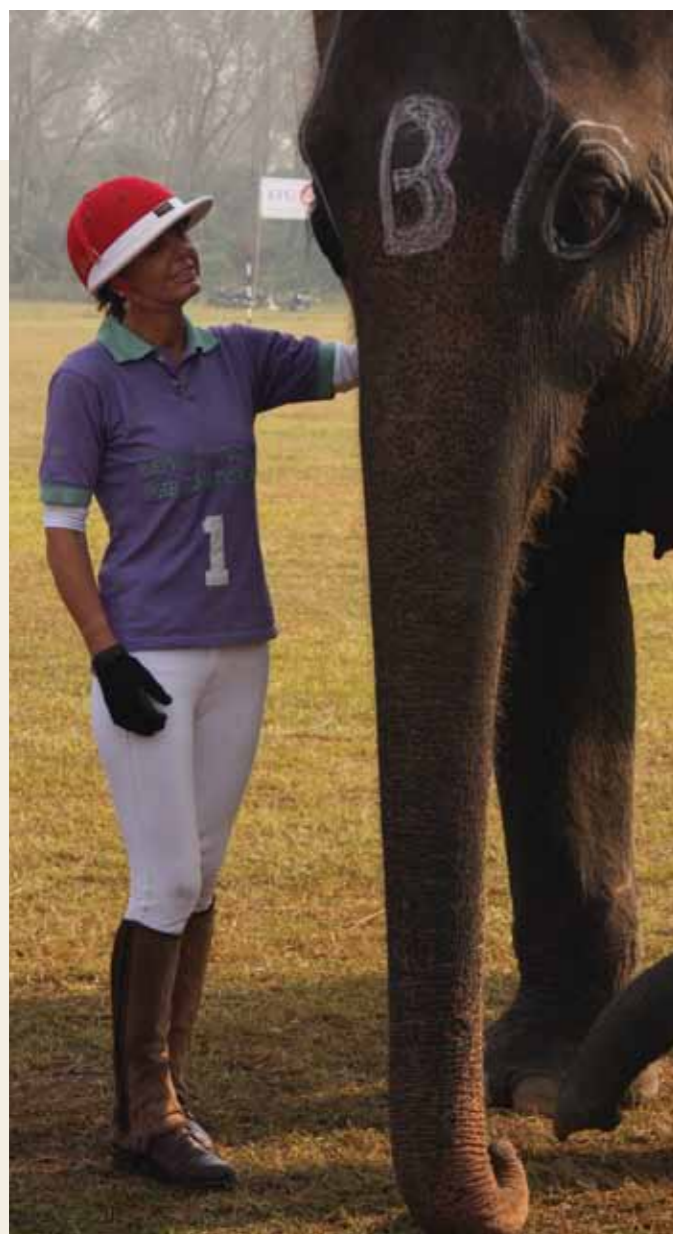


from the editor



New Year in the Emirates usually heralds exciting new developments but 2012 is truly exceptional. January sees polo in the UAE lifted to new heights yet again as the world's two top players, Adolfo Cambiaso and Pablo MacDonough, come to Dubai for the 2012 edition of the UAE Nations Cup.

Absolutely the season's showcase tournament, the Nations Cup was inaugurated by Adolfo in 2009. The maestro's presence set new standards for polo in the country, raising the game's profile in the Emirates and inspiring many to take up the 'game of kings'. Indeed, Adolfo made playing with young Emirati players a priority throughout the time that he was at Desert Palm.

The world's best player returns for the fourth edition of the tournament with fellow 10-goaler Pablo MacDonough with whom he combined so successfully in 2010 in the Dubai high-goal squad to win the Queen's Cup and British Open and who played alongside him in the 2011 Argentine high-goal season that saw Dubai La Dolfina invincible.

Ali Albwardy, affectionately known as the 'father of polo' in Dubai, is credited with having made it possible for polo fans in the UK to see the world's best in action over the past decade as he has consistently invested in the sport, retaining not only Adolfo for the Dubai high-goal line-up that has dominated British high-goal for the past decade, but other high-goalers too, including Adolfo's life-long friend 'Lolo' Castganola, 'Pikki' Diaz Alberdi and, most recently Pablo MacDonough. It is thanks to Ali's commitment to polo that UAE polo benefitted from Adolfo's presence in 2009 and it is entirely due to Ali that we now have the chance to see both Adolfo and Pablo in action in Dubai. Thank you Ali.

Firmly established as the most prestigious tournament in the UAE season, the fourth renewal of the UAE Nations Cup sees six teams contest the Emirates' most sought after title. Adolfo will play with Ali Albwardy's home team, the UAE. Pablo will line up with Brunei's Prince Bahar Jefri Bolkiah with whom he played so successfully under the Richard Mille banner in the British Open. Most significantly Adolfo and Pablo will be in Dubai fresh from victory in the world's most prestigious tournament, the Argentine Open. The Dubai La Dolfina win over Ellerstina with an unprecedented 16:10 scoreline firmly established the squad as the very, very best in the world at the moment and 50 per cent of that line-up will be at Desert Palm in January... if that doesn't make for a great New Year I don't know what does. ▶

ABOVE: At the World Elephant Polo Championships at Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge in Nepal.

Cartier

from the editor



Staying with polo, but a somewhat larger form, we focus in this issue on the most heavyweight tournament of all, the World Elephant Polo Championships that celebrated its 30th anniversary in December 2011. Arguably this is the most exclusive of all forms of polo, simply because so few people have enjoyed either the opportunity or inclination to make the journey to Meghauly on the jungle fringe in Nepal to contest the title. I have been immensely privileged to make that trip for six consecutive years and, incredibly, each tournament somehow gets better than the previous one, which is no small achievement considering how superb each is.

The 30th edition saw EFG Switzerland successfully defend their title against the home team Tiger Tops Tuskers with a new line-up for the Tiger Tops Tigresses proving the strength of girl power taking the bronze medal position. Powering their way through the ranks a newly formed Mongolian line-up triumphed in the Olympic Quaich, stealing victory in the dying seconds of the game from 'the world's favourite elephant polo team' the Pukka Chukkas.

As always just being at elephant polo is a treat in the extreme, but as the sport's co-founder James Manclark quipped upon winning yet another world title on the eve of his 72nd birthday, winning is also fun too. I was hugely fortunate to play alongside the world's best lady elephant polo players, Sam Prentice, Stine Edwards and Carolyn Syangbo with the Tigresses and my thanks and congratulations go to all of them for a wonderful week. We did a lot of winning. Not quite enough as EFG beat us in the semi-final, but we won against everyone else we met riding out the most

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Presenting the Best Playing Elephant Award at the 30th World Elephant Polo Championships; The Equestrio Filles line-up in the SOBU Bicycle Polo Cup; With British Polo Day founders Tom and Jess Hudson and Ed Oliver in Singapore; WEPA Nepal Founding Chapter member Subarna Chattri knows a good read when he sees it; With Imogen Lillywhite at WEPA; Sunny Kalaan enjoys Equestrio at Lawyers Polo in Dubai; the Tiger Tops Tigresses show impeccable style.

successful ladies elephant polo team ever - which was, I agree with James, a lot of fun. Elephant polo is, as Kristjan Edwards continually reminds us, "all about the elephants" and it was therefore with great pride that Equestrio presented the Equestrio Best Playing Elephant award to the best performing elephant and mahout (elephant driver) during the tournament. The winner of the inaugural award was the National Parks-owned tusker Narayani Gaj driven by mahout Lal Babu Chaudhary. Congratulations are due to a great partnership.

With so much to look forward to all that remains is to wish you all a very Happy New Year and every sporting success in 2012. See you there...

Publisher and Editor in Chief

Visit us at Air Cargo India. Hall No. 5, Stand No. 1, 1st - 3rd February 2012 in Mumbai.



Perfectly at home.
The reliable carrier for thoroughbreds.

Our specially designed horse stalls are hygienic, self-contained units, ensuring your horse is at home in the air. So, whether it's the Kentucky Derby or the Dubai Championship, your thoroughbreds will be off to a flying start.

skycargo.com

cover story



Whistlejacket Fine Equine
Photography: *New Approach*

One of a series of ethereally striking works born out of desire to create emotive portraits of the world's finest horses, this striking image marries the regal elegance of 18th century equine art with 21st century fine art photography. The brainchild of photographers Martin Barraud and Chris Ryan, Whistlejacket Fine Equine Photography breaks new ground in the equine photographic genre and creates new opportunity for owners to commission truly individual works of their most cherished equine partners. We are delighted and proud to showcase an exclusive series of Whistlejacket portraits in the Portfolio section of this issue.

www.whistlejacket-images.com



contributors



Laura King needs no introduction to Equestrio readers. From her Dubai base she has travelled the world reporting from racing's major venues for many years. For this issue she follows the action from the Cathay Pacific International Races at Sha Tin in Hong Kong, brings us the best of the season's action so far closer to home in the UAE and previews the Dubai World Cup Carnival as the Emirates season prepares to move into top gear.

Andrew Watkins is an acclaimed force on racecourses around the world. From his Dubai base he has long been Equestrio's man on the spot for all things equestrian. He concluded a busy and unprecedented Dubai racing season in 2010 with striking images of the moment that will certainly go down in history as the multi-million dollar photo-finish in the Dubai World Cup. For this issue he provides us with insightful images to accompany our UAE season round-up and Dubai World Cup Carnival preview.



Oliver Doran has rapidly established himself as a force to be reckoned with in the art of social polo photography. His images from the Royal Salute after party at the UAE Nations Cup in January propelled him into the spotlight and he has since become a familiar face on the UAE polo scene. Most recently, as British Polo Day goes global, he has travelled with the BPD team to capture the essence of those quintessentially British occasions abroad. In this issue his images of British Polo Day in Singapore bring the celebration to life on our pages.

Allan Greenfield is no stranger to all things equestrian, having spent much of the past decade working behind the scenes at one of the UAE's major racing operations. Frequently found at the side of polo fields at home in the UAE and abroad, Allan was on the line for us at the inaugural edition of Lawyers Polo at Desert Palm in Dubai. He brings the energy and high-octane action from polo field to these pages. You can almost hear the hooves...



Michael Clark is a man familiar with pointing his lens at pachyderms. A naturalist and photographer now based at Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge in Nepal, home of the World Elephant Polo Championships, he enjoyed unique and perfect opportunity to combine wildlife and sports photography as elephant polo 'came to town' at the end of November. His images from the world's biggest polo tournament bring the delights and wonders of the sporting festival that takes place each year on the jungle fringe richly to our pages.

The private bank for polo



Proud sponsors of:

- Veuve Clicquot Gold Cup
- 40 Goal Challenge, Palm Beach
- Heritage Polo Cup, Sandhurst
- Cambridge University Polo
- EFG Bank Scandinavian Polo Open
- Veytay Masters, Switzerland
- Desert Palm Nations Cup, Dubai
- Haryana Polo Club, Delhi
- Thai Polo Open
- Swiss Team, European Polo Championship 2010
- Royal Salute Maharaja of Jodhpur Golden Jubilee Cup

Photo: David Lominska

Practitioners of the craft of private banking

