



Veuve Clicquot
REIMS FRANCE

POLO
ONTHEBEACH
WATERGATEBAY

Media Release

15th September 2009
For immediate release

RECORD NUMBERS THRILLED BY POLO ON THE BEACH

Record crowds were treated to a captivating exhibition of beach polo at Cornwall's Watergate Bay last night.

Organisers estimate that over 3,000 people attended the free Veuve Clicquot Polo on the Beach event, demonstrating how the sport is increasingly capturing the interest of the public.

With teams composed of professional players and England internationals, spectators were treated to a highly entertaining match which saw over a dozen goals as the players from South West Polo put in a convincing performance to win by 10 goals to Midas Construction's 4 1/2.

Andy Burgess, team captain for South West Polo, said: *"It was amazing to see so many people down on the beach and on the cliffs being entertained by polo. We've had a fantastic turnout, it was way above expectations. To hear the crowd roaring every time you hit the ball is awesome, and everything is so close for the spectators, they can get really close to the horses, it's brilliant."*

The Midas Construction team of Barbara Zingg, Ed Olof and Tim Vaux started the match with a handicap advantage of 1 1/2 goals over their opponents, however all the early pressure in the first chukka came from South West Polo, who dominated the opening period of play and managed to convert their pressure with two goals from former England international Andrew Blake Thomas.

Andy Burgess scored again for South West Polo early in the second chukka to take the score to 3 goals to 1 1/2, but then it was the turn of Midas Construction to press their opponents with Tim Vaux and Ed Olof both coming close to scoring on several occasions - Olof trying a long range shot which sent the ball whizzing airborne just past the far post, and Vaux thwarted by staunch defending from South West Polo's Andrew Blake Thomas.

The pressure eventually paid off for Midas Construction, with Ed Olof converting a penalty hit to bring the difference back to half a goal, only to see South West Polo restore their lead immediately from the restart. Then all three players from South West Polo produced an extremely well-worked goal, scored by Richard Blake Thomas, to extend their team's lead to 5 goals to 2 1/2 as the hooter blew for the end of the second chukka.

In the great tradition of the sport, spectators flooded onto the pitch during the interval to trample in the divots on the playing surface, before umpire Jamie le Hardy (himself a current England player) threw in the ball to start the third chukka.

The Blake Thomas brothers continued their unrelenting assault on the Midas Construction goal, with Andrew scoring from the opening play of the third chukka. Soon after Richard flew down the Padstow side of the pitch, crossing the ball into the path of Andy Burgess who slotted between the posts for a 7 goal to 2 1/2 lead.

After the early flurry of goals, Midas pushed hard to reduce their opponents' lead with Ed Olof coming close to scoring. It was end to end stuff and very hard work for the ponies as both teams battled to produce some beautiful shots and good defensive clearing work - but no more goals - in what was a very evenly matched chukka.



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Needing to score five goals in seven minutes, Midas Construction started the fourth and final chukka with victory looking improbable. Two quick goals from Richard Blake Thomas made their challenge impossible, and trailing by 9 goals to 2 1/2 meant the Midas team were playing for pride alone.

Ed Olof, clearly fired up by the uncompromising spirit in which the game was played, scored a spectacular goal, driving an angled ball hard across the pitch and between the posts while riding flat out. He could have scored another soon after, but with the ball bogged down in the churned sand the fleeting chance was gone. Midas continued to pin their opponents back into their goalmouth, eventually forcing a foul from South West Polo which was converted by Tim Vaux to take the score to 9 - 4 1/2.

With both teams pushing for one final goal, Barbara Zingg was thrown from her pony as the play swept from one side of the beach to the other. Slightly winded, the Sandhurst Polo Manager soon recovered and was back on her mount. And in one final stampede towards the goal, South West Polo's Andrew Blake Thomas caressed the ball over the line just seconds before the hooter blew for the end of the match, taking the final score to 10 - 4 1/2, and earning his team the Watergate Bay Trophy.

Receiving the award for the Joules Most Valuable Player, Andrew Blake Thomas said: *"I've only played once before on a beach so it's fairly unfamiliar territory but it's good fun, I really enjoy playing on sand. It's a different way of playing. It's quite intense, it's a good battle, you can get really stuck in with the other players. I like playing like that, where it's tough and constant, very enjoyable. I definitely think there's a big future for beach polo, I would love to play some more pro beach polo on good sand, it would be awesome to watch and good fun."*

Winning the prize for the Woof Wear Best Playing Pony was 'Quaela', who was played by Tim Vaux of Midas Construction in the second chukka.

And with a huge grin on his face, swigging Veuve Clicquot champagne from the Watergate Bay Trophy, South West Polo team captain Andy Burgess was clearly delighted with the response from the spectators on the beach.

He said: *"All the players who took part put on an incredible show this evening, and it's great to get so many people here to see for themselves how exciting polo is. Maybe some will become inspired to start having lessons and take up the game themselves, you never know. This event gets better every year and huge thanks go to everyone at Watergate Bay for making it happen. This is by far the best crowd I've played in front of - you always get a better crowd in Cornwall."*

ENDS

Images

High resolution print-ready images can be downloaded from our online [Media Centre](#)

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Notes to Editors

Founded in 1772, **Veuve Clicquot** has an established history of innovation and creativity. Madame Clicquot was the first woman to run her own champagne house when she took over the business. She revolutionised the way champagne was made by putting holes in her kitchen table and bottles to clarify the wines. Similarly, Veuve Clicquot's innovative, daring approach is evident in how they became the first company to register their unique iconic yellow which is still apparent with Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label today. www.clicquot-season.com

With over £70m of construction work on site in Cornwall, **Midas Construction** is industry leading within the county and contributes greatly to the community through its involvement in business and social initiative.

South West Polo offer polo tuition for players of all levels at their practice ground near Wadebridge, Cornwall. Set up by professional polo instructor Andrew Burgess, South West Polo enable people to experience 'The King of Sports' for themselves - from a beginners introduction to polo, to instructional chukkas and team play. www.southwestpolo.com

Woof Wear has been designing and producing high quality protective products for equine athletes and riders for over twenty years. In-depth research combined with testing and feedback from riders has helped Woof Wear develop practical, hard-wearing products that work in harmony with both horse and rider to give maximum protection – day-to-day or at top level competition. Woof Wear are presenting the trophy for Best Playing Pony. www.woofwear.com

Back in the '90s, Tom Joule spent a large amount of his time at country shows and soon realised that there was a significant lack of bright fun clothing. So he designed a pair of bright pink wellies and ordered 100 pairs. These sold out like hot cakes and the rest they say is history! Today **Joules** has a highly successful mail order business, 30 shops in quintessentially British market and coastal towns and the brand is also available from over 1000 stockists worldwide including John Lewis and Harrods. Joules is built around traditional family values with a strong influence of colour, quality and detail. Designed to last and be loved. www.joulesclothing.com

The Hotel, Watergate Bay has emerged from a £2 million programme of investment as a must-visit beach destination. With the public areas and bedrooms all refurbished in the past three years, the décor is beach house chic throughout. The contemporary modern look, award-winning dining and relaxed atmosphere are only topped by The Hotel's unbeatable location right on the beach. www.watergatebay.co.uk

The Extreme Academy, Watergate Bay is one of Britain's leading venues for beach sports and events. Founded in 1999, the Extreme Academy comprises specialist schools for surfing, kitesurfing, waveski, stand-up paddlesurf and mountainboarding; technical equipment hire; and the **Extreme Store**, stocking a wide range of clothing and technical equipment. **The Beach Hut**, located on the ground floor of the Extreme Academy, is well known as Cornwall's coolest beach hangout, and a great place to eat. www.watergatebay.co.uk/polo



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