

This is no dream but the...L'Ormarins Queen's Plate Racing Festival of 2020

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As I wake up in the morning to the smell of fresh sea salt and organic roasted coffee beans, I am reminded I am in the serene mother city. As I complete all my morning routines, I can feel the excitement soaring over me through the multiple butterflies fluttering in my stomach. As I slip into my gentle, baby blue silk dress and elegant white sandals, I begin to feel like a princess elated for the day that is to come. I make sure I have golden, luscious curls to carefully place my white hat onto and finish my makeup with a slight pink lip. I pair my look with some dainty pearls and grab my tickets from the kitchen counter. I then climb into the cab just as if I were a princess getting into a carriage, and off I go to what I will soon realize is no dream, but the prestigious L'Ormarins Queen's Plate Racing Festival of 2020.

As I arrive, I walk across the freshly cut fields to see the distance is covered in an array of gorgeous blue and white furniture embodiments. As I reach the entrance, the polite hostesses dazzled in jockey attire greet me so politely and make me feel so welcomed to the marvelous Kenilworth race course. As I enter, the crisp air brushes over my face and a colossal smile takes control. It sure does feel soothing being back at one of the most charming horse racing events in the world.

The sun is out, and the racecourse is filling up by the minute. The first order of the day is a glass of bubbles. A delicious glass of rose bubbles would set the tone for a magical day that is to come. I soon get a phone call and it is my fierce, all female friend group. They have just arrived, and I have told them to make their way to me by the bubbly stand. We share hugs, kisses, perfume scents and giggles. It has been a few months since we have all been in this glorious city and it's been a year since we were all at this spectacular event. No longer is a glass on order but two bottles of desirable South African Rose MCC. My energetic team are ready and set.

Whilst we all look our best, we head to LQP flower wall to grab our most instagrammable photoshoot pictures. We all strike our best looks, shout out our next pose and smile head on to the camera. A few photographers see we aren't here to mess around and they scoop the opportunity to get some shots of us girls flaunting our soft dresses and happy looks. After we have got the pictures we need, we move to a garden table designed so perfectly, with every precise detail finished so well, that we all seem to be mesmerized. We open our bottles of rose and away we go. Just like that, the glasses are flowing, the memories are being made and the atmosphere is at its peak of the day. We were so caught up in it all, we completely missed our opportunity to bet on the first race. With no surprise Mrs Rupert's horse took the first win and we were then motivated to get our bets in. Our girl squad are no experts, but we know a thing or two. We bet for the next few races and stir up conversations with people in the que whom the favourites are and who to watch out for. Some bet trifecta, others on one particular horse. A short synopsis, whether we won money or not, we were at the Queens Plate having the time of our lives and that was a win in itself.

We hurriedly go past a food stall where we indulge in some crunchy spring rolls and delicious Asian bowls. The array of food on offer at the event is nothing short of tantalizing. We hurriedly return to our garden table and the various races commence. Every race is different and brings a new set of emotion and anticipation. Some of us cheer as we have winning results whilst some of us laugh off the spent Rands that we lost. Horse racing is an enchanting sport and keeps you captivated with every moment. I take a moment to isolate myself to admire the crowd as they unite in a victory and celebrate life and its blessings. I wish I could freeze this moment and bottle it into a snow globe.

We are having so much fun that the time has flown by and the main race is about to begin. Within moments the commentator has our undivided attention as he jeers on telling the crowd which horse is at the forefront. The whole venue is eager, and everyone is anticipating whom they think will win. The lean horses powerfully gallop past and we are in awe of their strength, speed and determination. The jockeys are high spirited, and the race becomes more intense as it draws to a close. The crowd is cheering and there truly is an uproar of excitement. We are standing on our tippy toes to make sure we get a glimpse of the end of the race. The race is heated, and the horses are side by side, it is hard to tell whom will take the title. But, just like that, the underdog takes home the Queens Plate 2020. Vardy will take the title in his stride and there is no denying the owners and the horses' trainers will be counting their blessings as they enter 2020 with the best win of the day. As I peer over the entire venue, I find myself smiling at strangers and I am at ease knowing that this is what true happiness feels like.

As the main race comes to an end, the crowd starts to fizzle out. More bubbles were ordered and people that were strangers have joined us in our festivities as if we had known them our whole lives. The sun starts to set, and we slowly move over to the after-party venue situated behind the festive Stud Club. As we enter, the vibe is already booming, and the DJ is playing music with a truly South African flair. People are down doing the Voshos, everyone is intimate, and the night is alive. My girl squad and I are having the time of our lives, our shoes are off, and we are at the center of the dance floor. We sing, we laugh, we drink some more and rejoice in the day. The venue is heaving, and everyone is in their element.

As the night gets old, I decide to call it a day. I kiss all my friend's goodbye and walk out the racecourse waiting for my cab. My drive home got me reflecting on the magical day that was had. I am always surprised how much beauty could be accumulated in such a short space of time. If my year is anything like the day I had, I know it's going to be a prosperous year, filled with everything in abundance. As I arrive home, I put the coffee machine on and smell the ocean again. I am reminded I am in this serene city. I am calm and full of gratitude. I sit on the couch and tell myself this isn't a dream, it was a day at the L'Ormarins Queen's Plate Racing Festival of 2020 and what a day it was.