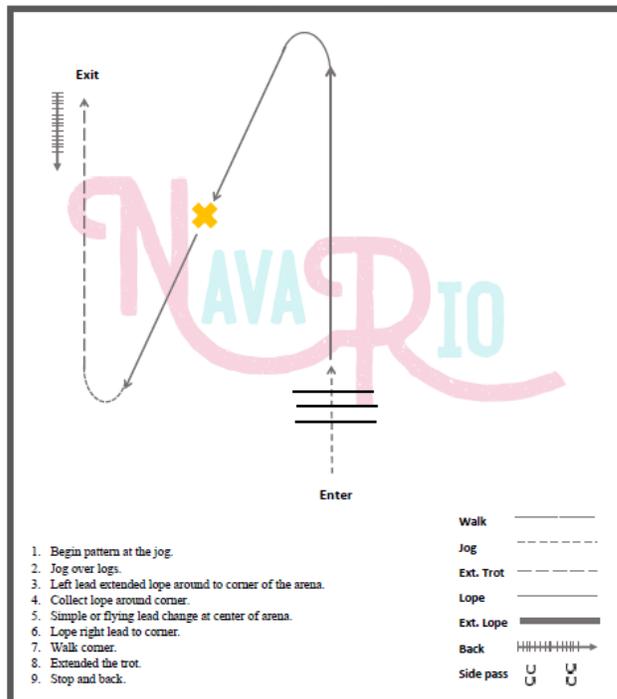
An experienced judge reviews and scores the videos using the 70-point scoring system endorsed by AQHA and other organizations. The judge fills out a score sheet, providing plus or minus points and penalties for each maneuver based on the AQHA rule book for that class. Riders also receive written feedback to supplement the scores. Each class is placed, and prizes mailed to contestants.

“You Should Do It!” She Said...

So I did. I didn’t have much time – the submission deadline was in 2 (well, now 1 and a half) days! I paid my \$15 via PayPal, and almost immediately received a confirmation email with the pattern and instructions for submitting my video to Dropbox.

Amanda D told me, “We planned the Cyber Show as a learning tool for new and beginning riders... well it’s a learning tool for any rider at any level. It was just a weird coincidence that our first show is happening at this same time as the virus is closing everything down.”

The series focuses on one class each month, starting with Ranch Riding in March. April’s focus will be Ranch Reining and May will be Ranch Pleasure. There are 5 divisions: Walk/Trot Youth,



Pattern Used in Ranch Riding

If you haven't experienced Ranch Riding, it is one of the core classes in the category of "Ranch Versatility." Horse and rider perform a pattern, consisting of several maneuvers at the walk, trot, and lope. Typical scored maneuvers include gait changes (transitions), trotting, loping or side-passing over logs or poles, direction changes, lead changes, stopping and backing.

This pattern included trotting over 3 poles, then loping off in the left lead, extending the lope around a tight left corner, traveling diagonally across the area, changing leads then breaking to a walk around the tight right corner, extending trot to the top of the area, stopping and backing up.

That evening, I selected the least soggy area of my pasture (after 9+ inches of rain so far this year, that wasn't easy), set up my poles and saddled my horse. I put on my show clothes – long sleeve shirt, chinks, wildrag and hat. I paid an entry fee, and it's a show - might as well go for it!

Nerves?

Oh you better believe it! NO! I'm at home! This is crazy! But what a great personal show-prep exercise I have discovered!

I warmed up my horse, thankful that I'd been riding regularly the last several days and waited for my husband to come out to film.

I'm SWEATING, my horse is sweating! My mouth is dry... wait... I can't remember the pattern! Ugh... ok, here we go!



Photo Credit: Claudia Dineen



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The nice thing about a Cyber Show, is you get some “do-overs”. Though my videographer was only willing to stay for 3 tries, we got it done.

I selected the best of the 3 and submitted it before the deadline. Now, the judging begins and I’m excited to see the placings and my scores!

What I enjoy most about showing is the opportunity to see friends and hang out, doing what we love. And while that part was missing, I did love the real-life mental exercise that was required for this Cyber Show concept!

And it really was that simple!

About NavaRio Ranch

Established in 2017, NavaRio Ranch isn’t an actual physical location. It’s a TEAM of friendly, creative folks developing a community and support system for equestrians across the Brazos Valley Area and



Photo courtesy of Google Maps

beyond. The NavaRio team puts on ranch horse shows each year at various arenas around the Brazos Valley, and offers consulting services to other horse event producers. They have an extensive network of volunteers, videographers, photographers, riding instructors and arena owners that they can connect people to. They also offer a range of marketing services and support for equine related events.

The Texas Brazos Valley Area consists of 7 counties surrounding the Brazos, Little Brazos and Navasota Rivers. It’s home to College Station, Texas and Texas A&M University, The George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum and more.

About the Author:

Claudia Dineen is a freelance writer and equestrian living in north central Texas. Her business, Runaway Writing helps businesses communicate with content that gets results. She specializes in newsletters, biographic pieces, “how-to” (articles, manuals, info-graphics, programs) and professional presentations. Find her on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/claudia.runaway.writer> or on the web at www.claudiadineen.com