



**Press Release – 28/05/09**

### **New look for Horse & Country**

H&C today launches its new website at [www.horseandcountry.tv](http://www.horseandcountry.tv). In parallel the company has introduced an all new brand identity across both its online and broadcast platforms. These moves represent the culmination of a comprehensive strategic review that repositions H&C away from its beginnings as a linear broadcast channel to become a truly multi-platform offering.

The relaunch is timed to coincide with H&C's unparalleled Badminton coverage which culminates this weekend in an eight hour extended highlights programme of this year's event.

### **The website**

The website is built around H&C's five core themes of Horse, Dog, Fish, Land and Life. It offers extensive resources for the equestrian community and lovers of the countryside alike with in-depth news, expert advice, "how to" videos, blogs and event listings. And the site launches with over 200 hours of H&C's programming which will be continually updated and refreshed as new shows are commissioned and acquired, as well as new features and content areas.

### **Cross platform initiatives**

The multi-platform focus of the relaunched H&C is reflected in a number of initiatives that link the on-air and online environments. They include:

- **Five core themes**

Wherever the audience encounters H&C, their experience will be guided by the five core themes of Horse, Dog, Fish, Land and Life. Each theme is identified by its own palette of colour and textures which are used across all on-air branding and online design. The level of visual integration ensures intuitive and easy navigation for the viewers whenever they're with H&C.

- **Major equestrian events**

H&C is committed to bringing its audience broader, deeper coverage of horse sport than they have ever had before across both the on-air and online environments. H&C's live online coverage of this year's cross country day at Badminton highlighted the scale of the opportunity. A three day campaign of Facebook marketing resulted in over 5,000 friends joining the H&C fan page with click through rates over six times the industry average. On the day itself over 17,500 streams were served with an average view-time of 48 minutes. Going forward all of H&C's horse sport coverage will be available for online viewing with Badminton, The British Open and Houghton Hall forming a high quality initial offering.

- **Bloggers**

H&C has recruited an outstanding collection of experts to write for the website. They include:

- Olympic eventer Sharon Hunt
- Fisherman John Bailey
- Gun dog trainer Howard Kirby
- Kelly Marks of Intelligent Horsemanship
- Game chef Jose Souto

The bloggers are also a key element in the channel's on screen branding, featuring in a series of short films focussing on their daily lives. Each trail directs viewers to the website where, in addition to the blogs, they can seek expert advice, enter related competitions, win a chance to meet etc.

- Foalcam

Foalcam is a 24-hour live webstream where our audience can check up on progress in the foaling box of a busy stud farm in Normandy breeding Selle Francais horses. Promoted on-air, foal-cam is a small but simple example of how the web can build and enhance the value of a broadcast medium.

Together, these cross-platform initiatives are designed to offer the audience maximum opportunity to indulge their passion whenever they spend time within the H&C universe.

### **The rebrand**

H&C worked with three key agency partners to implement the rebrand.

- Method

The new identity was conceived and developed by brand experience agency Method who produced the new logo and colour palette which inform all aspects of H&C's communications. Method were at the heart of the development of the new site taking the lead on the user experience and core design elements.

- Bouncing Minds

Bouncing Minds, a company specialising in high spec online video technology and web development, undertook the main build of the site. Bouncing Minds' integration of video ad serving with the Open X ad server has already been welcomed by the open source community as a major step forward in the development of online ad serving

- Addiction

Addiction are responsible for the complete on-air look of H&C. They have developed and produced an animated graphics package that uses the ampersand from the logo as the hero element to emphasise the depth and breadth of H&C's offer. Addiction also produced the two major on-air campaigns which herald H&C's new direction; the "day in the life" campaign featuring the channel's bloggers and a schedule reinforcement campaign which informs viewers of which nights of the week are dedicated to each of the channel's core themes.

### **A unique opportunity for UK equestrianism**

With over 2 million regular riders, the UK equestrian community has been overlooked and underserved by broadcast media for too long. H&C are now combining the best attributes of television with everything that the web has to offer to create a unique new media vehicle for horse fans, event organisers and the equestrian trade at large. All parties stand to benefit from a brand that understands and shares their passion.

Heather Killen, Chairman of H&C said:

"Our biggest asset is the passion and engagement of our audience. They're not just viewers, they're doers too. In building our new website we are recognising and capitalising on the web's potential to enable people to really get stuck into what they care about most. We think that our unique combination of on-air and online means that the UK equestrian community has finally got the depth and breadth of coverage they both want and deserve."

### About H&C

H&C launched in 2007 and can be found at Sky channel 280 and [www.horseandcountry.tv](http://www.horseandcountry.tv) . New investors bought into the company in December last year and the steps outlined above are the direct result of the strategic review undertaken by the new management team. Earlier this month, in another example of the value of its cross platform strategy, H&C ran a trail on-air inviting its audience to fill in an online questionnaire and tell us about themselves. Some of the key findings were:

- 49% currently watch H&C every day
- 72% live in a household that owns a horse
- 73% live in a household that owns a dog
- 18% live in a household that owns chickens
- 49% ride every day
- 69% are aged under 45
- 79% describe where they live as the countryside/rural
- 57% have household income over £30k

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