

What's Brewing™  
News Release From The Hampton Coffee Company

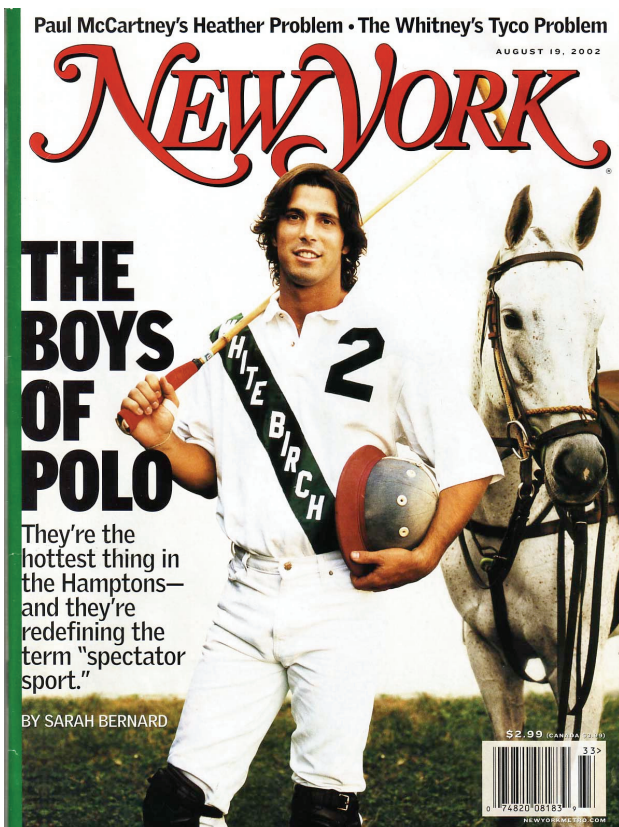
For Immediate Release

August, 2002

Contact: Jason Belkin - (631) 726-2633

"New York" Magazine Cover Story Highlights Hampton Coffee Company®

In every city the polo players briefly occupy, they nail down a home-away-from-home routine, complete with a mandatory breakfast place. For this tournament, it's Hampton Coffee Company in Watermill. When the Chevy pulls up, a group of players and grooms is already there. As a round of bagels and eggs arrives, Nacho regales



BERNARD Continued from page 27

par with Alex Rodriguez. The exceptions are the sport's superstars: 10-goalers Heguy, Cambiaso, and Aguerre, who do rake in millions. The going rate for a 6-goal player is in the range of \$40,000 to \$50,000 for a single tournament if they bring their own horses; a 10-goal player can command upward of \$120,000. Aguerre, who has played for White Birch since 1987, also runs a successful horse-breeding business back home. A rabid Mets fan, he named all of the offspring of one of his mares after his favorite players, past and present. There's a *Piazza*, a *Bonilla*, a *Ventura*, and a *Robin*. "People ask me why I have gray hair," he says. "I am not sure if it is my age or the Mets."

AFTER ANOTHER RUN-THROUGH OF HIS morning ritual at the stables, Nacho, dressed in jeans, black suede Pumas, and a white zip-up jacket with his team logo across the back, slides into his white Chevy, and Hilario jumps on his lap. "He drives," Nacho deadpans. As Nacho steps lightly on the gas, Hilario turns the wheel to the right. "Má, más," says Nacho, turning it more. "Bueno." Hilario, bursting with

of intense competition and vast stretches of tedium, usually spent simply tailgating. Their wives and girlfriends, outfitted in the latest posant tops and Christian Dior tinted shades, look like they could have been Gisele Bündchen's high-school clique. The players and their entourage have elevated "the hang" to an art form: Sometimes they'll bring along golf clubs to practice putting (polo players are invariably impressive golfers) or keep the car stereo on while they watch. Even on a Sunday morning, when any sensible Hamptons denizen is sleeping off her hangover, the gang are out on some field with their *mote*, silly taking in the action. They're there to scout the horses and their opponents' level of play, of course, but they're also there because it's the only place they really know.

Even Nacho, who with his extracurricular modeling gigs has had a taste of a horse-free profession, does not like to be far from the field. His plan is to fit in the modeling when he can and when it interests him (and when he can stand the ribbing of his friends). "I don't do a swimsuit catalog," he says. "You know what I'm saying?" And the work, for which he has an agent at Elite, is not entirely unrelated to his game:

But when one of the ringers gets a particularly brutal slam from an opponent, even veteran polo watchers flinch.

Just two days before, Matias Magrini broke his nose in three places. (The day after, word would spread of Adam Snow's nearly fractured jaw—a bloody incident involving a mallet to the face at a match in Santa Barbara.) Almost every player has endured a gruesome injury. Hirsch had had his teeth knocked out and his ribs broken. Nacho once took a ball to his right eye, but got back on the horse even before the stitches came out—only to get hit again in the same place.

There's something seductive, almost sexual, about the game that keeps them coming back. Tincho tries to explain: "When I'm running with the ball by myself, no one behind me, it feels like *freedom*. It feels like you own the world and you own the moment, and it feels like you want more. You want to go faster and faster and you want to go again and again and again."

When the game ends, with White Birch ahead, both teams are chauffeured in Mercedes convertibles over to the trophy platform, a souped-up hay wagon covered in AstroTurf. Nacho, as always, has Hilario in tow. The members of the two teams line

"WHEN I'M RUNNING WITH THE BALL BY MYSELF, NO ONE BEHIND ME, it feels like freedom. It feels like you own the world and YOU OWN THE MOMENT."

up, makes it past the stables and down the driveway, then Nacho transfers him to the backseat. "La policía," he whispers.

In every city the polo players briefly occupy, they nail down a home-away-from-home routine, complete with a mandatory breakfast place. For this tournament, it's Hampton Coffee Company in Watermill. When the Chevy pulls up, a group of players and grooms is already there. As a round of bagels and eggs arrives, Nacho regales them with a story about his trip to a doctor in Greenwich the day before. In June, after a heated fight over a girl, one groom stabbed another groom eight times and left him for dead. Though the groom didn't work for Nacho and the incident took place in South Carolina, Nacho has taken it upon himself to look after the guy and pay his doctor bills. Everyone cringes as he folds a napkin and demonstrates where the surgeon had left a piece of gauze inside the guy's right arm. After that, breakfast ends rather abruptly and they head out to watch yet another game.

On the sidelines of a polo match—pretty much any match—players who are not suited up park their cars in one long row along the field. Their life is a combination

of intense competition and vast stretches of tedium, usually spent simply tailgating. Their wives and girlfriends, outfitted in the latest posant tops and Christian Dior tinted shades, look like they could have been Gisele Bündchen's high-school clique. The players and their entourage have elevated "the hang" to an art form: Sometimes they'll bring along golf clubs to practice putting (polo players are invariably impressive golfers) or keep the car stereo on while they watch. Even on a Sunday morning, when any sensible Hamptons denizen is sleeping off her hangover, the gang are out on some field with their *mote*, silly taking in the action. They're there to scout the horses and their opponents' level of play, of course, but they're also there because it's the only place they really know.

AT THE FOURTH SATURDAY GAME, THE SUN IS blazing. Arriving guests beeline for the chilled Voss water bottles. In an eleventh-hour move, Brant has replaced himself and another White Birch player with two ringers for their match against Equuleus. Brant says he's injured, but some don't buy it. "This is called 'White Birch wants to win,'" says one polo aficionado. Immediately, it looks as if that will be so.

"It's Nacho!" says the announcer as he takes the ball long and gallops toward the goal.

"Nacho, Nacho-man!"

Far from the distracted hum of the tents, a group of diehards intent on actually watching the game has colonized the bleacher seats across the field. This time, when Aguerre lets out a gratuitously bloodthirsty wail—even with his team up by five—there are some knowing chuckles.

up shoulder to shoulder, each holding a flute of champagne in one hand and a silver trophy in the other. The audience has dwindled to a smattering of onlookers and relatives—by now, most of the spectators are already halfway home.

Suddenly, the scene has the small-town feel of a midwestern beauty pageant. Lucas Monteverde, who scored thirteen out of fourteen goals for Equuleus, is named MVP. Aguerre's horse Califa gets the Best Playing Pony Award. Park Avenue dermatologist Howard Sobel has sponsored the honor, which means he gets to drape the mare with a forest-green blanket, then smile for a snapshot.

"Califa!" says the announcer into his microphone.

"Califa!" the players exclaim, correcting him.

"Califa!" the announcer tries again. "From the Luna bloodline; Luna played with Gonzalo Pires. Maybe in a couple of years, when Califa needs a little work, Dr. Sobel will give her a nip and tuck!" he says. No one really seems to be listening—his commentary is mere background noise.

"But right now," he adds, "right now, she sure looks beautiful!"