

Champagne & hightea



Seduced by the heady mix of equine and ethereal opulence at the Magic Millions Carnival, Merissa Borg reveals where purveyors of haute couture will be found in early January.

The Marina Mirage

There is something to be said about the unique experience which is the Magic Millions Carnival. Whether you're attending purely for the horse flesh, the social aspect or a bit of both, the ideal Gold Coast destination of sun, beaches and shopping plays a relaxed yet equally luxurious host to this iconic affair. So even if a good eye for a horse is not in the repertoire, albeit the discussion of conformation versus pedigree, there is still the opportunity to pick a winner, even if it is the two-legged variety!

The annual summer carnival has evolved into more than just an internationally ranked yearling sale and first-class race for 2YOs. The social element of the carnival boasts an array of significant fashion events and parties, the sea-side backdrop adding a casual yet opulent feel that cannot be replicated. This annual celebration of sorts blends the soiree of racing, fashion, parties, dining and entertainment, exposing the unique atmosphere of local offerings. There has been a great history of local support behind the carnival which continues to grow each year, and it remains a welcomed boost to the economy.


It certainly attracts a wide genre of people, from celebrities and racing personalities, models, sporting identities and cashed up party-buffs all vying for a piece of the action. The fashion awards themselves are a platform for showcasing designers both local and up and coming, as well as individual fashionistas, culminating in all the glitz and glamour of the events calendar. This year will see over 40 associated events staged during the 18 day carnival, attracting both locals and visitors alike. The fashion events will be headed by local Gold Coast girl and Olympic gold winning tri-athlete Emma Snowsill, who has the honour of being the face of 2009 for the inaugural

fashion awards and social events calendar. She is a great choice for the ambassadorial role, her sporting career paralleled with that of a Gr1-winning filly, representing an equal capacity for athleticism.

The fashion awards will incorporate a wide range of events including the best dressed category for both men and women, rivalling the southern states with both exceptional style and distinctive couture. The events will comprise of a charity ball, high tea, cocktail parties and fine dining along with the awards' selection and preview events.

The award winning Absynthe restaurant will host 'Ladies of Luxury', a stunning fashion event celebrating the arrival of the 2009 Magic Millions Carnival. Guests will enjoy champagne cocktails on arrival, and a sumptuous two course luncheon specially prepared by award winning, 2 Michelin Star chef, Meyjitte Boughenout. Exquisite millinery, lingerie and South Sea pearls will be presented in an intimate and sophisticated atmosphere.

The Marina Mirage, a shopping experience of lavish indulgence, houses award-winning restaurants, designer boutiques, top fashion labels, as well as an abundance of specialty stores with a unique collection of home wares, artwork and gifts to please even the most fastidious buyer. The impressive waterfront location overlooking the beautiful Broadwater will play host to a fashion awards selection event at centre stage, highlighting the latest trends, labels, designers and elegant racing couture. These are just some of the luxurious events on offer throughout the carnival.

So while the champagne lifestyle and fashion awards will be far from the thoughts of diehard punters and serious buying moguls, there will still be plenty of emphasis placed on the best-dressed filly of the carnival. 



Hats & High Tea, Suzanne Messara

“The annual celebration blends the soiree of racing, fashion, parties, dining & entertainment.”



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Fashion Tips for Magic Millions Racing Carnival

A regular at Magic Millions each year, staff writer **Merissa Borg** knows what to look for in a filly both on the track and off. She caught up with Angelic Cooke from personal styling specialist Madaboochoo about how to look your best on race day.



“The warmth of the sunshine state triggers more flowing designs & flowers, perfect for that romantic feel.”



The Magic Millions Carnival is as renowned for its fashions as it is for its horses. Well-groomed fillies converge on the sunshine state every summer for this inaugural event, soaking up all the glamour and prestige of the Magic Millions Fashion Awards and the accompanying social events. So while there will be important inspections going on over at the sale complex, so, too, attention to detail will be all-important on the fashion front.

Madaboochoo offers a full range of services including a head-to-toe personal styling service for any occasion. The Madaboochoo website features predominantly race wear, including shoes, headwear, jewellery, and of course clothing. Catering for a very wide range of client from ages 18-50, Cooke comments: “Our style is classy, a little quirky at times, but also lends itself to a vintage feel.”

Madaboochoo pride themselves on their high standard of customer service alongside their ability to create a personally styled outfit at any budget with the click of a finger. There is a choice of outfits off the rack as well as one-off exclusive pieces made especially for the individual.

When choosing a personally styled outfit Cooke says, “I start with choosing a few dresses that they like, requesting a photo so I can see their colouring and body shape then we put together different outfits from this.” According to Cooke, once the dress is chosen it is important to add the accessories like a headpiece, bag and jewellery. Wearing something that suits your personal style, compliments your body shape and is comfortable is an essential fashion tip. Keep this in mind whether choosing a simple, elegant frock, frills or a loud print.

There is a debate between classic race wear and the emergence of a modern ‘fashion forward’ style, as well as criticism of certain apparel which has emerged over recent years. Whether you’re a fan of one or the other, it comes down to elegance and glamour with

well-appointed style that creates the unique approach to race day fashion. Cooke reveals, “You can wear any style you like at the moment, from suiting to a vintage style dress. It is more about a theme or particular look that you would like to achieve.”

This season the fashion trend is based on romance, showcasing feminine style through florals and colour. According to Cooke, blue is popular this season, so too is pink or anything bright and bold. Get the look with small floral prints and soft lines or glam it up with a large floral pattern and an A-line cut. The trend can be transposed to fit the modern ensemble or a 50s inspired look. Cooke advises that another trend that has come through strongly this spring is black and white together or black with white accessories.

One tip to remember is that some outfits were never meant to grace race day fashions, so avoid tight short dresses, Lycra, evening wear and sequins. Also, choose one printed piece and be careful not to clash or overdo prints and colours.

Remember, the key is femininity.

Classic elegance requires a decent length to the hemline and it is essential to have a hat or fascinator. The must-have survival kit includes make up and powder for touch ups, plus bobby pins, bandaids and party feet.

Of course, Magic Millions fashion is different to Melbourne’s Spring Carnival. The cooler weather of the latter evokes more long

sleeves and tailored styles, while the warmth of the sunshine state triggers more flowing designs and flowers, perfect for that romantic feel. Race day fashion styles do change every year, according to Cooke, who notes: “Fads are usually inspired by a particular era that then have a certain twist added to the style that brings it up to date or gives it a more modern point of view.” So if keeping fresh with this season’s race fashions is a high priority, why not enlist the services of a personal stylist and enjoy all the glamour that is the Magic Millions Carnival. ✨



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