



POLO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Uwe Seebacher, Austrian representative for polo, founder of A Quechua and president of the players' and trainers' association PIPA, is focusing on the sustainable of polo as a new trendy sport.

INTERVIEW KATRIN LANGEMANN PHOTOGRAPHY A QUECHUA

DR. SEEBACHER, WHAT DOES A QUECHUA STAND FOR?

At A Quechua, sport is the focus. Our VIPs are the horses. We need to put more focus on the sporting components. Polo means action and has to present itself in a cool, stylish, dynamic and chic way. And it is working, as our tournaments are the ones that get the most press coverage compared to other polo tournaments, including the established ones.

WHAT MAKES A QUECHUA TOURNAMENTS SO SUCCESSFUL?

Friendly local players with similar playing abilities, successful media and PR work, perfect event planning and spectators who enjoy following the matches because the explanations and commentators make it easy for them to understand, for a change. Emotion, excitement and atmosphere. Arena polo with a higher levels of intensity, moves, and turns is simply spectacular. Don't get me wrong, I love playing polo on grass passionately. As with any other sport, you have to develop skills

and work on them. So it makes little sense for us to start with polo on grass, the Formula 1 of polo. You're better off starting in the Formula 3000 series. Why do many grass polo enthusiasts spend years at the same level and come off second-best compared to arena polo players in terms of technical development? Because as a beginner or when you are making your way through the ranks in grass polo, you spend less time coming in touch with the ball compared to a player who trains in and plays arena polo intensively. We're often laughed at, but the developments, our strong brand partners and success of our players clearly prove we're on the right track.

A QUECHUA GIVES GREAT IMPORTANCE ON IN-DEPTH TRAINING...

It's not just the events that are important. To inspire people to play polo is not enough. Anyone can set up a polo facility. But if you don't have the right training concept, a qualified trainer and the right players, you're missing the basics. We need ground-

work and we need to work with upcoming players. Teaching and training methods are always important for player improvement. Patron polo is fun but having tourists on the field does not contribute much to the sport in the long run. In other words: just because all Austrians can ski does not mean that we are all good at teaching it. Just because someone has a South American passport or can hit the ball is no guarantee that he or she is also a good trainer, methodologist or educator – on the contrary! A good skier is not necessarily always a good ski coach. An important component of sustainable development is well-equipped training centres. We are currently in the process of building a network of polo villages and resorts – all-year-round facilities that will teach the sport using A Quechua specialists knowledge via certified PIPA instructors. Our training centre prototype in Kumberg near Graz (www.aquechua-kumberg.com) already attracts clients from various different countries to its beginner, tactics and tournament preparation courses. The training centre will set up international standards in many aspects. We will gradually apply this concept to new locations. Over the next year, we will start up in Liechtenstein with a friendly team and will train and certify a young English professional via PIPA. For investors and interested parties, this village concept offers long-term attractive and profitable opportunities in the real estate sector. Chacras – houses with large rooms in South American/Italian style – can be bought in various sizes either as an investment, for your own usage or to let. A Quechua takes care of the management. And as an owner, you are also entitled to stable some of your ponies here, enabling you to play regularly and holiday here. They will be looked after and trained by qualified and specialized staff as part of a full-service package. There are also horses in the A Quechua pool ranked according to the four performance categories and precisely typed thanks to special pony profiling.

We have also developed trainer training courses with PIPA and sports scientists that go far beyond current standards. Our A Quechua polo book series has become an international benchmark. The first in the series is the best-selling beginner's book. The fourth book "The smart match" will be published shortly and we have received excellent reviews from our test readers.

WHAT ARE YOUR VISIONS AND AIMS WITH A QUECHUA?

With A Quechua and the PIPA Association, which is now represented in twelve countries after just two years, I want to make a responsible contribution in turning polo into a trendy sport. Our international events help with this. The international tournament series starts with the International Beach Polo European Championship in Lignano (www.beach-polo.org) and the Snow Polo European Championship Tour which is already played in San Candido, Italy (www.snowpolo.it), Austria (www.snowpolo.at) and a completely new polo country. The Tur-rach is no longer played following its cancellation in 2012 and an unsuitable playing field in 2013 – too dangerous for the horses and lack of guarantee that it will be prepared professionally. The number of new requests we have received mean that we will be organising a PIPA ProAm Tour for 2014/15 with between six and eight events. All PIPA countries will be able to take part and compete for the European Championship title.



The chukka timer displays the 7 minutes and 30 seconds in color for stopping the time yourself and has its own goal counter for quick and easy counting.



The A Quechua tournaments are popular with players, spectators and sponsors alike.

A QUECHUA HAS GROWN ENORMOUSLY RECENTLY. THE A QUECHUA WORLD NOT ONLY COMPRISES TOURNAMENTS AND POLO SCHOOLS, BUT ALSO PRODUCTS SUCH AS PERFUMES, WINES AND EVEN FURNITURE – THE HOME COLLECTION.

A Quechua is a story that is being written by more and more people as time goes by. Over the past few weeks, we have recruited around ten new employees. People do not just buy our products – they also buy our history of elegance, lifestyle, action and much more. And it is this that leads them to polo. Our product portfolio now comprises everything related to polo. We are proud to be the suppliers of the world's only "authentic" polo watch with a chukka timer that lights up at the 7 minute and 30 second point and a goal counter on the bezel for quick and easy counting when things get lively. The CEO of Jacques Lemans, Alfred Riedel, has also supplied us exclusively with 100 high-quality ETA Valjoux 7750 watches – connoisseurs will know what I am talking about. We are as well undergoing the construction of the world's first covered all-year grass polo facility. You can find more about this in the online shop on www.myaquechua.com or the A Quechua portal on www.myaquechua.com. Direct requests can be sent to info@aquechua.com •