

TDNA



Walter von Kanel

With its name tied in with such prestigious racing events as the Longines Hong Kong International races, the Prix de Diane Longines, the Kentucky Derby, Royal Ascot and the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, luxury watch company Longines has become one of the most visible brands in racing worldwide. Lucas Marquardt sat down with Walter von Kanel, President of Longines, to discuss the company's involvement in racing, including some recently announced sponsorships.

LM: Treve recently shaved two seconds off the course record when winning the Longines Prix de Diane. Do we think she was trying to impress Longines in the hopes of becoming its next ambassador?

WV: As official timekeeper of the Chantilly racecourse for the third year, we were indeed very excited. The 2013 edition of the Prix de Diane Longines was amazing.

LM: Longines has become the preeminent sponsor of flat racing in the world. What makes Thoroughbred racing a good match for Longines?

WV: Longines has a long tradition in the field of equestrian sports. Its commitment actually dates back to 1878, with the production of a chronograph engraved with a jockey and his mount. This model was seen on the racetracks in 1881 and was extremely popular among jockeys and horse lovers. So it is pretty much a logical choice. Moreover, both Longines and horse racing share the values of performance, tradition and elegance.

LM: On June 16, you announced a long-term partnership between the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) and Longines, wherein Longines will sponsor the IFHA's World's Best Racehorses Rankings. Is the idea to tie the best in horse racing to the best in watchmaking? [Click here.](#)

WV: This partnership is, in a way, an obvious next step for our involvement in equestrian sports. Beginning this year, we have signed a long-term agreement with the FEI [Federation Equestre Internationale]. The partnership with the IFHA confirms our commitment to horseracing.

LM: In April, Longines and Churchill Downs announced a five-year sponsorship deal for the Kentucky Oaks. Were you able to make this year's Oaks?

WV: No, unfortunately I haven't been able to go to Churchill Downs this year. We have a lot of events throughout the world, and as it is important for me to work closely with all of our markets, I travel a lot. But I definitely have to go there once!

LM: Are you a fan of horse racing?

WV: I really like horses and I appreciate the tension we can feel while watching the races. And as it is a very elegant sport, true to Longines slogan, "Elegance is an attitude," I do like it very much.

LM: Of the overseas racecourses (that is, overseas for we Americans) you've visited, do you have any favorites? Are there any races or events in particular that Longines sponsors that you'd recommend to American race fans?

WV: Every racecourse has its own specificities, its own atmosphere. I would recommend the Prix de Diane Longines at Chantilly and the Royal Meeting at Ascot racecourse for those who love to combine elegance with action; the Grand Prix Longines Lydia Tesio in October at Capannelle racecourse in Rome for those who would like to enjoy the Roman sun, and in November the Longines Hong Kong International races at Sha Tin racecourse in Hong Kong.

LM: Have you ever owned a racehorse? If not, any interest?

WV: No, I have never owned one. But I grew up on a farm and had some horses, but not of the same kind, of course.

LM: Give us some fashion tips--what's your favorite Longines watch style?

WV: Above all, I love classical watches. I cannot choose one favorite Longines watch, as I am very involved in the product development. But currently, I wear a model of the latest collection, Conquest Classic - a chronograph in gold with a black dial. I like its sporty, yet elegant design.

Photos Courtesy Longines