



Hot Pink Summer Polo



The Ladies International 2010

The women's World Fusion polo team converged on Johannesburg, from various corners of the world... A Pink Profusion – The visiting team was made up of stalwart, Argentinean based Natascha Baecher, Floridian Angela York, fellow United States player and veterinarian from Philadelphia, Cindy Mason Buchanan and London based Pakistani Sehr Ahmed.

Words by Catherine Hartley, photographs by Karen Pilling.

The women's World Fusion polo team converged on Johannesburg, from various corners of the world, on the evening of Wednesday 29th September to play in the South African Hot Pink Summer Ladies International Polo tournament.

Hosted by Highveld Polo's Wayne and Catherine Hartley and Marius and Alida Vermaak the visitors got straight down to business as they spent their first afternoon trying horses at Crocodile Creek Polo Club. Horses were very kindly lent by Murray Macnab, Rick

Melville, Wayne Hartley, Iqbal Hirji and Rupert Hackwill.

It was thus a very thirsty bunch to arrive for evening drinks at the Polo Lounge at the Westcliff Hotel. This was followed by a wonderful dinner hosted by Walter Grindrod at Wombles restaurant, giving our visitors a great taste of the older, more colonial Johannesburg.

Friday morning saw the start of the tournament, kindly hosted by East Rand Polo Club. With ten 0 goal teams made up of 26 local players, the four visitors and one (very lucky) man in each team, this



was the largest women's tournament to be held in South Africa to date. The enthusiasm and determination of all the South African players was very encouraging and set the tone for a superb weekend's polo! Sponsors Alzu Horse Feeds had also given a pink cap for each player, so the fields were awash with pink.

The tournament was held on a seeded basis with Friday's play determining the order of merit for Saturday's matches. The top 4 teams went through to the semi finals with the next 6 teams

migrating to the Plate section.

The visiting ladies also used the tournament as an opportunity to try more horses kindly lent by local ladies and the East Rand players, including Nigel and Karen Pilling, Campbell Macnab, Davey Evans, Johan Du Preez and Hannes Pickard.

After play on each day and as the sun set, après polo Pimms was enjoyed at the edge of the field, generously sponsored by Distell Ltd. This was followed, on Friday evening, by a cocktail party held at the

Voodoo Lounge and Afrodisiac in Linksfield, giving our World Fusion visitors another sampling of African flavour.

The Sunday of the finals dawned fresh and breezy as the last games got underway early in order to accommodate all the matches prior to the International game. The plate final was won by Fresh & Crisp who just beat the Red Hot Chilli Peppers, having been given a goal due to handicap differences. The tournament final was a hotly contested game between

Deep Purple and Vets & Jets with Deep Purple winning by a goal. Whether this was due to the Hartley man conceding in the interests of marital bliss will continue to be debated!

The Ladies International finally got underway at 3.30 pm. A Women's Championship Tournament (WCT) endorsed event, the 4 goal showcase match was the very first African WCT match. Showing off the best of ladies polo, the South African team of Sarah van Wyk (2), Sophie Crossley (1), Amy Gace

above
The Oaklands
team, closely
monitored by
their opposition
Vets & Jets.



this page

top
Team Captains
in a tusk
tackle (ride-off)
(Natascha
Baechar and
Sarah van Wyk.

bottom
Catherine Hartley
and Rene van Wyk
going to the ball.

opposite
page
Jo Spilsbury being
chased by Angela
York.

(1) and Jo Spilsbury (0) fought bravely against the widely travelled World Fusion ladies. The match was very even and although they were two goals down at half time our South African team quickly scored three goals to put them ahead. However, World Fusion came back firing in the final two chukkas to win a very exciting game by one goal.

Sarah van Wyk was selected as MVP and Karma, played by Cindy Buchanan and owned by Alida Vermaak, won Best Playing Pony.

Prizes were also awarded for turn out of the players and teams. Oakland's won the prize for the best turned out team, The Brave Acorns for the most creative dress and special mentions were made of Guns & Roses and Angels & Demons for the effort made on their teams' dress. All in all it was a very enjoyable tournament and a great launch-pad for South African ladies polo.

On Monday the 4th October, the World Fusion team was very generously hosted by Chick Legh at Tshwene Lodge, in the Welgevonden Game Reserve. On the drive into the lodge, we were lucky enough to spot Rhino and Elephant and on the evening game drive, even a leopard.

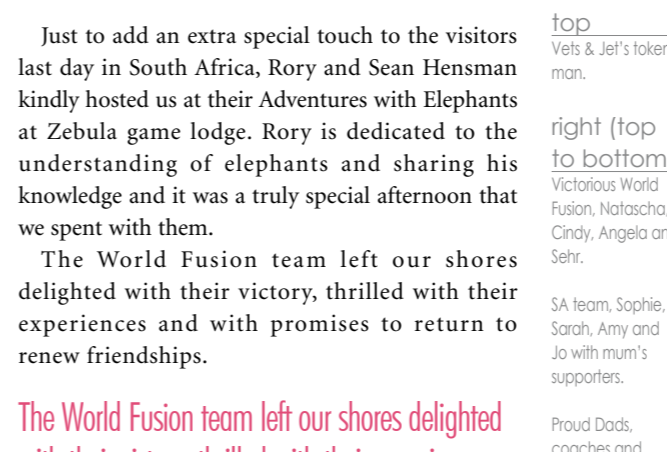
Tshwene was a welcome break from the busy weekend and we were thoroughly spoiled at every turn, from our delicious meals to the luxurious suites.





top
Cindy Buchanan keep sa close eye on SA's Sarah van Wyk.

bottom
Sancy Vermaak races for the ball.



Just to add an extra special touch to the visitors last day in South Africa, Rory and Sean Hensman kindly hosted us at their Adventures with Elephants at Zebula game lodge. Rory is dedicated to the understanding of elephants and sharing his knowledge and it was a truly special afternoon that we spent with them.

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Our grateful thanks to the local polo fraternity who helped support the tournament, The SA Polo Association, Highveld Polo and East Rand Polo Club and especially to our sponsors; Alzu, HI Merwitz, 30 Yards, Tshwene Game Lodge, Adventures with Elephants, Vuma Horse Feed, Pimms, Polo Clothing and Cheval Polo in America for providing the shirts for both International teams.

We look forward to the 2011 Hot Pink Summer Polo to be held on the 2nd of October – you just have to be there! ◀

top
Vets & Jet's token man.

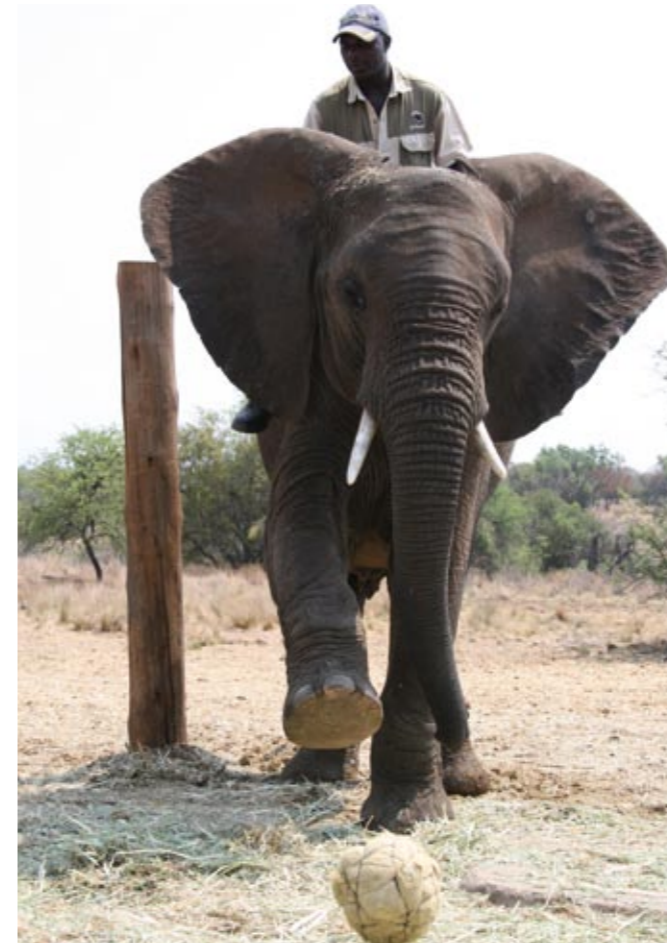
right (top to bottom)
Victorious World Fusion, Natascha, Cindy, Angela and Sehr.

SA team, Sophie, Sarah, Amy and Jo with mum's supporters.

Proud Dads, coaches and supporters; Andy Erskine, Nigel pilling, Rory and Lindy Hensman and Bob Crossley.

Polo kit swapped for cocktails!
Pg 20: Angela York lines up for a near side backhand from the lofty height of Chisuru.





The Brave Acorns

Tracey Gardiner (C)	-2
Melinda Meyer	-2
Sarah Van Wyk	2
Charles Van Wyk	2
	0

Wa'z Women

Lizelle Pretorius	-2
Robyn Lotz	-2
Sophie Crossley	1
Warren Lurie	3
	-1

Vets & Jets

Clair Heaton-Nicholls	-2
Rene Van Wyk (C)	-1
Cindy Buchanan	1
Wayne Hartley	3
	1

Gunsmoke

Penny Uys (C)	-2
Charlotte Bekker	-1
Natascha Baecher	1
Walter Grindrod	2
	0

Angels & Demons

Angelique Kieser	-2
Ina Visser (C)	-1
Angela York	1
Murray Macnab	1
	-1

Red Hot Chilli Peppers

Nelleke Lotz	-2
Karen Pilling (C)	-1
Sehr Ahmad	0
Campbell Macnab	3
	0

Deep Purple

Leigh-Anne Van Wyk	-1
Cath Hartley (C)	-1
Amy Gace	1
Johan Du Preez	2
	1

Oaklands

Mumpy Bruce (C)	-1
Jos Spilsbury	0
Jo Spilsbury	0
Garth Fraser	1
	0

Fresh & Crisp

Camilla Hyslop	-2
Jonathan Hill	-2
Sancy Vermaak (C)	0
Crispin Hyslop	2
	-2

Guns 'n Roses

Caroline Rose	-2
Catherine Uys	0
Alida Vermaak (C)	0
Murray Spark	2
	0

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opposite page
Where was he when Bafana Bafana needed him? Chisurus shows his kicking form!

above right
World Fusion girls up close and personal with the dainty Sham at Adventures with Elephants.

