

TDNQA

CARTER CARNEGIE, CAPUCINE HOUEL & ELAINE HATTON: DESTINATION EUROPE

In late February, it was announced that the promotional bodies of racing in Britain, Ireland and France—Great British Racing International, Irish



Thoroughbred Marketing and the French Racing & Breeding Committee—would join forces to create a strategic alliance aimed at attracting global

investment in the European racing and bloodstock industry, and in promoting Europe as the premier region to both source and race top-class horses. The alliance was recently dubbed 'Destination Europe'. The *TDN's* Kelsey Riley sat down with the heads of the three organizations—Carter Carnegie (GBRI), Elaine Hatton (ITM) and Capucine Houel (FRBC) to get the scoop on the creation and goals of Destination Europe, and what initiatives they have in store.

KR: When was the idea first proposed, and can you explain how it was developed and ultimately put into action?

Hatton: When Carter started [with Great British Racing International] in September, he brought it to the table while we were meeting at Keeneland. For me, the first seeds were sown really in September of last year when Carter spoke to me.

Houel: I heard from Carter in October. It took quite a while for the French people to decide, so we were the last to say yes, and that was in January.

Carnegie: I think it was an idea that a lot of people had floated in the past, as to how the three groups could work together, and I was just fortunate enough with my Breeders' Cup ties to have worked with ITM and the FRBC in the past, so we were able to create some connections and have a very frank dialogue that allowed us to sit around the table collectively and come up with the right deal.

KR: Where is the funding for Destination Europe coming from?

Hatton: Each organization will be contributing to essential funds, and we'll be working from that. We're starting off small and we'll see where we go from there.

Carnegie: [Destination Europe] is open to anyone in Europe who wants to participate. It's an open door policy, so they can join our efforts if they want to. At this point in time, any other country or breeding association [in Europe] is welcome to join us and take part in this effort.



Carter Carnegie
Racing Post

KR: Have you had interest from any other European countries?

Carnegie: Yes.

KR: Will the Arc, British Champions Day, and the recently announced Irish Champions Weekend be promoted as a series?

Carnegie: Those three race meetings operate separately, and our efforts right now have nothing tied to those weekends in terms of creating a series or anything like that, although I think we will use our respective race meetings and other big weekends throughout the year to showcase the value of racing in our respective countries.

Hatton: Those three race meetings are an example of what Europe has to offer, and we'll be utilizing the fixtures there as an example of what Europe has to offer, and the synchronization of the three countries for people coming from



Capucine Houel
FRBC.fr

outside Europe. If they're coming to Ireland, we'd encourage them to get a flight to France and go to the Arc, and then really encourage them to travel to England and get the full experience of European racing. We will be encouraging what the whole of Europe has to offer.

Houel: We'll use those races to show international owners that the most prestigious races are held in Europe, and of the need to own and race horses in Europe.

KR: Is the main aim of Destination Europe to retain European based horses, or to encourage international participation?

Hatton: It will be both, really. You're trying to get international investments into Europe, and obtain the people we have here, and just emphasize that it is a great place to come racing.

KR: You seem to be emphasizing the idea of getting people to go racing in Europe. Will there be marketing efforts focused on that?

Carnegie: I think we want to promote both our racing and breeding. A lot of our outreach effort is design to get people from outside of Europe to come experience us as the first step into considering whether this is the right place for them to buy and race horses, or buy horses to take back to their home. It really just provides a gateway to all those opportunities. A lot of people have interests in their home countries, but they also have horses in training in Europe, and so this is really creating that message for people to introduce them to those kinds of opportunities. We're really advocating for that area to grow.

KR: How much of the Destination Europe initiative will be focused on racing, and how much on the breeding and sales sides of the industry?

Hatton: I think they go hand-in-hand, and there are a lot of stories to be told, whether it's about where the horse is bred, or the trainer being based in Europe. We'll take every opportunity we have to promote Europe and they'll come hand-in-hand, I believe.

Carnegie: I agree. A lot of what we're doing is going to be message-based, and we have some very positive messages with regards to breeding. With the racing, I think the calendar will dictate what we're going to do.

KR: Obviously ITM, GBRI and the FRBC will continue to work separately on independent projects. Do you see a conflict of interests arising? If so, how will they be resolved?

Houel: It's for all of our benefit to work together on the marketing. It'll be more efficient. The International buyers that come to the sales in Europe are used to traveling from country to country, so it's going to be the same, we'll just make it easier for them to travel from one country to another, and then they can decide where they want to go.

Hatton: I don't see any conflict at all arising. It's promoting Europe. ITM will be working hard to promote our own individual sales and the sales companies will do their own work as well. We'll continue to do our marketing how we always have done, and this is just an added arm.

With regards to conflicts, from day one we've had a clear and open discussion between the three parties. We need the agreement of all three parties before an advertisement or event takes place, so there's no reason for a conflict to take place. So we'll always be in agreement in terms of what we do, and we've found it very easy so far to come to agreements in terms of logos, events and advertising templates. We've been extremely harmonious, because we all want the same thing.

Carnegie: The way we've designed it is really, as Elaine pointed out, an atmosphere where we're having a lot of conversations together and sharing our points of view, so to date we've been successful in being able to have an open communication. This is the early steps in trying to forge a really meaningful marketing platform, and so far it's been working really well.

KR: What will be some of the first initiatives or projects we will see from Destination Europe?

Carnegie: To start with this year, it's really going to be just rolling out the brand and doing messaging in specific markets about Destination Europe. We're also going to look at doing some events; this year we're looking at the possibility of doing an event at Royal Ascot under the Destination Europe brand. But I think going forward we'd look at doing more events outside of Europe under the one common brand.

Hatton: Destination Europe will be a platform to promote, at the moment, the three associations on a contacts base. So if you have someone from Australia wanting to come to Europe, it'll be easily accessible who they want to contact, whether they want to go to France first, then England and Ireland. So it's promoting our three countries under one banner. So as Carter said, Destination Europe highlights to the world who the contacts are in the relevant countries. It's promoting a destination for racing and also highlighting the strength of European pedigrees, and under that arm that's what our aim is to do. It's not to promote any individual aspects, whether it be racecourses or sales or events. We're happy if we can get international people to come to Europe and experience European racing as opposed to other continents. I think the benefits will be for our trainers and our breeders in Europe, and it'll be a global advertising campaign for those individuals.

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Note: a landing site has been created for Destination Europe at www.destinationeurope.com. It currently serves as a platform to the three committees, and will be developed further at a later stage.