

# The Art of Modern Athletic Style

*A conversation with Harriet Posner of CALLIDAE*



**F**ew brands capture the intersection of style, performance, and modern equestrian life quite like CALLIDAE. Founded by Harriet Posner, the California-based label has redefined what it means to dress for the sport (and sport in general), bringing a refined, fashion-forward perspective to the traditional riding wardrobe.

With a background as a high-powered lawyer turned equestrian entrepreneur, Posner built CALLIDAE to reflect the lifestyle she felt was missing – timeless, sophisticated, and effortlessly wearable from stable to street.

Ahead of Horse & Style's Summer Issue, we sat down with Harriet to talk about the evolution of the brand, her design philosophy, and what's next, including the latest innovations shaping the future of CALLIDAE.

**HORSE & STYLE:** *CALLIDAE has such a distinct point of view. What originally inspired you to create the brand after 30 years of practicing law?*

**HARRIET:** I didn't start riding until I was in my 40s and happened onto the sport at a particularly difficult period in my life. I fell in love with the sport, with the horses, and

the zen of partnering with another being of another species who speaks a different language, and quickly got more and more involved. As I did, and started learning about the sport and its history, I decided the clothes didn't capture what I saw as the history and grace of the sport and the lifestyle, and decided to start my own equestrian clothing line.

**H&S:** *How would you define the CALLIDAE woman?*

**HARRIET:** My inspiration for the look and feel of the brand is a photograph by Slim Aarons called "Riding School." A framed archival print of the image hangs in my house. The CALLIDAE woman is the 21st Century version of the young women in that photograph. Casual yet sophisticated, active, stylish, comfortable, and confident. She has classic sensibilities, but she doesn't take herself too seriously.

**H&S:** *CALLIDAE is known for bridging performance and lifestyle. How do you approach that balance in your designs?*

**HARRIET:** I don't see any dissonance between chic clothing and performance. To me, the most stylish clothing is simple,





“The marriage of functional simplicity with an enduring sense of poise; that’s what I think about every time I’m designing a CALLIDAE piece.”

classic, made of beautiful fabrics. A pair of technical, high-performance breeches, a sleek turtleneck, and a beautiful piece of outerwear (vest, sweater, windbreaker) are the modern expression of the quintessential 1950s off-duty uniform. The marriage of functional simplicity with an enduring sense of poise: that’s what I think about every time I’m designing a CALLIDAE piece.

**H&S:** *Your technical pieces, especially your shirts, have become staples. What sets them apart?*

**HARRIET:** A decade spent building relationships with the people who make our clothes. I work closely with our factory partners here in Los Angeles, so I know every piece – not just in a CAD file or production sample, but as they are cut, sewn, and finished for our clients. The same goes for fabrics. We are

constantly sourcing new materials, rather than relying on the standard “performance” textiles you see everywhere. I’ve never been interested in what’s easy or readily available. We look for fabrics that genuinely elevate the experience of wearing them.

As the business scales, maintaining that level of quality control is non-negotiable. Growth only makes sense if the integrity of the product comes with it.

**H&S:** *Your pieces feel rooted in a very specific sensibility. Where does that point of view come from, and how does it guide what you create?*

**HARRIET:** I’ve always been drawn to things that endure – pieces that feel as right today as they would have decades ago. When I started riding, I was inspired by women like Audrey Hepburn and Jackie Kennedy Onassis. There was a quiet confidence

to the way they dressed – nothing forced, nothing excessive, just an ease that is timeless. That sensibility has always guided me.

Equestrian style, at its core, is incredibly honest. It has to function, it has to hold up, and it has to feel natural in motion. There’s no room for pretense, or for anything that isn’t made properly. I think that’s why it translates so well beyond riding.

When we create, we’re not chasing trends. We’re asking: does it perform? Is it beautifully made? Will it still feel relevant years from now? If the answer is yes to each of those questions, then it earns its place. And I think people can feel that when they wear our brand.

**H&S:** *CALLIDAE has continued to evolve since it launched in 2014. Can you share what you’re excited about right now?*

**HARRIET:** I’m excited about redefining what athletic clothing can look like. We’ve become very accustomed to prioritizing comfort above all else, and in doing so, we’ve lost a bit of personality along the way. I don’t think those things have to be in conflict. You can feel completely at ease and still look polished. Moving away from that sense of sameness – that’s what feels interesting to me right now.

**H&S:** *What’s next for CALLIDAE?*

**HARRIET:** For a long time, I’ve felt that CALLIDAE didn’t belong to just one sport. It started in the saddle, but the values behind it are broader: elegance, tradition, function.

From there I started imagining what it would look like to dress “more life” of an active woman. She might ride in the morning, play a set of tennis or live ball in the afternoon, and then sit down with friends for martinis and mahjong. And she should feel entirely like herself and put together in each of those moments.

Our new vertical, JEUDAE, grew out of this vision and the belief that this woman, we call her the “all day athlete,” should not have to change at each stop. JEUDAE is not a departure from CALLIDAE but an expansion of it. We’re taking the same standards we held ourselves to in equestrian – how something fits, how it performs, how it holds up over time – and applying them to our clients’ extended diary.

We are launching with essentials that work beautifully for golf, pickle, and the club. A truly one of one tennis skirt will follow later this year. **H&S**

*View all of the collections now at [callidae.com](http://callidae.com).*