

Cartier



Riding out for his last chukker

Remembering Gianni Berry (1954-2015)

Gianni grew up in St. Moritz. His father was the first president of the St. Moritz Polo Club. In the early sixties, when St. Moritz hosted summer polo tournaments, five-year-old Gianni caught the polo virus that should never leave him again. Every kid played polo in those days: on bicycles or foot—destroying bikes and many a window—until school teachers had confiscated all the polo balls in the Engadin valley.

In 1978, Gianni came to Marbella to work as a trainee in the hotel I was running. We were young and lived the tough life of a hotelier and polo player: working hard, playing hard, and partying even harder. Gianni and I became part of the first-ever St. Moritz polo team with Andres Parlade and Canuto Errazurriz. In Sotogrande, we played polo every day; the horses were cheap as chips, some of them cast-offs from the bullfighting ring. But Gianni was a natural with horses

The polo virus wouldn't leave him

In 1983, Gianni was a member of the first-ever Swiss national polo team. Together with Niki Hahn and Umberto Gasche, we played against Spain in Barcelona, and to everyone's surprise, we beat the Spanish—who had completely underestimated us—by 7:6. We celebrated for two straight days in Barcelona, and one more night upon landing at the airport in Zurich, where Rolf Kressig had organised a VIP reception for us—straight off the plane.

After that, we regularly played together as Swiss national team but never won a game again during those years. We played as the St. Moritz Team in Munich, Berlin and Argentina for a few years, joined by two professionals. One time, we even had an «all Engadine team» on the field: Gianni Berry, Arnd Küchel, Reto Gaudenzi and Gianni's brother Pepo Berry. Gianni was an elegant player: he favoured the no.1 position, at his peak, he reached a respectable handicap of +1.

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In 1985, when we started the Snow Polo World Cup in St Moritz, Gianni was my closest ally and friend, and we even won the world premiere! For many years, Gianni helped us organise the Snow Polo World Cup in different positions. He was always willing to help.

The polo virus wouldn't leave him: Gianni continued playing low-goal in Zurich and remained a keen supporter of the sport in Switzerland. After the grass FIP European and the FIP World Championships were held in St. Moritz in 1993 and 1995 respectively, Gianni started a low-goal tournament in the summer with some of his friends. He was there, among us, when we opened the Polo Bar at the Cascade in December 2014.

Gianni celebrated life.

He was a natural master in hospitality and charm, his looks of a «Grande de España», his outgoing personality and his kind and respectful way of approaching people opened doors and hearts to him. Everybody loved Gianni.

On the 3rd of July 2015, after a splendid dinner with his Wife Eri and friends at his house in Sardinia, Gianni's heart suddenly stopped. Way too early, Gianni rode out for his last chukker. Our thoughts are with his family, loving wife and children.

We will miss you, Gianni Berry! Your open mind towards people and life, your joy and passion for polo, your broad smile. Thank you for everything, Gianni—we shall never forget you!

Adieu and a revair in tschêl,

Reto Gaudenzi and your polo friends all over the world

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BADRUTT'S PALACE
ST. MORITZ SWITZERLAND


SNOW POLO
WORLD CUP
St. Moritz

MASERATI

CHAMPAGNE
PERRIER-JOUËT


LA MARTINA
OFFICIAL SUPPLIER



Snow Polo Pioneers: Gianni Berry (right) and Reto Gaudenzi during the first test match on the lake of St. Moritz, 1984

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