



The China Horse Club, which has experienced global success with its runners this year, recently unveiled the China Equine Cultural Festival, which will take place in Inner Mongolia Sept. 20 & 21, and will feature the first-ever live Thoroughbred racing in Mainland China. The event is expected to attract strong international support, and is part of an ambitious plan to build the Thoroughbred industry in that country. The *TDN's* Kelsey Riley sat down with Eden Harrington, General Manager of the China Horse Club, to discuss the current operations and future of the China Horse Club.



Eden Harrington

KR: Can you explain why the China Horse Club was formed, and what its main goals and objectives are?

EH: The China Horse Club's goal is to become the premier lifestyle, business and racing club in China. To achieve this goal we not only need to provide a peerless service to our members--we need to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the industry in China. Core to the CHC is the successful establishment of a self-sufficient Thoroughbred industry in Mainland China. That means a breeding industry, racing industry, logistics, auctions, horse feed, media, veterinary services, etc.--a value chain that established jurisdictions have. To achieve these standards, the CHC has partnered with leaders of industry in a number of fields. We are also mindful that an industry needs a lot of skilled people, and we have set up a scholarship program that has already seen students work in the industry in Ireland and France, and in 2014 this will hopefully expand to Britain, Australia and beyond.

As a club and service provider, we offer our members a bespoke experience that will not only provide them with the highest standards of service and amenities, but will also provide members with the opportunity to race both locally and internationally. This is quite unique anywhere in the world. We have international stables in Australia, France, Singapore and the United States.

KR: Can you explain how the different syndicates under the CHC umbrella are differentiated?

EH: Our syndicates are based around the countries and cities in which we have stables. We have four international stables: France (Paris/Chantilly), Singapore, Australia (Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane) and the United States (New York), and each of these centers has a slightly different appeal for different members of the CHC. We want to provide a reason for our members to go and race in cities that they enjoy going to, and these cities are among the most popular cities for our members. We ensure they have a wonderful getaway in their city of choice and enjoy racing their horses while they are at it.

KR: I understand the CHC has had six winners in four different countries this year, and the club has also been active in sales rings around the world, including an expense of almost A\$5-million at the Inglis Easter sale. Can you describe the club's strategies for sourcing horses?

EH: We have been delighted with the manner in which our racing operation has begun. We have had six individual horses race across four countries and each has won at least one race. Our program is to be disciplined and seek opportunities. We have had some good fortune to date in determining what opportunities we should take and which ones we should let go. It is important our members enjoy racing, and winning is hard to beat. This year's Inglis Easter Yearling Sale was the first sale in which we have bought under our own banner, but it certainly isn't the first sale we have been active at. At Easter we purchased some lovely yearlings, including some high profile ones with our partners, Coolmore. We remain hopeful they can run up to their looks.

KR: How does this fit in with the club's announced intention to import more than €100 million of bloodstock over the next 10 years?

EH: The announcement that €100 million will be spent in the next decade is naturally exciting for the Thoroughbred industry internationally. The focus of this money will be on breeding stock. China requires quality foundation mares and stallion prospects. Again, the intention is to be selective and play to our long term plan. I would expect this will open opportunities for the breeding industry in America. There are some wonderful operations in the U.S. that continue to breed great racehorses and have very successful breeding programs.

KR: How many horses-in-training does the CHC currently own?

EH: Across our racing and breeding divisions we have an interest in nearly 100 individuals. It is an exciting space to be in. Our racing team has some lovely young horses set to race in the next 12 months as well as some promising older individuals that I think you will hear more of. Hopefully we will be able to expand our interests in the U.S. later this season as well. Our U.S. stable is the newest of our four stables and focuses on one mare at present called Tabreed [(GB) (Sakhee)].

Tabreed was selected at the Arqana Sale in December by our French trainer Nicolas Clement to race in the U.S. under the care of his brother, Christophe. Tabreed is a winner and is stakes placed. She is possibly unlucky not to have won more than once under Christophe's care. In time she will be an important addition to our breeding program.



Tabreed winning at Monmouth June 29

KR: How is the CHC governed?

EH: The China Horse Club is managed by international staff that have experience in a range of fields. Many of the senior staff were heavily involved in the highly successful Meydan grandstand project. Assisting in the management of the China Horse Club is an elite advisory board. This 'council of peers' are leaders of industry from many fields, and we are very fortunate to have these esteemed individuals involved in our club. The makeup of this board has not yet been publicly announced, but that will happen very soon.

KR: The CHC recently announced that it will host two days of live racing at the China Equine Cultural Festival in Inner Mongolia, which takes place Sept. 20 & 21. Can you describe for our readers what the China Equine Cultural Festival is?

EH: The CECF is a celebration of Thoroughbred racing in Mainland China. It is also the first internationally endorsed Thoroughbred event in this part of the world. Aside from international participation from breeders, owners, jockeys, sponsors and support from fellow Jockey Clubs over a two-day festival, there will be a wonderful blend of local and international dignitaries.

There will also be invited speakers at an International Symposium. His Excellency Professor Joseph Deiss, the former President of the United Nations General Assembly, heads a list of VIPs who will be present. In time we hope to build the profile of this event, and it would be wonderful to have participation from American vendors, jockeys, trainers and administrators, and possibly a guest speaker next year or in the near future. The U.S. has a great deal to offer.

KR: How will the club's operations and objectives change when racing commences in Mainland China?

EH: Our objectives are long term and take into account 2014 and beyond. Next year is the Year of the Horse, and so it will be very significant in China for the CHC. There will be some significant and very exciting announcements on this in due course.

KR: Are there any plans for live racing dates in Mainland China beyond the China Equine Cultural Festival?

EH: The CECF will be the first exhibition race the CHC is involved with, and we are honored that the Hohhot Sports Bureau is hosting this event. It is our intention to race more regularly in 2014 and beyond.