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Mendoza Soars to Victory in \$400,000 Longines Hampton Classic 5* Grand Prix

Al Ajami Wins \$70,000 Hampton Classic 2* Grand Prix presented by The Deslauriers Family & Lynne Tarnopol

Bridgehampton, NY – August 31, 2025 – Great Britain's Jessica Mendoza created a self-fulfilling prophecy with her mount *In The Air* on Sunday, soaring to victory in the **\$400,000 Longines Hampton Classic 5* Grand Prix** with one of only two-double clear scores in 37.34 seconds. This marks Mendoza's first 5* win.

Celebrating 50 years of world-class equestrian competition in 2025, the **Hampton Classic Horse Show** took place in Bridgehampton, NY, **August 24-31**, featuring FEI CSI5* and CSI2* show jumping and USEF Premier hunter competitions with more than \$1 million in prize money.



Jessica Mendoza (GBR) and In The Air claimed their first 5 victory in the \$400,000 Longines Hampton Classic 5* Grand Prix © KindMedia*

Prior to the Grand Prix, World #21 ranked show jumper Daniel Bluman (ISR) presented the talented 17-year-old Zangersheide gelding *Ladriano Z* to the competition ring for the last time. Daniel took over the

reins from Ilan Bluman (COL) in the winter of 2016, kicking off their partnership with several top ten placings on the 2017 Wellington circuit. That partnership grew to include appearances at the 2018 World Equestrian Games, 2022 World Championships, 2023 World Cup™ Final and 2024 Olympic Games, as well as two of Daniel's three Hampton Classic Grand Prix victories (2017 and 2023).



Sunday's opening ceremonies included the official retirement ceremony of Daniel Bluman's (ISR) accomplished partner Ladriano Z © KindMedia

After Bluman, *Ladriano*, and their friends and family retired from the ring, the Hampton Classic and its longtime partners reminisced on 50 years of world-class equestrian tradition before opening the gates for the 39 horse-and-rider combinations representing 14 countries in the \$400,000 Longines Hampton Classic 5* Grand Prix. Nick Granat's highly technical course featured 17 total jumping efforts set at 1.60m, proving to be quite the challenge as the class went on. American Kristen Vanderveen was the first to pass the test without fault aboard *Bull Run's Jireh*, but it took another 17 trips before Mendoza guaranteed the spectators a jump-off. World #22 Shane Sweetnam (IRL) was the only other rider to join them riding *James Kann Cruz*.

"I knew today was going to be very difficult, and with the seated order based off Friday's qualifier, that we had to wait for a clear round," Granat said. "I was really pleased with the class and the jump-off. There is always pressure to have some clears; everyone wants to see a jump-off. I was happy we were able to give them one."

Vanderveen and Bull Run Jumpers Inc.'s 11-year-old Holsteiner gelding took a risk while setting the time to beat in the tiebreaker course, but the final fence fell to put them on a four-fault score and leave the door open for their fellow competitors. Mendoza immediately followed with her double-clear score in 37.34 seconds aboard the 12-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare she co-owns with Georgia Kipp, Kristi Mitchem, Mellissa Skowlund and Pernilla Amman, which ultimately secured her first FEI 5* win.



Mendoza and In The Air © KindMedia

Sweetnam and his and Gizmo Partners LLC's 12-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding landed in second place with their faultless time of 37.90 seconds, dropping Vanderveen and *Bull Run's Jireh* into third.

"It's a pretty amazing win," Mendoza said. "This is one of the best American shows. It's truly amazing to be here and to win the Grand Prix. It's always fun to go into the jump-off with the top three; you don't have much to lose. I knew there was a bit of room where Shane could catch me, but my mare was perfect across the ground. She's an incredible horse and had an incredible summer. She really found herself this year."

"I was very happy with my horse," Sweetnam said. "He's a very different horse (from Jessica's). He spends a bit of time in the air and is a bit of a slower horse, so I did my plan close enough to what I thought would be enough to challenge. He jumped great. In hindsight, I could have taken a few more gambles."

"It's definitely special to have this big of a crowd and a long lead-up to a clear round," Vanderveen said. "It was cool to be the first clear. My horse was quite fresh, but he was great today. I went into the jump-off thinking not to go too forward because he's a naturally fast horse. In hindsight, I could have really gone for it and been a bit more competitive, but I'm really happy with how he was today."



L: World #22 Shane Sweetnam (IRL) and James Kann Cruz claimed second place. R: Kristen Vanderveen (USA) and Bull Run's Jireh finished third. © KindMedia

Along with the winner's share of the \$400,000 purse, Mendoza received a Longines timepiece and bottles of wine from Wölffer Estate. Professional groom Lina Karlsson, who cares for *In The Air*, received \$500 from Aden Brook for her hard work keeping the horse healthy and ready to compete.

This victory also earned Mendoza the **\$20,000 Longines Rider Challenge for the FEI 5* division**, which awarded a \$20,000 bonus and a second Longines timepiece. She finished the week with a total of 395 points. Sweetnam earned second with 355 points, while Skylar Wireman (USA) took third with 324 points.



L: Mendoza also won the \$20,000 Longines Rider Challenge for the FEI 5 division. R: Groom Lina Karlsson was recognized for her exceptional care of *In The Air*. © KindMedia*

Earlier in the day, 32 entries representing 10 nations competed over Granat's 16-effort, 1.45m track in the **\$70,000 Hampton Classic 2* Grand Prix presented by The Deslauriers Family & Lynne Tarnopol**, with six moving on to the jump-off and only two going double-clear. Qatari rider Faleh Suwead Al Ajami's faultless time of 46.09 seconds launched him to the top of the leaderboard in the

penultimate trip, and he brought home the win with Blue Atlantic Doha's 10-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding *Karmalensky*.



Faleh Suwead Al Ajami (QAT) and Karmalensky emerged victorious in the \$70,000 Hampton Classic 2 Grand Prix presented by The Deslauriers Family and Lynne Tarnopol © KindMedia*

“It was a nice class – a bit of a challenge for all the riders,” Al Ajami said. “We had so many good entries in that class. Beat Mändli is my idol, and I always followed his riding when I was younger. To be in the same classes as him now has been a pleasure. This is my first time at the Hampton Classic, and I don’t think it will be my last.”

Second place went to three-time Olympic veteran Beat Mändli (SUI), who had the only other double-clear round in 46.91 seconds aboard *Cordani PS*, Grant Road Partners LLC’s 11-year-old Hanoverian mare. Ariana Marnell (USA), who was faster than Al Ajami in 45.06 seconds, rounded out the podium with a four-fault score aboard *Jikke-Cara*, Alison Firestone LLC’s 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare with whom she won team gold and individual fifth in the 2025 Gotham North/North American Youth Championships presented by USHJA – Young Rider division.



*L: Beat Mändli (SUI) and Cordani PS finished second. R: Ariana Marnell (USA) and Jikke-Cara took third.
© KindMedia*

With this victory, Al Ajami earned a total of 290 points throughout the week and secured the **\$10,000 Longines Rider Challenge for the FEI 2* division**, which awarded a \$10,000 bonus and a Longines timepiece. Overnight leader Stella Wasserman (USA) finished in second place with 248 points, while Marnell landed third with 245 points.



Al Ajami and Karmalensky also won the \$10,000 Longines Rider Challenge for the FEI 2 division © KindMedia*

For full show results, visit HamptonClassic.com. Photos from the event are [available via Dropbox](#) with credits to KindMedia (unless otherwise noted in the folder name).

Each year, approximately 50,000 people – including many A-list celebrities – come to watch the nation’s best equestrian athletes compete at the Hampton Classic Horse Show. Rated **USEF ‘Premier-6’** for hunters and jumpers with designated **FEI 2* and 5*** jumping classes, the Hampton Classic features more than 200 competitions in six spectacular show rings, the Agneta Currey Boutique Garden

with more than 70 vendors, and a wide selection of dining options, all on its world-class 60-acre showgrounds.

FEI competition began on Thursday, August 28, with the **\$5,000 Citarella Open Jumper CSI2*** and **\$32,000 CSI5* Two-Phase** and continued throughout the weekend with seven 2*/5* classes. FEI competition also included Friday's **\$32,000 Wölffer Estate 2* Grand Prix Qualifier, \$116,100 Douglas Elliman 5* Grand Prix Qualifier**, Saturday's **\$62,500 5* Winning Round**, and culminated in the **\$70,000 Hampton Classic 2* Grand Prix** and **\$400,000 Longines Hampton Classic 5* Grand Prix** on Sunday, August 31.

Other competition highlights included the **\$30,000 The Wellington Jumper Challenge**, **\$10,000 Stomp Capital 1.40m Open Jumper**, **\$40,000 CME Group 1.45m National Grand Prix**, **\$10,000 Hunt & Go Stake presented by The Baran**, **\$10,000 Hermès Equitation Championship**, **\$25,000 Agneta & Brownlee Currey 1.45m Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic**, and **\$30,000 Longines Rider Challenges**, which were offered as two separate bonuses for the first time: \$10,000 for the FEI 2* division and \$20,000 for the FEI 5* division.

For more information on the Hampton Classic Horse Show, please visit the Hampton Classic website at www.hamptonclassic.com or call 631-537-3177. Hampton Classic Horse Show, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation.