

L'Ormarins Queen's Plate Racing Festival

ELRINE STOKES

On a glorious, sunny, summer day, the L'Ormarins Queen's Plate Racing Festival was once again held at Kenilworth Race Course on 10th and 11th January 2020. Even nature played along providing a beautiful blue sky as a backdrop for the event. Once again, they did not disappoint as one of horseracing's premier events of the year.

Saturday 11 January 2020 and the car arrived to transport us to the day's celebrations. Blue and white elegance was the order of the day and we all duly complied. The car delivered us safely to our destination and as soon as we walked through the gates we were greeted with lovely ladies in blue and white outfits, smiling and welcoming us to the festival.

Kenilworth Race Course was blanketed in blue and white luxury and sophistication. From the beautifully set out LQP garden party held the day before to the jazz band playing throughout the day in the Style Village to the very swanky Stud Club. Guests dressed in their blue and white finest mingled through the general access areas which were beautifully decorated with designated tables and chairs and lounge areas. The usual LQP platform was positioned front and centre for all racegoers to take their customary LQP Letter photographs. Guests were treated to fantastic food stands and L'Ormarins Brut was provided to quench one's thirst on the hot summer's day.

Both days were very well supported and attended by the general public and celebrities alike. The lovely Liezel van der Westhuizen and Jeannie D were enjoying the day's celebrations and even the very sporty Springboks Faf de Klerk and Steven Kitshoff ditched their rugby togs for the day, donned their finest and made an appearance on the day.

The lovely Fee Ramsden, TV Presenter, was beautifully dressed by Crème Store in the customary blue and white colours for the L'Ormarins Queen's Plate Racing Festival.

Some of the well thought out attractions were the ever popular Beauty Bar, providing ladies with the perfect opportunity to refresh their hair and make-up whilst the gentlemen were able to feast their eyes on the wonderful vintage car display (all in blue and white of course) which featured a glorious Bugatti valued at a cool R4 million. A real treat for all car enthusiasts. A beautifully made up LQP carousel was perfectly situated in the Style Village, providing ample backgrounds and opportunities for capturing the essence of the day and the moment for one and all. It further added a touch of light playfulness to the venue.

Guests could be seen all day enjoying the different set ups throughout the venue and stands and could be seen mingling and chatting to fellow racegoers.

In the distance across the race track, at the parking area, one could see the racegoers coming and going and some guests were even dropped off by helicopter adding some more luxury and extravagance to the day.

Blue and white sophistication flowed throughout the venue with ladies and gents alike dressed to the hilt in their finest. Outfits ranged from playful and light to classy and elegant. Luxury prizes were up for grabs for Best Dressed and Best Hat competitions. Best Hat winner went to the lovely Zinzi Ntoyiwa who sported an exquisite white flower headpiece with her outfit. Best Dressed Man went to the very suave Charles Samuels and Best Dressed Lady went to the beautiful Roxy Joubert who oozed elegance and sophistication in her stunning outfit, looking as if she had been plucked out of the Queen's Royal Garden Party. Roxy won a 5-day trip for two to the United Kingdom and tickets to the L'Ormarins Luncheon at the Qatar Glorious Goodwood Racing Festival in July 2020.

The various venues within the Kenilworth building were steeped in elegance with stunning blue and white décor. The atmosphere inside the Somerset Room and Peninsula Jazz Room was classy and sophisticated helped along with a lovely overhead view of the track, allowing patrons to enjoy their three course meals and wine and bubbles whilst watching the days racing and general activity from above.

Closer to the track, avid racing photographers such as Chase Liebenberg lined up alongside the track to catch all the racing action whilst it happened, looking ever so smart whilst doing so in their blue and white clothing attire. They were certainly kept busy capturing all the race action with the various horses and jockeys taking part in the day's racing.

Throughout the day, glimpses of the trainers such as Justin Snaith, Candice Robinson, Mike De Kock and Anton Marcus could be seen in the parade ring having a final look at their horses before they headed down to the starting gates. The horses paraded around the parade ring in pristine condition and looked remarkable.

The opening race of the festival on 10 January 2020 was won by Dad's Catch with jockey Bernard Fayd'herbe, providing a great start to the festival's racing.

The winner of the Cartier Paddock Stakes Grade 1 race was Queen Supreme.

Excitement built throughout the day on Saturday in anticipation of the L'Ormarins Queen's Plate Race. It was well worth the wait as ten of the country's best horses and jockeys lined up at the starting gates. Hawwaam and Do It Again had many racegoers watching them closely as the race started, but in the end, an impressive run from Vardy, with jockey Craig Zackey took the Grade 1 win and the R1.5 million purse.

Racegoers and festival attendees were treated to a great day of horseracing. The horses put on a great show in all the races throughout the day.

As the day and racing started to wind down, the excitement did not ebb as there was yet more to come. The much anticipated, legendary LQP after-party did not fail to impress with celebrities and guests dancing the night away to the tunes of DJ PH and DJ's from Roastin' Records. All in all it was a wonderful end to a glorious day of racing.

The L'Ormarins Queen's Plate Racing Festival seems to outdo itself year after year, never failing to provide a day of splendour and luxury and leaves us counting the days until the next LQP Racing Festival.