

# COMMUNITYVIEW

## Equine accommodations: *Barn tour aids mustang rescue organization*

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Blue skies and the promise of tasty tapas brought out hundreds of visitors for the first Mustang Mare-y Christmas Barn Tour.

The event featured five barns in the Dripping Springs/Driftwood area—Bel Canto, Graymar Farm, Royal Kings, Red Barn and Oakhaven. Each location offered visitors something slightly different, from the music of the Dripping Strings at Bel Canto to a chance to meet the mustangs who benefit from the tour at Red Barn.

Proceeds from the tour go directly to Texas H2Oasis, a nonprofit group in Driftwood that rescues pairs of mustangs from government roundups on BLM lands in states including Colorado, Nevada and New Mexico.

Executive Director Karen Bartell said that, after expenses, the organization brought in about \$3,000 from ticket sales and donations.

She said they were thrilled with the turnout, and estimated that about 350 people came out for the event.

"We were just inundated with three times the people we were expecting," she said.

The high point for Bartell came the day before the tour, when a family decided to adopt the mare currently at H2Oasis. Her filly, Amber, had previously found a permanent home.

Denise Brown and her husband, Art, and daughter, Denise, met the mare during the annual Christmas in the Hills Tour of Homes.

"Sometimes it just feels right, you know?" Denise Brown said. She said she simply fell in love with the mare's beauty.

The family has two other horses (and 13 chihuahuas). One of the horses had also been a wild mustang.

Art said he worked with the horse for months to be able to ride him. He said he plans to bring Sierra, as they've named the mare, into the family with the same amount of patience.

Bartell said she will have another filly, Noche, soon and hopes to find a second mustang as soon as Sierra moves to her new home.

To donate, volunteer or learn more about Texas H2Oasis, call (512) 894-0105 or go to [www.texasH2oasis.org](http://www.texasH2oasis.org).



Photos by Anne Drabicky

Graymar Farms in Driftwood held the first Texas H2Oasis Mare-y Christmas Barn Tour on Saturday. Top, as part of the attraction, vaulter Alex Schaubhut performed at Bel Canto, the first barn on the tour. Amber (bottom), was one of the second pair of mustangs to be rescued by the nonprofit group.