

Sébastien Le Page, is enthusiastic about the Snow Polo World Cup St. Moritz. The passionate polo player and Owner of the Polo & Country Club Zurich is also one of the sponsors of the snow polo tournament in St. Moritz.

By Birgit Hügli-Herrmann

Mr. Le Page: Do you remember your first time at the Snow Polo World Cup in St. Moritz?

Yes, actually it was not long ago. To be honest, I only discovered the Engadine three years ago – despite living in Switzerland for over 15 years – and only through opening my restaurant Hato St. Moritz. But once having been there, I fell in love with the location, and have been returning often since. I was very much impressed with the organization and the atmosphere of the snow polo and decided last year to participate in the capital of the company that runs the show. So I am now a shareholder of the Snow Polo World Cup in St. Moritz – albeit a minority one!

St. Moritz is the cradle of the snow polo and has defended its leader position despite numerous other worldwide snow polo events. What makes the tournament in St. Moritz outstanding?

I think first and foremost, it is its historical significance. Polo actually started in Switzerland at the end of the 19th Century in St. Moritz, so St. Moritz has over 125 years of polo history under its belt, which is quite impressive if you think that the first polo club in the world was only founded in 1862. The Snow Polo World Cup was founded in 1985 and has been hugely successful year after year. The beauty of the Engadine Valley adds to the charm, and the fact that you are playing on a frozen lake puts some element of extra danger to what is already a quite dangerous sport. The village of St Moritz itself is a wonderful place for food, shopping and partying, let alone skiing and other alpine treats. So I believe that this cocktail of reasons, along with a flawless organization, makes for a very successful tournament, which is very difficult to beat.

Photo: © Kathrin Gralla



Sébastien Le Page and his charming wife Morgan van Overbroek with 'Mister Polo' Reto Gaudenzi



Interview with Sébastien Le Page, owner of the Hato Restaurants St. Moritz and Zurich

"Snow Polo World Cup St. Moritz is an amazing tournament, which is very difficult to beat"

You are business wise very active on many fronts. One of your projects are the – for fine Asian cuisine well-known – Hato Restaurants in Zurich and St. Moritz. How was the idea born to enter into the restaurant business and what made you focus on Asian cuisine?

When I quit my job to focus on playing polo every day, I thought that the polo scene and the gastronomic scene went very well together. People who like polo tend to like a special type of lifestyle, in which good quality of life is essential. And I thought that a high-end restaurant would be a very good crossover with polo. So I started looking around for a potential place to open a high-end restaurant, and once the location was found in the center of Zurich, the question came of what style of food. Along with my gastronomy consultant Wolf Wagschal, we realized that if you compare Zurich with New York, London, Paris or Dubai, a top level Asian restaurant was missing, despite Zurich being a hub of expats and business travellers. On top of which I love Asian cuisine, so it made it even easier to choose!

So we hired chef Nathan Dallimore who had Asian gastronomy experience in Novikov in Moscow and London, and set up Hato Zurich. Some months later a wonderful location in the center of St. Moritz was up for grabs so we jumped on the occasion and created Hato St. Moritz, which has a slightly different concept than Zurich but with the same flavor. I am very happy with the decisions taken, and with the outstanding results from the two restaurants. Gault & Millaud has awarded Hato 15 points on our second year of opening, and voted Hato third best Asian restaurant in Switzerland. I am very proud of this achievement.

Not only impresses the Hato Restaurant with its outstanding food but also with its interior. Who was the creative brain behind it?

The interior was designed by Ralph Kellenberger from company COCC and coherent AG based in St. Gallen, Switzerland. The design was then nudged by Wolf Wagschal and then approved by myself. I have to say that Ralph did an amazing job of the whole concept. As a result, Hato was awarded the Red Dot Award for 'best international design', and the German Design Award for 'best design'. The paintings that you can see in the restaurant are from famous Swiss artist Dimitri Horta, and mix wonderfully with the design. The corporate identity was designed by Dave Zangger of ALLINK AG.

Hato will 2018 be a sponsor of the Snow Polo World Cup in St. Moritz. What made you decide to enter that sponsoring?

Hato is a sponsor of the Snow Polo World Cup in St. Moritz since last year. However, we do not cater at the event itself, we are a partner, which means that the polo players and sponsors come to eat and party at the restaurant, so in that sense we cater, but we are not at the event itself. If you want to mix with famous polo players or international stars, come for dinner at Hato St. Moritz!

To what delicacies from the Hato kitchen can guests look forward to?

Hato is a little peculiar in Asian gastronomy as it does not focus on one region alone. We have dished from China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, with a zest of Australian, Indian and Western touches mixed. Our most requested dish is the Crispy Aromatic Duck Salad – which we can also do in a vegan style. By the way, as I am gluten intolerant, I make sure than we cater for all types of allergies and choices, so if you are coeliac or vegan, you will still find dishes for you in Hato. The sushi and sashimi are excellent, both in traditional and New Style. We also make very tasty hand made Dim Sum, and the Rock Shrimp Tempura is very much liked as well. Another favourite is the Yuzu scented Miso Black Cod. Many different types of fish and fresh seafood are then best enjoyed when the sea is so far away! Also, Chef Nathan Dallimore being a New Zealander, the grilled meats are always an experience. Finally a dessert from our kitchen will amaze you because people rarely eat desserts in Asian restaurants, but the creativity of our pastry chef Patrick Reiterer is truly mind-boggling.

Do you picture yourself playing with a team at the Snow Polo World Cup in St. Moritz in the near future?

It is a real possibility, and I have been invited already more than once, but I need to train more, my level is not really there yet, as this is quite a high-level tournament. And I need to have some experience of snow polo at a lower level before competing in the World Cup. I always believe you need to learn how to walk before you can try running!

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