

Beat: Lifestyle

St. Moritz 2014 : Where the Snow meets the Turf

White Turf did it again!

La Jolla, CA, 09.03.2014, 17:49 Time

USPA NEWS - Each year the Ambassadorial Roundtable covers 5 INTERNATIONAL TOP EVENTS. 2014 was kicked off by “White Turf St. Moritz” the premier snow event in Switzerland where thoroughbred horses are towing snow skiers. This Engadine sport, was discovered in 1923 and remains unique to the region.

Many flirted with idea of promoting the sport and including it as an Olympic discipline, however, although imitated and adapted in many alpine countries, skijoring in its original form has only established itself in the place where it originated, the Engadine valley in Switzerland. Nowhere else in the world do thoroughbred horses regularly compete without riders on their backs but instead with skiers in tow.

The tradition begun 1756 and over the years the so-called “Classic Route” was developed, comprising St. Leger, Derby, 1000 Guineas, 2000 Guineas and Oaks. These flat races, which have remained unchanged in their formal principles and have merely been adapted in terminological terms,

Since the end of the last century, horse racing has also experienced a veritable boom further afield, in Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai. The first horse race in Switzerland was held on 29 September 1872 on the Wollishofen Allmend in Zurich. In this country, the sport of horse racing, or the “turf” as it is known, has a very special character, as it is not borne by the horse breeders and therefore does not, as is the case abroad, constitute a branch of industry.

What makes these races in St. Moritz so unique, so very special, was summed up a few years ago by the former European champion jockey and trainer, Peter Schiergen: “It is the awareness of galloping across a lake. Across the ice, just like the rider in the 19th century ballad, “The Ride Across Lake Constance”, but without the dangerous cracks.”

President Silvio Staub, Markus Hauser, VP, Elizabeth Zindel and their White Turf 2014 team carried on the tradition in style continuing the luxurious display of BMW sponsors, restaurants, and vendor stands and on the 50 cm iced lake, entertaining over 30.000 visitors over the 60 meter deep lake. The St. Moritz sun enchanted spectators, but annoyed horses as less than optimal conditions resulted in the cancellation of some races due to unsafe snow conditions and potential injuries.

Grand Prix of St. Moritz, which since 1993 has been staged as a listed race and which at CHF 111, 111 boasts the highest prize money for a horse race in Switzerland, thanks to the Skijoring Trophy, the Grand Prix trotting race and the various supporting competitions, and thanks to all the multi-faceted trappings that come with the event, a mixture of both exclusive and down-to-earth, alpine-rustic Swiss components “ thanks to all these things, White Turf is unique, unparalleled.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1973/st-moritz-2014-where-the-snow-meets-the-turf.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Ina von Ber

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619