

XCEPTIONAL

THE BT3-MILLION KNOCK-ABOUT

The King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament again shows its value to conservation



CARL, Anna and Yoanna



CHIN and Oliviero Bottinelli



CHARLES Richelmann of the New Zealand All Blacks, Paul Stitt, Raj Kalaan and Robin Brooke.



ELEPHANT POLO for a good cause brings together, from left, Hua Hin Deputy Mayor Suwit Hrenrungrueng, Tourism Authority Governor Suraphon Svetasreni, Bill Heinecke, Mayor Jira Phongphaiboon and Dillip Rajakarier.

THE NATION

Last month's King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament involved a lot of tottering fun atop tuskers, but its charity dinner at the Anantara Hua Hin also raised Bt3.1 million to help both domesticated and wild elephants in Thailand.

Attending the gala dinner were supermodels Cindy Bishop and Lookade Kingpayome, singers Krisada Clapp and Yuyee, Tourism Authority chief Suraphon Svetasreni, Swiss Ambassador Christine Schraner Burgener,

Oliviero Bottinelli of Audemars Piguet and Bill Heinecke of Minor International.

The tournament saw 12 teams from around the world competing in the royal seaside town, at Hua Hin's Suriyothai Army base. There were plenty of memorable moments both on and off the pitch.

Always expanding in popularity, the King's Cup – now in its 10th year – has gone from a



PRINCESS ANNA, Robin Lourvanig and Princess Yoanna



THE AUDEMARS PIGUET TEAM: Captain Peter Prentice, Oliviero Bottinelli, Bill Heinecke, Angad Kalaan and Uday Kalaan

two-day affair with six teams to a full week's extravaganza with twice as many squads from four continents.

More than 50 players were involved this year, including Prince Carl-Eugen, Princess Anna and Princess Yoanna Oettingen-Wallerstein of Germany and Robin Brooke

and Charles Riechelmann of New Zealand's All Blacks rugby team.

"I heard about the elephant polo and thought it must be exciting and I wanted to play myself," Prince Carl-Eugen said.

"Having played horse polo, I found it very challenging! But the most important thing is to raise money for a good cause. That's my main goal for being here."

The beneficiary was Anantara's charitable wing, the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation. Some of the animals it's rescued from city streets live comfortably in a camp at the Anantara Golden Triangle Resort & Spa.

The tournament raises enough money to care for 24 more young

elephants during the two weeks of the event, in a forest environment with nurturing food and veterinary check-ups.

The funds raised also support research and clinics for children with autism, for the first elephant hospital in southern Thailand, and for a project addressing the human-elephant conflict.

The foundation and Elephant Conservation Network maintain a wildlife reserve in Kanchanaburi, where the migration of wild elephants is impaired by the creation of new water reservoirs.

And the two agencies are assisting research into parasite cross-contamination between cattle and wild elephants in the western province. The Anantara Elephant



CHAMPION Angad Kalaan with his wife



TIM BODA and Swiss Ambassador Christine Schraner Burgener

Camp has already developed inoculations to protect elephants from buffalo parasites.

Find out more at www.Anantara.com and www.AnantaraElephantPolo.com.

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