

POLO

KING'S POLO ACADEMY

HT EXCLUSIVE SNEAK PEEK AT EGYPT'S NEWEST
STATE-OF-THE-ART POLO FACILITY

BY BRIDGET McARDLE McKINNEY

WITH THE GRAND OPENING PLANNED FOR SPRING, THE FINISHING TOUCHES ARE BEING MADE AT A FAST AND FURIOUS PACE TO COMPLETE EGYPT'S FIRST AND ONLY PURPOSE-BUILT LARGE-SCALE POLO AND EQUESTRIAN FACILITY. HT TAKES YOU ON AN EXCLUSIVE VIRTUAL TOUR OF THIS INCREDIBLE NEW FACILITY.





This ambitious project is the brain-child of **Mohamed El Sewedy**, a 2-goal player and captain of industry, with a passion for horses and a passion for polo. But it was not his alone. The polo community - spear-headed by the legendary **Farouk Younes**, former President of the **Egyptian Polo Federation**, its current President **Dr. Mohamed El Shamy** as well as **Karim Loza**, Region Ambassador of the Federation of International Polo - has long recognized the need to carry forward the Federation's programme to redevelop the sport of polo in Egypt, with its focus on player training, polo pony breeding, and polo field excellence. And to this end the next step was the construction of a facility where these aims could be met.

The 120 acre facility includes two regulation-size polo fields, a stick-and-ball field and training area, a massive exercise track, a **Polo Academy** arena, paddocks, cryobath, three barns, a club house, gym, restaurant, and luxe accommodation for pros, grooms and guests.

The barns are truly amazing. Designed by the famous architect **Ricardo Balzano**, they are a dream of simple clean lines and efficiency. Each barn holds 32 stalls in four 8-box sections, perfect for tending to a 4 or 8 pony string and opening easily out to washing, training, and exercise areas. The first barn is reserved for outside players and rentals, the second for the Polo Academy, and the third for the Club's own ponies. Each barn has its own dedicated day grooms and night grooms. The space and ambiance are so serene and clean that it feels somewhat like a spa. Yes, the ponies are well-cared for, indeed, pampered. Even the feed is bespoke; high protein and aromatic alfalfa is trucked in all the way from Toshka!

The polo fields are an engineering marvel. Like a lush oasis in the arid desert, as you enter the facility the verdant green expanses of Field #2 come directly into - and overwhelm - your view. The playing field is 320m by 170m, the area of approximately six soccer fields. Supervised by South African polo player and King's Polo head coach, Gavin Chaplin, the obvious difficulty in creating a regulation polo field in the desert was ensuring a sustainable and level playing surface of international caliber. But these challenges have been successfully met and the first practice matches have begun.

The Polo Academy has been in existence for several years, training up young male and female players at Farouk Younes' Abu Seir Farm. The Polo Academy at King's Polo will continue this mission to establish and grow continuing generations of players in Egypt. As Farouk Younes has said: "These young people are the future".

But that is not all! The Club has a comprehensive show jumping facility as well. With purpose built stabling for **100 horses** with lovely light and air, the facility includes a show jumping arena, stadium seating, paddocks, wash areas, office, trainer's apartment, dedicated vet, farrier and grooms rooms, and its own entrance.

Once the basics are in place the Club plans to include a sports complex and an elegant boutique hotel to cater to Club members and international guests attending polo in high season, a short drive from the new airport.

The dream of re-energizing and growing the sport of polo in Egypt is being realized. 🐾



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