

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Grass Arena Polo World Cup Azerbaijan – “The Success Story Continues”**

Last year marked the beginning of a new era for polo in Azerbaijan, when the 1<sup>st</sup> Grass Arena Polo World Cup Azerbaijan successfully took place in the country, which is known as the birthplace of polo. This year the success story will continue in Baku at the beginning of September with the second edition of the tournament.

From 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> September, four teams will once again compete in Baku at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grass Arena Polo World Cup Azerbaijan. Among the four professional teams participating in the tournament, are polo teams from Argentina, the US, Europe and also from Azerbaijan. The polo teams will be sponsored by world famous brands such as Chopard, Baltika 7, Maserati and Embawood (La Martina will be the official supplier). The Azeri polo team consists of former Chovgan players, which is an ancient form of polo, still played in Azerbaijan today. As M. Ahadpur Khangah, the Vice-President of ARAF announced, the Azeri polo team has, for the first time in the history of the country, been professionally trained by the polo coaches of the Alegría Polo Farm in Buenos Aires. Raul Laplacette and his team of Argentine trainers, as well as world-renowned polo teacher Thomas Winter from Hamburg, prepared the Azeri team for the World Cup 2014 in Baku. M. Ahadpur Khangah: “Training of the Azeri National team started in April and since then they have gone from strength to strength and show this by now qualifying for the international tournament. Like parents proud of their successful children, so am I proud of our national players.”

For hosting the second Grass Arena Polo World Cup Azerbaijan, which will be produced and hosted by ARAF (Equestrian Federation of Azerbaijan Republic), World Polo and the Elite Horse and Polo Club Bina, a completely new polo arena and modern polo facilities were built last year in Bina Horse Center, to welcome the local and international polo fans. In addition to the arena with high-definition lighting systems, 40 horseboxes are also provided.

Azerbaijan also applied to become a member of the World Polo Association FIP and got the approval in December in Buenos Aires. Under the leadership of the Equestrian Federation of Republic of Azerbaijan and its Vice-President Mr. Ahadpur Khangah, polo is about to gain ground and develop to a countrywide known sport. The 60-year-old businessman discovered his passion for polo while studying in the English town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and has been hooked on the fast-paced sport ever since. “This is a special year for us, as this will be the debut of the Azeri National Polo team. We are off to a great start! This year’s event will be conducted under a new slogan: Welcome the Azeri Polo Team! This tournament will be an improvement to the last edition in the scope of participation, sponsorship and entertainment. We will have a famous singer from France ‘In-Grid’ and a band from Italy ‘I Love Italy’ performing at the Gala dinner on Saturday. The Polo Party on Friday at the Jumairah Bilgah Beach Hotel will include performances by the Noux from Miami and DJ Ray Douglas. We foresee another sold-out event and an increase in the international and local audience. 2014 is going to offer even more fun, entertainment and surprises for our guests.” World Polo

GmbH Zürich, ARAF and Elite Horse and Polo Club are responsible for the organisation and production of the event.

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