



FROM RED SOX TO Hunting Fox

Bill Gutfarb on Riding,
Responsibility, and Retirement

BY KATHRYN SELINGA

Some people are born with riding in their blood, other people grow into it. Bill Gutfarb is the latter. It wasn't until Gutfarb was grown and his own daughter began riding that he was introduced to the world of horses. Gutfarb enjoyed a variety of athletics throughout his life—from baseball, to hockey, to golf, and beyond—so it was no surprise when he decided, as horses accumulated in his historic Dover, Mass., barn, to begin riding himself. “I thought, jeez, if I’m paying for all of this, I think I’ll get some enjoyment out of it!” he laughs.

Gutfarb joined the Norfolk Hunt Club in the early 1990s and began schooling with the hounds before progressing to riding out in the field on the flat, and finally going over every jump in the field. Even with a full-time job, Gutfarb made time to ride. “I would do a Tuesday hunt and my wife, Wendy, would then take the horses back while I’d go straight home and shower, change, and go into my office—it was a very enjoyable lifestyle!” he recalls.

In 1973, Gutfarb began working with the Boston Red Sox after his junior year in college at Boston University. He approached a professor about summer job opportunities,



Bill with his daughter JoJo.

"Not many people stay with the same organizations for their entire adult life. I started in '73 and, though I'm retired from full-time work, I'm still a trustee of the Yawkey Foundations," explains Gutfarb. "So, I think it was very fortunate that I agreed I wasn't going to quit after a couple of days on the ground crew—and it led to a career that has been very rewarding."

Working his way up to executive vice president and treasurer of the organization, Gutfarb was responsible for—beyond baseball—Mrs. Yawkey's investments, the Yawkey Foundation, and the 25,000-acre Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center in Georgetown, SC—where he first became familiar with the state of South Carolina.

With yearly trips South between work and horse showing on Wendy's part, when the pair decided to retire they settled on Aiken—a thriving equestrian community. But, before they became full-time residents in 2014, Gutfarb was diagnosed with not only sarcoidosis—which affects his heart and lungs—but breast cancer as well. "So that was it for me," he says. "I stopped riding at that point."

Though Gutfarb's riding journey has ended, he and Wendy remain heavily involved in the equestrian community. Wendy is a joint master of the Aiken Hounds, and, together, they decided to go into a racing partnership as well. "We've had five race horses total, and two of them Wendy fox hunts now," Gutfarb says.

Little did he know, however, that owning race horses would lead to his next big journey. In 2018, Gutfarb was approached by Aiken Training Track. Looking for someone with a business mind who knows numbers, he was elected to the board. Then, in September 2019, Gutfarb was elected as President of the track. "I think the best thing that could happen with the training track is that our numbers go up for track use and our stall usage goes up," he says.

A sensible businessman, Gutfarb doesn't miss being in the saddle because, "What's the sense of missing something if you know you can't do it?" But he doesn't have to—his life is still full of horses.



Bill's wife Wendy is an active equestrian and is a joint master of the Aiken Hounds.

and, when asked what he wanted to do, Gutfarb said he'd like to work for the Red Sox. He was able to land an interview with the head of the grounds crew—an experience he'll never forget. "I sat at the corner of Joe Mooney's desk, the head groundskeeper, and he gave me an application to fill out and he said, 'You know, this is just sweeping and cleaning, it's not glamorous work. We get guys like you coming in here for a couple of days and then they quit—so think about it.'"

Gutfarb decided to stick it out—a choice that would shape the rest of his career. The following year, he began working in the Red Sox ticket office in the summers and the accounting office in the winters until he completed his MBA from Babson College and went into accounting full-time with the organization. That's where Gutfarb would stay until 1982 when he went to work for then-owner, Jean Yawkey, at the Boston Trust Management Corporation. "The Yawkeys were as kind as you can imagine," he says. "They treated people the way that they would want to be treated."



Bill Gutfarb and his wife Wendy at the Aiken Hunt Ball.



Visit Aiken, South Carolina

New Bridge is a special setting that celebrates horses, people, and land - in a place that connects them all.

Shelly Marshall Schmidt

When the temperatures drop and the snow begins to fly, many New England residents head south to an equestrian Mecca, Aiken, S.C. With its charming historic roots and incredible homage to everything horse, it is no wonder that many horse lovers find themselves spending the winter months here.

Horse events are a plenty, with a multitude of local training events happening on the regular. This is a wonderful way to expose your horse to a variety of challenges in a low-key environment. Aiken is also the proud home of larger competitive facilities including the Highfields Event Center (psjshows.com) and the Aiken Horse Park (aikenhorsepark.com).


Adding to incredible equestrian allure is the 2,100-acre forest of Hitchcock Woods that offers over 70 miles of meticulously maintained riding trails. They even have special traffic lights that are horse height for crossing Whiskey Road from one of the favorite parking areas to get into the woods! There is someone riding in the woods almost every day, driving carriages, hacking, houndrunning, and walking (hitchcockwoods.org).

While many equestrians pull into Aiken with a trailer in tow, there is also a local airport, which makes it convenient to travel in and out of the city (aikenaviation.com).

Where to Stay

Once you start to plan your trip to Aiken, it's time to make reservations as the local hotels fill quickly, especially during the races or larger horse shows.


Experience southern hospitality at its finest when you visit The Willcox. This white-pillared Colonial Revival landmark on the National Historic Register, has been a permanent fixture in the town since 1898. Starting with the inviting rocking chairs lining its pristine, white-columned front porch, it represents the casual glamour of a bygone era. Guest rooms at The Willcox are comfortable retreats luxuriously appointed. The award-winning restaurant is a local favorite and a must for hotel guests (thewillcox.com).



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There is also a number of popular hotel chains that you can confidently book a room at. Consider the Hilton Garden, Hampton Inn, Fairfield Inn and Suites, Country Inn and Suites, or Townplace Suites.

If you plan to make Aiken more than a visit, the local equestrian communities are amazing. New Bridge is an 861-acre private, gated equestrian community just 15 minutes from downtown Aiken. Born from the excitement, intensity, and tradition of polo, it is the home of New Bridge Polo & Country Club, with five world-class fields and thrilling medium goal polo tournaments during Spring and Fall seasons (newbridgepolo.com).

Where to Eat

Looking to start your day with a delicious breakfast? The Training Track is a must! Located at the Thoroughbred training track, the food is wonderful and is a great deal. After you have fueled up, head out to the track and watch the hopefuls training (aikentrainingtrack.com).

For lunch and dinner, you have a multitude of delicious options. Check out the Aiken Fish House and Oyster Bar, a local family-owned seafood restaurant and Oyster Bar specializing in fresh domestic seafood (aikenfishhouse.com). We encourage you to check out Whiskey Alley for a delicious selection of craft whiskey and one of the best burgers in town (whiskeyalley.com).

Test out the local craft beer scene at The Alley Downtown Tap Room (thealleydowntowntaproom.com) and Aiken Brewing Company (aikenbrewingcompany.com).

Prime Steakhouse is an authentic, big-city steakhouse that serves the finest in aged steaks, whole lobsters, and fresh seafood. The atmosphere of the restaurant includes modern artwork on brick walls and an exciting bar serving premium drinks (primesteakhouseaiken.com).

What to Do

For a bit of local flavor, head to the Aiken County Farmer's Market on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Open year round, it is the oldest farmer's market in the state.



The Aiken Training Track.



The Willcox cultivates a sophisticated, yet informal glamour amidst America's storied Thoroughbred country.



Frank DiBona



Shelly Marshall Schmidt



Laura Peruch



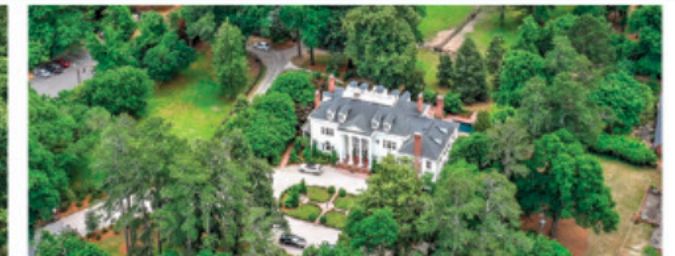
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Chime Bell Farm

COURTNEY CONGER 803.645.3308 or RANDY WOLCOTT 803.507.1142 • \$1,495,000

Impeccably transformed farm encompasses 52 acres, with 20 board fenced pastures, gated entrance, 8-stall center aisle barn with luxurious lounge and custom details, broodmare barn, enclosed equipment shed with hayloft, renovated 4-stall barn, run-in sheds and round pen. Painted brick home, completely renovated in 2014 has been turned into 2 comfortable apartments. Surveillance system, monitored security and fire alarm systems.



Sandhurst Estate

THOMAS BOSSARD 803.640.2845 • \$2,495,000

Beautifully restored Winter Colony residence has 8 bedrooms, 9 full baths, 2 half baths, and 10 fireplaces on 3 finished levels. Encompassing over 30,000 square feet, Sandhurst features soaring ceilings, elegant wainscoting and millwork, original heart of pine floors, and magnificent architectural details. Includes stunning pool, landscaped gardens, and 5 stall barn. Set on just over 5 acres adjacent to Hoplands Gardens, there is a private deeded riding easement to Hitchcock Woods.



Polo Vista Stables at New Bridge Polo

COURTNEY CONGER 803.645.3308 • \$650,000

This beautifully constructed center aisle barn on 22.47 acres overlooking manicured polo field offers 18 large, matted stalls, wash stall, spa and tack room/lounge combo, two bunk rooms, laundry room and full bath. There is also an 1800 square foot, insulated equipment shed and 13 four-board fenced paddocks and pastures. New Bridge Polo & Country Club amenities include world-class polo, riding trails, clubhouse and pool.



The Paddocks

Call MIKE HOSANG at 803.270.6358

Equestrian lots now available in popular south side horse country — build a home for you and your horses! The 21 lots offered in Section One range from 5.34 acres to 13.83 acres. Community amenities include arena and miles of perimeter riding trails. Wooded lots offered at just \$16,000 per acre, and cleared lots are offered at just \$18,000 per acre.



Three Runs Plantation

JACK ROTH 803.341.8787 • \$849,000

All brick custom home has 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, open floor plan, gourmet kitchen with 5-burner gas cooktop, high ceilings, hardwood & tile floors throughout. Main floor master suite has spa bath with shower, soaking tub, heated floor. Office with built-in desk, family room with fireplace, sunroom, library, sauna room, bonus. Includes 40x60 barn/workshop, saltwater pool on 5.8 acres. Amenities include jump rings, dressage arena, clubhouse, fitness center, pool and trails.



Three Runs Plantation

COURTNEY CONGER 803.645.3308 • \$550,000

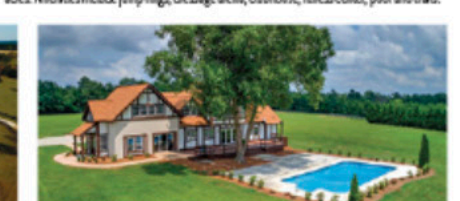
This custom-built residence in Aiken's most popular equestrian community offers over 4000 square feet of gracious living space featuring high ceilings, polished wood floors, formal living and dining rooms, family room with fireplace, fabulous kitchen with all appliances included, bonus room with separate stairway, owner suite with spa bath and 3 guest suites. The board-fenced 5-acre lot has direct access to riding trails. Amenities include over 30 miles of riding trails with clubhouse, pool, picnic shelter, fitness center, 2 jump rings, 2 dressage arenas & cross country course.



Terrybrooke Farm

RANDY WOLCOTT 803.507.1142 • \$875,000

Equestrian facility ready for your horse! Custom built home and 36 stall barn on 21 plus acres. Custom built 4-bedroom home with master suite down. Living room opens to the custom kitchen centered by a large island. Dining area overlooks the views of the covered patio and fields beyond. Barn features 36 stalls, 2 wash/grooming bays, 2 tack rooms, feed room, and 2-bay garage/workshop. Apartment for guests or groom. Fenced fields with waterline, 7 run-in sheds, arena with light!



Stratford Farm

RANDY WOLCOTT 803.507.1142 • \$739,000

Five miles from downtown Aiken lies this 64 acre hilltop farm. Privacy abounds with large mature trees surrounding the entire property. Fenced pastures, 4 paddocks, 6-stall shed row barn with hay storage, tractor shed, 6-stall center aisle barn, pond and main residence with large entertaining areas, 2 bedroom suites downstairs and 3 bedrooms up. Attached 6-bay garage with apartment above. Large deck overlooks sparkling pool.



The Oasis

COURTNEY CONGER | RANDY WOLCOTT • \$449,000

Spacious home offers over 4,000 square feet designed for comfort & entertainment. Formal dining room, formal living room with fireplace, game room, family room and large kitchen with breakfast area. There are 4 bedrooms and 5.5 baths with the master suite and one other bedroom on the main level. All bedrooms have bath en suite. Landscaped lawn overlooks a ground pool with pool house. On over 36 acres with gated entrance.



Three Runs Plantation

JACK ROTH 803.341.8787 • \$569,900

Beautiful NEW home on a great lot has 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths on main floor, with bedroom/focus room and full bath upstairs. Property has 5.2 acres and 2-bay garage. Flooring throughout entire house is either oak hardwood, ceramic tile or carpet in bedrooms. Miles of groomed trails, dressage arenas, jump ring, schooling areas, pool & cabana, clubhouse and fitness center.



Vale Estates

JANE PAGE THOMPSON 803.215.8232 • \$649,900

Custom built residence on over 5.5 acres plus pool house with full bath in equestrian neighborhood. Main house features vaulted ceilings, arched doorways, granite countertops, columns, hardwood floors and covered porches with views of stately live oaks. Attached 3 car garage plus detached 2 car garage with unfinished loft storage could be small run-in shed for horses. Screened porch, loft office, covered poolside porch, fenced dog yard.

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No trip to Aiken is complete without a peek into its historic roots. We recommend the Aiken Train Museum, located next to the farmer's market, making a leisurely dual trip for a Saturday morning (aikenrailroaddepot.org).

The Aiken County Museum is well worth the trip. Featuring a gorgeous backdrop on the edge of Hitchcock Woods, this museum houses wonderful displays and an unabashed look at southern history (aikencountysc.gov).

For the passionate shopper, Downtown Aiken on Laurens Street is simply the best, with nothing but cute shops that sell everything from hardware to high-end men's wear! There is a multitude of shopping locations, but for the equestrian there is nothing that compares to heading to the local tack shop! Aiken Saddlery is a full service tack, feed, and equine specialty store that stocks everything that you need (aikensaddlery.com). At many of the horse shows, you can find Griffinbrook Tack with their engraving operation (chergiffin.com) in addition to the Oak Manor Saddlery mobile unit (oakmanorsaddlery.com).

Do you head to Aiken for the winter months? Have you made Aiken your permanent residence? We want to hear all about your experience! E-mail us your Aiken favorites and travel tips to editor@nequestrianlife.com.



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