



For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Whitney Fields

Phelps Media Group, Inc.

(859) 280-3316 | wfields@roodandriddle.com

Rood & Riddle Wellington Veterinarians Perform Life Saving Surgery on Talented Equitation Horse Caracas

Wellington, FL - Nov. 16, 2017 - Everyone loves a fairy tale ending. In early February of this year Rood & Riddle in Wellington was able to be part of one. A beautiful 9-year-old Holsteiner gelding was brought into the hospital with a history of lethargy and fevers of unknown origin. Caracas, owned by Jim Hagman, Elvenstar Farm, was bright, alert, responsive, and showing no signs of discomfort when he arrived at the hospital. His only symptom was a low grade fever and unusual interactions with his stablemate.



Hailey Link with Caracas. Photo Courtesy of Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital

Two procedures were performed in order to determine what was causing this unusual behavior in the normally energetic gelding. The first was an abdominal ultrasound followed by a peritoneal fluid tap. A large mass was indicated by the ultrasound and peritoneal fluid analysis.

With the results of these two tests, Wellington surgeon Dr. Jose Bras along with internists Dr. Meg Miller and Dr. Lisa Fultz from Equine Medicine Specialists of South Florida, and Surgeon Dr. Axel Beccar Valera along with Dr. Leah Patipa, determined that an exploratory celiotomy was needed to be performed to further diagnose the origin of the mass and its possible removal.



Hailey Link with Caracas after surgery. Photo Courtesy of Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital

Trainer Kay Altheuser describes her feelings at the time the decision had to be made. "We wanted to try to save Caracas as he is really such a good show horse and very special to us, however, we were not willing to compromise him or make him suffer. Those were very hard conversations to have, and the doctors were so helpful."

The owners were shocked by what the doctors found when the surgery was performed. A mass, weighing nearly 30 pounds and larger in size than a basketball, was found attached to the base of the cecum. The mass was successfully removed and a drain placed for abdominal lavages.

"You can imagine how thrilled we were to hear that he had gone through the surgery very well and was already standing and looking for food just hours after! He is truly a miracle horse! We were able to visit him at the hospital a week or so later and he looked very happy." stated Kay Altheuser. "Dr. Bras and Dr. Fultz also gave us daily updates on his condition after the surgery so we were well informed at all times and very appreciative of the calls."



*Hailey Link and Caracas winning USEF Talent Search Finals West.
Photo Courtesy of Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital*

When he returned to California after his surgery he started his rehab here in Moorpark. The work that his trainers, Kay Altheuser and Jim Hagman, did with him in Moorpark was slow and cautious at first, but he seemed so comfortable without the mass, they were able to slowly increase the work as Caracas continued to improve. He then moved to Elvenstar Orange County to continue his rehab with Hailey Link and Halie Robinson.

After several months of recovery, Caracas was ready to start on the road back to the show ring. With steady progress and the love of his young rider, Hailey Link, Caracas made his post-surgical debut at the Blenheim June Classic in San Juan Capistrano, CA show. As the season continued, he regained his stamina and strength. By September he was back to pre-surgery form. In September, Halie Robinson rode him in the USEF Talent Search Finals West at the Blenheim International Jumping Festival where he was champion and won the best horse of the competition award. Caracas continued showing up the east coast to compete in the USEF Talent Search Finals East with rider Taylor Griffiths and earned 3rd place in Gladstone NJ.

Caracas has made a full recovery and doing exceptionally well. To read more about Caracas go to <http://www.ridingmagazine.com/index.php/articles/all-the-latest-news/1309-miracle-horse-caracas-89->

About Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital

Rood & Riddle began as an ambulatory practice in Lexington, Kentucky in 1982 and established a full-service equine hospital in 1986. Today the practice is known and respected throughout the world for innovative and highly skilled treatment of horses. Rood and Riddle continues their tradition of excellence into the twenty first century serving as a referral center for horses requiring specialized medical and surgical care and providing ambulatory care for all breeds and disciplines. With the original hospital in Lexington, Kentucky and satellite hospitals in Saratoga Springs, New York and Wellington, Florida, Rood & Riddle maintains an unwavering commitment to quality, both in the care of horses and in our relationships with clients and the community.

Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital in Wellington Fast Facts:

Location:

5320 S. Shore Blvd. Wellington, FL 33449

Contact:561-383-5437

Hours of Operation:

Open for emergencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Open daily from 8am-5pm.

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