

**Mia Farley, 24**  
**USA**

It will be a first Defender Burghley for the USA's Mia Farley (24) and her ride Phelps, an ex-racehorse who was purchased for just \$1.

Mia and Phelps caught everyone's attention when clocking the only cross-country clear inside the time on their five-star debut at Maryland in the USA in 2023, where they finished fifth. They followed this up with a 13th place finish in the five-star at Kentucky this spring.

Mia grew up in California and started riding when she was three years old at the yard her mother Rebecca worked at. She initially competed in hunter jumper classes and tried eventing for the first time when she was seven. She combined both disciplines until moving to the east coast of the US in 2018 to work for Olympic gold medallist David O'Connor and focus fully on eventing.

Despite her young age, Mia has already notched an impressive roster of results and has finished in the top 15 in 44 of her 66 international starts to date. She was also the recipient of the 2024 USET Foundation Jacqueline B. Mars Spring National Competition and Training Grant.

**Phelps** (Tiznow-Boom Town Gal (Cactus Ridge)), owned by Mia's trainer David O'Connor, is an 11-year-old thoroughbred gelding. He is an ex-racehorse and Mia started riding him when he arrived at David's yard as a sales project as a four-year-old.

"Phelps was a sales horse for the longest time, and he just kept moving up the levels," says Mia, who describes the gelding as "sensitive to everything".

Mia and Phelps finished an impressive fifth on their five-star debut at Maryland in October 2023 and were 13th in the five-star at Kentucky in April 2024. They were also third in the CCI4\*-L at Morven Park in Virginia in 2022.

Mia says of Phelps: "He's definitely got the biggest heart of anything I've ever had the pleasure of working with".