

RANCH DESIGN

MAXIMIZING WORK FLOW

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From the converted corncrib sundeck of the hilltop bank barn, views of the horse barn to the west hint at its grandeur. On this coveted chunk of land that flanks the Potomac River, site positioning of the barn, arenas, and service building within the landscape—as well as the bank barn and main residence—capture not only enviable views, but allow the farm to function seamlessly on a daily basis.

Tucked into a hill, the horse barn appears in the foreground and effectively lowers the ridge of the enclosed 25,000-square-foot arena nearby as the visual break provides a more human scale. The barn complex is placed near the center of the surrounding paddocks to move horses easily from the barn to paddocks. The 24-stall barn, designed as a private facility for horse training, has additional stalls for boarding guest horses. There is also a central tack room, lounge area with full kitchen and laundry, and a farm office loft with views of the main aisle of the barn and outdoor arena.

The barn's wooden frame is clad in a hardy plank material for low maintenance and upkeep, while the roof is metal standing-seam. A continuous ridge skylight, Dutch doors, steep roof, and continuous vents are custom-designed

to provide natural light and ventilation. Other distinctive characteristics are an unusually wide—20 feet—aisle of interlocking rubberbricks, made from recycled materials, and a heated aisle floor in the wash/groom-, feed- and tack rooms at the barn's center.

Additionally, the center portion can be isolated from the stalls by a fire separation and sliding pocket doors. On the barn's west side, the stalls open into small corrals, which then open into larger paddocks to simplify moving horses from stall to paddock. The service and storage building to the east of the barn complex is close to the access road, with its back toward the main residence, so open garage doors and service vehicles are largely hidden from view. This placement of the smaller service building further provides a visual break in the arena's scale.

With a rigid steel frame and a continuous ridge skylight, the arena is physically positioned about five feet below the base of the barn. Lowering the perspective of the arena helps prevent its size from overwhelming the rest of the farm visually. Rollup glass garage doors around the perimeter allow

the arena to function as a convertible indoor/outdoor facility. These characteristics promote natural ventilation and provide views of the surrounding area, including an adjacent outdoor arena that is 125 by 200 feet. Coated sand footing that does not require irrigation is used so sprinklers and water storage are unnecessary.

Attached to the north side of the enclosed arena is a large observation room with kitchen and restroom facilities.

Keeping the barn, arena and turnout areas centrally located means less work for handlers and horses during the daily routine.

Overhead flat screen monitors are mounted for viewing closed-circuit video, films or sports programs, and complete this world-class equestrian center.

John Blackburn is an architect whose portfolio includes hundreds of equestrian projects, ranging from barns and arenas to complete training facilities. He has offices in San Francisco, California, and Washington, D.C. To learn more about Blackburn's work, visit blackburnarch.com.