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Ascot: The History



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Synopsis

Ascot: The History, written with the full cooperation of the Ascot Authority and with access to the Royal Archives, Weatherbys, and the Jockey Club, is the official history of the world’s most famous racecourse. For almost three centuries, the very word Ascot has been synonymous with royalty, elegance, high fashion, and style-and with the world’s finest racehorses battling for some of the Turf’s most prestigious prizes. Established in 1711 by Queen Anne in an open space in Windsor Forest, the course has come to represent the sport of racing itself through the reigns of twelve monarchs. Above all, the history of Ascot resonates with the names of the many outstanding horses that, over the years, have graced its turf and established its reputation. Here are the eighteenth-century legends Eclipse and Gimcrack; the twentieth-century giants Ribot, Nijinsky, Shergar, and Dubai Millennium; Arkle, the supreme steeplechaser; and the best-loved Ascot horse of all, Brown Jack. And with the great horses are linked the great jockeys, including Steve Donoghue, Gordon Richards, Lester Piggott, and Frankie Dettori, whose "Magnificent Seven" winners at Ascot in 1996 remains one of the greatest feats of jockeyship in the racecourse’s history. At once enormously readable and authoritative, Ascot: The History is rich in character, detail, and anecdote and is lavishly illustrated throughout. Exciting, illuminating, and entertaining, it is the book for all who love the sport of Kings and Queens.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Wonderful book, arrived in great condition! Listed as Good condition, but I’d give it Very Good!

A fascinating and in dept story of the origins and evolution of the great British racetrack known as Ascot. My only quibbles would have been more details (but I'm OCD that way), and perhaps more illustrations, but those are minor.

It is perfect!! I was very pleased with my purchase.

A beautiful book on one of the worlds greatest racing meets. The photos really help you live the experience of being there.

Sir Peter O'Sulleven claims, in the foreword to this book, that Ascot is the most famous racecourse in the world. Whether it is or not, it has established itself as one of the most important racecourses in Britain over the past 200 years.Ascot's history begins almost 300 years ago, in 1711, but took a long time to establish itself. Documentation of the early history is incomplete - for example, the result of the first race staged there is not known, although a list of all the horses competing was preserved. Apparently, the person who was supposed to record the result didn't turn up to see the race. Such modest beginnings contrast sharply with what Ascot later became.This book, written with the co-operation of the royal family, explains their role down the years. You are not left in any doubt which kings and queens enjoyed horse racing and which ones were uninterested.Ascot only really started to blossom in the reign of King George III, who was the subject of the movie The madness of King George. The king was not interested in horse racing, but his son the Prince Regent was, and it was he (who eventually became King George IV) who made Ascot into a major racecourse, which it has remained ever since. The prince was also responsible for beginning all the pageantry that has now become part of the Ascot scene every June.Despite the royal patronage and the fashions, ultimately it is the racing that most of us are really interested in. Many champion racehorses have competed at Ascot and their exploits are given plenty of coverage. Although not a champion in the true sense of the word, Brown Jack was a very popular horse in the 1920's and a whole chapter is devoted to his exploits.The King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes was inaugurated in 1951 and has now become Ascot's most prestigious race. Run at the end of July, it has been won by some great champions including Ribot, Nijinsky, Mill Reef, Brigadier Gerard, Dahlia (twice), Shergar, Dancing Brave, Lammtarra, Swain (twice), Daylami and Galileo. Plenty of coverage is given to this great race, including the exciting finish in which Grundy beat Bustino.Traditionally, the Gold Cup was Ascot's most prestigious race. Staged on the Thursday of the royal meeting in June,

it is run over two and a half miles. It is still a race worth winning, but despite some popular winners such as Sagaro (who won three Gold Cups) and Double Trigger, this race is not particularly important these days. In the nineteenth century, horses who won the Epsom Derby as three-year-olds sometimes ran in the Gold Cup as older horses. They did not always win, but many did, notably Isinglass, the Triple Crown winner of 1893, as a five-year-old in 1895. No modern Epsom Derby winner would attempt to win the Gold Cup; the last one to try was the 1969 winner, Blakeney. The Gold Cup is given plenty of coverage in the book.Ascot has also seen plenty of champion milers, including Brigadier Gerard, Kris, Rose Bowl, Warning and Dubai Millennium, while steeplechasing and hurdling also get coverage. Desert Orchid won eight times there, including his thrilling victory over Panto Prince in the 1989 Victor Chandler.A chapter is devoted to the extraordinary day in 1996 when Frankie Dettori rode all seven winners, a feat unlikely to be matched in my lifetime.This is a magnificent book, well worth the price, which tells you everything you need to know (up to the time of publication) about one of the greatest racecourses in the world.

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