

POLO  
IT'S ALWAYS POLO  
SEASON SOMEWHERE

BY BRIDGET MCARDLE MCKINNEY

POLO SEASON DOESN'T HAVE TO END WHEN THE CHILL OF AUTUMN OR THE HEAT OF SUMMER APPROACHES. IF YOU HAVE THE MEANS AND THE ENTHUSIASM YOU CAN FIND POLO ANY SEASON OF THE YEAR.

YES, IT'S ALWAYS POLO SEASON SOMEWHERE. PICK YOUR DATE AND YOU CAN WATCH SOME OF THE VERY BEST AND MOST EXCITING POLO, PROVIDED YOU ARE WILLING TO TRAVEL WITH THE SEASONS. HERE HT PROVIDES A SELECT FOUR SEASONS GUIDE TO SOME OF POLO'S BEST EVENTS AND VENUES.



## Spring

"Spring has sprung, the grass has riz, I wonder where the polo is?" Dubai and Palm Beach, that's where. Although the United Arab Emirates takes advantage of every possible good weather day for chukkas with their season spanning from October to April, Spring is the time when it all comes together for the Dubai Polo Gold Cup series we love so much, running from late January to mid-April. Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, the series this year comprised five tournaments, but without doubt, the crown jewel of the Dubai Polo Gold Cup series is the Dubai Open for the Julius Baer Gold Cup, the top ranked tournament in the Emirates, held at the incredible newly minted Al Habtoor Polo Resort & Club, a luxury equestrian development including a St. Regis hotel, villas, polo club, state-of-the-art polo academy, riding school and exceptional equestrian facilities.

Next, we quickly jet to the States and take our seats in our private box (or tail gate) at the International Polo Club (IPC) outside beautiful Palm Beach, Florida to witness the U.S. Polo Open Championship, America's highest ranked and most prestigious polo tournament and her only World Polo Tour (WPT) Grand Slam event, held this year in late April. The IPC is most impressive, reached by means of a palm-lined lane, built in the breezy white-washed Old Florida style with terra cotta tiled roofs over the buildings and shade for the spectator areas. In addition to the three state-of-the-art polo fields, the club offers a pool, spa, and the famous Mallet Grille Patio, where the elite of Palm Beach County brunch on Sundays.



## Summer

Europe and the United Kingdom come to life in the summer months. The green fields are greener, the skies are bluer, the horses fresher. Perfect for polo. First up, we have the Gold Cup for the British Open Polo Championship, the premier English 22-goal handicap tournament, held at Cowdray Park Polo Club, which has been called the "Home of British Polo", having hosted some of the most prestigious matches on the grounds for over 100 years.

Debrett's describes the Gold Cup Final as "one of the most glamorous and chic country events in the sporting calendar, with world class players in action, celebrities in abundance, and a stunning location." This match ranks with the Argentine Open and U.S. Open at the top of the WPT ranking, as a Grand Slam event.

Now it's time to kick our shoes off. Yes, Côte d'Azur, St. Tropez, sea, sun, everything you would want in a summer and everything you would want in a polo club, Polo Club Saint-Tropez. "Polo's ultimate playground", as they call themselves. There the highlight of the season is the 18-goal Open de Soleil, a WPT Challenge Cup.

The club is situated on 100 hectares surrounded by forests, comprising four polo fields in Tifton turf of the best quality, a stick & ball field, a training course, and 350 boxes. The new clubhouse is a wonder to behold. Not your usual gentlemen's club leather couch and brass bar affair, it is a cool elegant space with the scent of power and feel of a karesansui garden giving on to a spacious terrace overlooking Field #1. The club restaurant Polo 1999 offers up Argentine-Peruvian cuisine and, of course, the best of the local vintages. Incroyable!



## Autumn

From Côte d'Azur to Costa del Sol as Summer turns to Autumn, we come to the most important fixture on the Spanish high goal polo calendar, the Sotogrande Gold Cup held at the elegant and exclusive Santa Maria Polo Club.

The beautiful grounds comprise over a million square meters of polo fields, gardens, stables, and club facilities within the private and prestigious residential area of Sotogrande. Ranking with the U.S. Open and the British Open as a Grand Slam event, it is a tournament no high goal player wants to miss.

As Summer turns to Autumn or, in this case, as Winter turns to Spring, Argentina dominates the polo calendar from now until the end of the year with the Argentine Triple Crown, the Tortugas Open, the Hurlingham Open, and then the crown of the sport of kings the Argentine Open, Campeonato Argentino Abierto de Polo, held in Palermo.

Without doubt, the Argentine Open is the preeminent polo tournament in the world. Teams must carry a handicap of between 28 and 40 goals, and in the latter case, yes, that means four 10-goal players.

To show what reverence Argentine players and spectators have for this event, the tournament venue, Campo Argentino de Polo, is called "the Cathedral of Polo" and this cup has been faithfully contested every year for the past 125 years!



Snow Polo World Cup St. Moritz 2018			
Friday, 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2018		Saturday, 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2018	
<b>THE WINSTON</b> The Winston Cup Cartier vs. Maserati		<b>MASERATI</b> Maserati Cup Maserati vs. Cartier	
<b>KARLTON HOTEL</b> The Carlton Hotel Challenge Cartier vs. Maserati		<b>DEUTSCHE BANK</b> Deutsche Bank Wealth Management Challenge Maserati vs. Cartier	
<b>Ranking</b> Team Points Goals 1. 1. 1. 2. 2. 2. 3. 3. 3. 4. 4. 4.		<b>Ranking</b> Team Points Goals 1. 1. 1. 2. 2. 2. 3. 3. 3. 4. 4. 4.	



## Winter

I say Winter, you think snow. I think snow polo, specifically snow polo in St. Moritz, Switzerland.

Founded in 1985, the Snow Polo World Cup has gained large numbers of enthusiastic players, sponsors, and spectators.

The event is considered the only 'high goal' polo tournament played on snow and ranks as a WPT Challenge Cup.

Just imagine, being surrounded by snow-capped mountains, impossibly blue sky, the air so crisp and cold, mittens and cap on tight, glistening flakes falling, and the horses and players coursing across the hard-packed snow, blowing steam between chukkas...and then, of course, the gourmet food and Glühwein (hot mulled wine). And so it goes...another wonderful exciting year of polo.