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## Dover Saddlery Offers Everything Equine at New Moraga Store - and Horses are Welcome

By Sophie Braccini



Dover Saddlery ribbon cutting ceremony. Moraga Mayor Roger Wykle, right, and Dover Saddlery Executive Vice-President James Cullen cut the store's ribbon. To Cullen's left, store manager Marc Ayala-Bass Photo Sophie Braccini

herself, said she was excited to see the store coming to town. "This is huge for the horse lovers all over the region," said Onoda. "Dover is a well-known and well-respected equine retailer. I do not know a rider who has not bought from Dover." The equestrian equipment store already has a large customer base online. "The problem in the past was it took a long time to get what you purchased because it was coming from Kentucky. That has all changed. Dover chose wisely when they chose to open a store in Moraga."

Dover Saddlery caters to English saddle riders, from the novice to those involved in riding competitions. The store offers specialized clothing, boots and chaps, horse tack including numerous dressage, jumping and close contact, all-purpose, or junior saddles, stable supplies, and items for horse care. Western saddle riders can order equipment online at Dover's other business, Smithbrothers.com.

Dover Saddlery was founded in 1975 by Jim and David Powers, two 1972 U.S. Olympian riders, and is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. The Powers were impressed by the quality of the equipment their competitors used at the Olympic games in Germany that they decided upon their return to distribute the best English, French, German, Italian and Argentinian equipment in the United States. The online business grew rapidly as the Internet developed, and stores were added over the years. It is now a publicly traded company grossing approximately \$100 million a year. The Powers sat on the board of directors until last year. "The current management is maintaining the same direction of excellence that was given by Jim and David," said Nittmann. "All our management, all our employees are passionate riders, moved by the same passion for horses."

The Moraga store will employ 30 to 40 people. There are still some vacancies, and anyone passionate about horses is encouraged to apply. "We will be an active part of the community and of the local horse shows," said Moraga resident and store manager Marc Ayala-Bass. "We will have

More local businesses are becoming dog friendly, but Dover Saddlery, which opened its 30th retail store in Moraga Friday, Nov. 13, has gone a step farther - with horses. Patrons can bring their horse to the store at 444 Center Street, so equipment can be selected and tried on the spot.

"We offer services in our stores that Bay Area clients are now going to be able to take advantage of," said Janet Nittmann, head of corporate communications at Dover Saddlery, a leader in equestrian equipment. "We have a test ride saddle demo program where clients can try a saddle on their horse for three days; and an onsite saddle consultation program, custom boots and coat fitting. We can also come to your barn, bringing several saddles to work with you on the better fit."

The Rheem Shopping Center is likely to become a hub for horses, ponies and their happy owners as Dover Saddlery plans future events that will focus on everything equine.

Friday morning's ribbon cutting ceremony was a big event at Dover, including Moraga's mayor, Roger Wykle. Councilmember Teresa Onoda, a rider

ongoing activities at the store, including book signings, talks by various professionals, and events for children as part of the pony club program." The store is open every day, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Dover Saddlery  
444 Center Street, Moraga  
doversaddlery.com

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Photo Jaya Griggs

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