

PASPALLEY POLO IN THE CITY
SYDNEY, PERTH, MELBOURNE
AUSTRALIA
01 - 15/12/07

Paspalley proves a polo winner Down Under

Oliver Eliot

The Australian polo series that began in one city, Sydney, in 2006, developed dramatically into a three-city series of tournaments in 2007 and is now set to expand further, and internationally.

The brainchild of players Janek Gazecki and Ruki Baillieu, the Paspalley Polo in the City concept grew out of desire to bring polo to the people by showcasing the sport in Australia's major cities in a series of high profile, glitzy tournaments. Traditionally polo in Australia has been the preserve of polo aficionados prepared to make the often lengthy pilgrimages to dedicated polo facilities in rural areas. But that's all changed now...

The Paspalley series aims to introduce polo to a broader section of the community and promote the game by maximising the hospitality opportunities that the sport provides. That Gazecki and Baillieu had hit upon a successful concept was proved as companies in the luxury business were quick to snap up sponsorship opportunities.

Joining Paspalley in embracing the series were Mumm, Ferretti, Audi, Execujet, Bombardier Learjet, Bang & Olufsen and Jaeger-LeCoultre. Similarly the Australian media rallied to the cause and grabbed the opportunity to see some of Australia's best young professional players in action.

With the notable exception of international player Ruki Baillieu, who flew in from the Argentine Open and arrived in style in an event-branded Audi Q8, most players had driven their ponies over dusty roads for hours, rather than arriving in customary polo glitz by helicopter, in order to participate in a series that they considered a significant development in Australian polo.

Notably the players' commitment was recognised by the crowds who thronged to Centennial Park in Sydney, Langley Park in Perth and Albert Park in Melbourne to watch them as spectators broke with what is becoming more and more common tradition as polo expands worldwide, and paid more attention to the games



Photo: © Janek Gazecki, www.polointhecity.com.au

Janek Gazecki's idea to bring polo into the cities proved a big hit in Australia. The Paspalley series succeeded in its aim to introduce polo to wider section of the community. Niall Donnelly, playing for Griffin Energy in Perth sends the ball flying towards the opposition's goal from a penalty.



Photo: © Janek Gazecki, www.polointhecity.com.au



The tournaments each had an intriguing mix of high goal and low goal matches, making them an instant favourite with players and spectators. The success of the inaugural event means Paspaley polo may come to a city near you soon!

Photo: © Janek Gazecki, www.poloonthecity.com.au

“The success of the 2007 series begs the question, “What next?” Janek Gazecki lays out impressive plans for the 2008 series.”



Photo: © Janek Gazecki, www.poloonthecity.com.au



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Photo: © Janek Gazecki, www.poloonthecity.com.au

Ric McCarthy becomes unintentionally airborne playing for ExecuJet at Paspaley Polo in Sydney.



Photo: © Janek Gazecki, www.poloonthecity.com.au

taking place before them than to the contents of the crystal in their hands... bravo Paspaley!!!

The secret to the tournaments' success appears to lie in the fact that each event boasted just two matches: a medium-goal game just before lunch that whetted crowds' appetites for a high goal match in the afternoon. This simple strategy proved a great success for players, sponsors and spectators and tournament organisers around the world will be left wishing that they could win over their crowds with similar panache.

Playing for crowds that included their fair share of international VIP guests, in this case Sarah Winter, the Maharana of Udaipur and Prince Raj Mewar, were high-goalers Ruki Baillieu and Glen Gilmore supported by Australia's up-and-coming professionals, with the result that matches were of a high, and fast, standard.

The success of the 2007 series begs the question, “What next?” Janek Gazecki lays out impressive plans for the 2008 series: “We are seeking to expand the series into at least one more Australian city (the Gold Coast or Adelaide) and one international location”, he says. “We are considering Dubai and LA, and we may invite some high profile international players.”

The 2007 series saw different teams playing in each city, but Gazecki is keen to develop the tournaments into an Australian national series. “Currently the series is made up of different matches played by different teams in each location, but for 2008 we are striving to get consistent teams across the whole series”, he explains. “Eventually, the idea is to have play-offs between the same corporate teams at various locations, with the final played in a different city each year.”

Having proved that bring polo to the people works, we wish him luck with a series that seems set for continued success.

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PASPALLEY POLO IN THE CITY

PERTH

GRIFFIN VS SANDALFORD 8:7

Team Griffin		Team Sandalford	
Tricia Hall	0	Greg Johnson	0
Niall Donnelly	2	Garrett Prendiville	0
Matt Welsh	4	Damien Johnson	6
Jason Stowe	0 6	Nick Bowan	0 6

FERRETTI VS MUMM 9:7

Team Ferretti		Team Mumm	
PJ Hall	2	Brett Kylie	3
Matt Welsh	4	Tex Webster	4
Kelvin Johnson	4	Glen Gilmore	7
Richard Rawling	4 14	Darren Smith	2 16

MELBOURNE

MIRVAC VS AUDI 9:8

Team Mirvac		Team Audi	
Tim Stewart	2	Corin Gibbs	3
Nick Hastie	2	David Yunghanns	1
Bryce Dicks	1	Rob Abbot	2
Josh Mantello	0 5	Janek Gazecki	-1 5

JAEGER-LECOULTRE VS MUMM 12:10

Team Jaeger Le-Coultrre		Team ExecuJet	
Ruki Baillieu	7	Ric McCarthy	3
Will Gilmore	2	Adam Meally	3
Gill McLachlan	4	Kelvin Johnson	4
Sam Gairdner	4 17	Andrew Williams	4 14

SYDNEY

AUDI VS MUMM 8:10

Team Audi		Team Mumm	
Matt Anderson	-1	Nick Wills	0
Brendan Fahey	1	Hadley Richardson	-1
Wal Ashton	1	Earl Herbert	3
Lochlan Graham	2 3	Adam Buchert	2 4

JAEGER-LECOULTRE VS EXECUJET 11:14

Team Jaeger Le-Coultrre		Team ExecuJet	
Ruki Baillieu	7	Ric McCarthy	3
Andrew Roberts	1	Adam Meally	3
Richard Rawlings	4	Kelvin Johnson	4
Gus Graham	3 15	Andrew Williams	4 14