

Anna Powell (AP) went to Dubai, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi 4-10 of March. AP attended the World Cup trials Thursday 4 March, then went racing in Bahrain and Abu Dhabi and returned for the ERA sale on 10 March before flying back for the Kempton Breeze-up Sale.

Meydan - 4 March

The 4 Billion US Dollar Meydan project was as impressive as expected— the grandstand extends 1.6 km and has a full capacity accommodating up to 60,000 people including 20,000 tiered seats. The racecourse consists of two left handed tracks; one is an all-weather Tapeta track, provided by Michael Dickinson and the other a 1m4f Turf track. The project was nearly finished by Super Thursday but final touches were still to be made before the grand opening for the World Cup. It was useful to attend the trials as there were plenty of international owners and trainers to meet without it being as crowded as World Cup night.



The Luca Cumani trained Presvis (GB) by Sakhee flew the flag for the British-bred and trained representatives. He took the Jebel Hatta Group 2 over 9f on the Turf under Ryan Moore 1 ½ lengths clear of the British-bred Alexandros for Godolphin ahead of Tam Lin (GB) by Selkirk in third. The 8f All-Weather Burj Nahaar Group 3 was taken by the Brian Meehan trained - Cat Junior - under Richard Hills with other British contenders including Jeremy Nosedá's Forgotten Voice (7th) and Marco Botti's Soneva (13th). The Group 3 Mahab Al Shimaal 6f All-Weather attracted British runners War Artist, from James Eustace's yard, and Sir Gerry, trained by John Best. Godolphin won the Derrinstown sponsored race with Desert Party, Mutheeb for Sheikh Hamdam Al Maktoum under Richard Hills came in second with Sir Gerry in third and War Artist in 5th.

Later in the month, British-bred Tattersalls graduate, Al Shemali (Medicean) won the Group 1 Duty Free with another son of Medicean, Bankable in second place. The Group 1 Dubai Sheema Classic was also won by the British-bred Dar Re Mi (Singspiel) owned by Lord Lloyd-Webber and bred by Watership Down Stud.

Emirates Racing Authority (ERA) Sale - 10 March

The ERA hosted its annual Horses-In-Training Sale on 10 March at Meydan Racecourse. This year however there was no Carnival Sale as in previous years and 95 horses were offered with 66 horses that sold for a total of

AED 2,138,000.00 (£ 388,000) and an average of AED 32,393.94 (£ 6,000). These figures were very similar to last year excluding the Carnival Sale horses. Buyers came from Sudan, Sharjah, Dubai, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Iran, Libya, Pakistan and Syria.



Bahrain - 5 March

AP attended the National Guard Cup Meeting. Bahrain hosts approximately 26 race meetings per year and the season runs from October to the end of April with their main King's Cup meeting, which was scheduled on 19 March this year. There is one race meeting a week with six races per meeting – five of which are for Thoroughbreds and one for Arabian horses. 40% of the races are reserved for imported thoroughbreds, 45% for local-breds and 15% for Arabian horses. The racetrack currently consists of two turf tracks - a 1m4f and a 6f straight. There are approximately 300 horses in training in Bahrain and most of the trainers base themselves at the racetrack in the stables provided and train on the sand track which is available to them. There are however private trainers that train away from the track. The feature race on the Friday, worth just under £10,000, was awarded to the Tattersalls graduate Signal Fire. He had been knocked down to John Walsh at the October horses in training sale in 2009 for 33,000gns and is now owned by the Bahrain based Ebrahim Al Afoo.

Abu Dhabi - 7 March

The Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club is located in the Al Mushrif area, just 10 minutes from the City centre set within an impressive sports complex. The Club not only has the racecourse but also a show-jumping arena, a 9-hole grass-surfaced golf course, a driving range, tennis courts and a swimming pool. The development of the Club and its facilities highlight the support that is given to the Club by Their Highnesses the Sheikhs, and is a good example of their commitment to the development of recreational facilities in the United Arab Emirates.

The Equestrian Club was originally founded as a Riding Club by the President, His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan in 1976. A grass track was laid in 1980 and racing officially started in 1991. The club was modernised in 1994 to include a fibreturf track and floodlights and then a new grandstand was built in 2003, together with air-conditioned stable blocks, equine swimming pool, VIP suites together with administrative offices.

The racing season in Abu Dhabi runs from November to March. There is one race meeting a week held on a Sunday, run and administered by the ERA. Pat Buckley has been based out there and managed the racecourse for 20 years and was very useful at introducing us to trainers and owners. The track is a 10 furlong right handed grass track, which also has an inner fibresand track for training purposes. The main race meetings including the National Day Cup, H.H. The President's Cup and The Emirates Championship.

The winner of the thoroughbred race was a Brook stud British bred, Five Cents by Exceed and Excel. He was a Craven Breeze-up graduate in 2009 bought for 92,000gns by Blandford Bloodstock and now trained by Dubai based trainer Ali Rashid Al Raihe who trained the first three home. The runner up was the 2009 DBS Breeze-up graduate Dahes who was knocked down to Bryan Smart for £27,000