

3.- PRESENTATION OF FUTURE MEYDAN RACECOURSE IN DUBAI, by Mr. Frank GABRIEL, Chief Executive, Dubai Racing Club



As introduction to his presentation, **Mr. GABRIEL** reported on the major steps taken in the development of racing in Dubai.

“We don’t wait for things to happen, we make them happen.”

This statement by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al MAKTOUM says it all about HH’s approach to fulfilling his vision.

On May 3rd, 1967 Sheikh Mohammed and his brother Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum attended their first race meeting in England where they witnessed Royal Palace win the 2,000 Guineas at Newmarket. The family’s passion for horses carried on and in 1969 Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum instigated the construction of the first racetrack in the United Arab Emirates called Al Ghusais, located just outside Deira, which is now the site on which the Dubai International Airport stands.

During the 1970’s horse racing continued to take place in the UAE but remained largely a scratch sport with limited infrastructure or formal organization.

Ten years on from when HH saw his first horse race, on June 20th 1977, Sheikh Mohammed’s own involvement with International Racing began with the filly Hatta at Brighton, England. 4 years later on October 1st 1981, the Dubai Camel Track hosted the first Thoroughbred meeting consisting of 3 races, a Sprint, a Mile and a Mile and a half.

Godolphin was established in 1994, and that same year they recorded their first International Group I winner when Balanchine won the Oaks at Epsom.

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Nad Al Sheba Racecourse is home to some of the finest international horse racing, notably the world’s richest horse race, the \$6,000,000 US Dubai World Cup and the Dubai International Racing Carnival.

It was only fifteen years ago in 1992 when the first organized race meet was run in the UAE. Relatively speaking that was just a short time ago compared to 257 years ago when the English Jockey Club was formed in 1750.

The Inaugural Dubai World Cup was held in 1996 and was won by the American champion CIGAR. In 1998 the Dubai Racing Club built the Maktoum Grandstand to be able to

accommodate the increasing attendance of our international guests. This building was upgraded and refurbished in 1993, 1999 and 2000.

The race course grandstand facilities, as of today comprise of 2 main buildings, the Maktoum and the Millennium Grandstands. The Millennium Grandstand was constructed in 2001 to cater for the ever-increasing popularity of the Dubai World Cup. Total attendance on a Dubai World Cup night is 50,000, with the ability to park 6,000 vehicles on site.

The Nad Al Sheba facility accommodates our international guests and horsemen at the highest standard but is currently at its maximum capacity.

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Under the direction and vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed a team was asked to look at the future of the Dubai Racing Club and where it would be on a global scale in the next five - ten years. To achieve this task, the DRC appointed a world leading Malaysian firm named Teo A. Khing (TAK) Design Consultants. Under the leadership and innovation of its Managing Director, Mr Teo Ah Khing, the consultants developed a Masterplan for a World Class Facility. This master plan would serve as a Dubai landmark that would define local heritage, facilitate the growth of the Dubai World Cup and the International Racing Carnival, and maximize the facility with entertainment all year round.

In assisting towards the development of the master plan the DRC/Meydan team and consultants traveled around the world visiting various racing facilities, studying their best practices and conversing with their operational departments.

To achieve this racecourse as a grand and efficient development the team took in to account feedback from all aspects of the industry, race goers, trainers, owners, jockeys, and our partners.”

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He showed a [video](#) presenting the entire Meydan development.

“Mr. Saeed Al Tayer, Chairman of Meydan has described the meaning of the word “Meydan” as a place where people congregate and compete, it is about where people go and achieve results.

This spectacular development covers 76 million sq ft that consists of the one Grandstand and numerous stables, a five star hotel, a business park and a championship golf course and golf course community.

With the building of the racecourse the safety of the horses and the horsemen was paramount. For the equine athletes, state of the art receiving barns and “safe travel” tunnels to access the facility and race track. For the Horsemen quick access from their lounge area to the saddling barns, from the walking ring to the jockeys room. The free-flow and travel of the horsemen was a key component in our studies.

This will be the first 5 star hotel connected to a thoroughbred grandstand. Each 400 room suite will have a direct unobstructed view of the race track.

In addition we will have the museum and gallery nestled between the grandstand and hotel, attached at the end of the east side of the building there will be the Meydan Boathouse and Marina. Overall there will be 10 International Restaurants to please your palate.

Water canals will connect the grandstand with other Meydan developments to give an additional form of access to the racecourse.

The signature 18 hole championship golf course and the adjacent Spa Villas will be some of the entertainment and relaxation features visitors can experience at Meydan. Continuing to strive to achieve customer comfort, Meydan will be able to park 10,000 cars in our undercover Falcon Park.

The Meydan Grandstand and Hotel will be housed in a 10 story structure, which will span over 960 meters, this equals to lining up 15 (747) Boeing Jets. This “landscaper” as it has been referred to by Mr. Teo of TAK is longer than the PETRONAS Towers in Kuala Lumpur if you were to turn those buildings on their side.

This is just one of the many aspects that make the Meydan Grandstand unique in the Thoroughbred racing world.

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Meydan is on a fast track as we are targeting completion by the 2010 Dubai World Cup. Since the launch on March 29 2007, the Meydan team is traveling at a light speed.

Several months ago we signed the two piling contractor’s National Services Contracting Co (NSCC) and Al Dhafra Pipeline & Contracting Co. (APCC) who were given the tasks of completing over 5000 pilings.

Just several weeks ago was the signing of the company Arabtec and WCT Engineering for the 1.2 Million US contract to construct the Meydan Grandstand and Hotel. The Arabtec Company has also on its resume the construction of the world’s tallest skyscraper the Burj Al Arab. Immediately after the press conference their team was onsite. They will operate over 17 high rise cranes to complete the project.”

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