



# Aussies Take The Spoils On Penang's Big Sprint Trophy Day



A welcome banner Penang style



BY KATRINA PARTRIDGE

Malaysian racing is, in many ways, unique in Asia. It is a predominantly Muslim country (60% of the population ethnic Malay Muslims. Ethnic Chinese and Indian Buddhists, Christians and Hindus constitute the remainder). Islam, which forbids gambling, provides the political backdrop. Only non Muslims can gamble, and then only on horse racing and lotteries. Although the Malaysian Racing Authority ("MRA") has an office in Kuala Lumpur, the head office is in a separate country (Singapore).

The MRA consists of four clubs: the Singapore Turf Club ("STC"), and three Malaysian turf clubs (Selangor Turf Club, Perak Turf Club, and Penang Turf Club.) Races are conducted on Friday evenings in Singapore and both weekend afternoons in both Singapore and Malaysia. Historically racing in Singapore and Malaysia rotated between the 4 clubs: Penang, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore. Unlike the STC which is owned by the Singapore Totalisator Board (a statutory board controlled by the Ministry for

Finance), due to various religious and socio-political reasons the four clubs in Malaysia are private members' associations.

Malaysia's distinct religious and cultural differentiators have greatly impacted the public positioning of the sport, and the industry has also struggled in recent years with problems associated with illegal bookmaking and reduced public confidence in the sport's integrity. The issues have been compounded by Singapore raising average stakes money which has allowed it to attract a higher quality of horse. As a result it has been some years since a Malaysian horse has been invited to compete in a major race outside the MRA circuit.

It has been disease that has posed some of the biggest challenges to the country's racing however. Singapore imposed a ban on the movement of horses from Malaysia to Singapore following the outbreak of the Nipah virus in Malaysia in 1999. There have also been more recent issues with strangles. Malaysia has therefore largely been left on its own. PTO



In the mounting yard

## Aussies Take The Spoils On Penang's Big Sprint Trophy Day (cont)

In an attempt to rebuild the cross-Straits races, the Totalisator Board of Malaysia has recently granted RMS4.2million to the three Malaysian clubs to assist them in building the Singapore government mandated isolation stables that will allow cross-border racing to recommence.

Dato Teh Choon Beng (recently conferred

the title of Dato Seri for his contributions to the racing and tourism industry) is considered a legend in Malaysian racing having been crowned champion trainer 13 times, and earning the world record for the greatest number of winners saddled on one day for the same owner (7). He is also a prominent committee man of the Penang Turf

Club and has worked tirelessly to attract new owners to the sport and to raise the profile of Malaysian racing internationally.

I was fortunate enough to be an invited guest of Dato Seri Teh Choon Beng and the Penang Turf Committee at Penang Turf Club's recent Sprint Trophy Meeting.

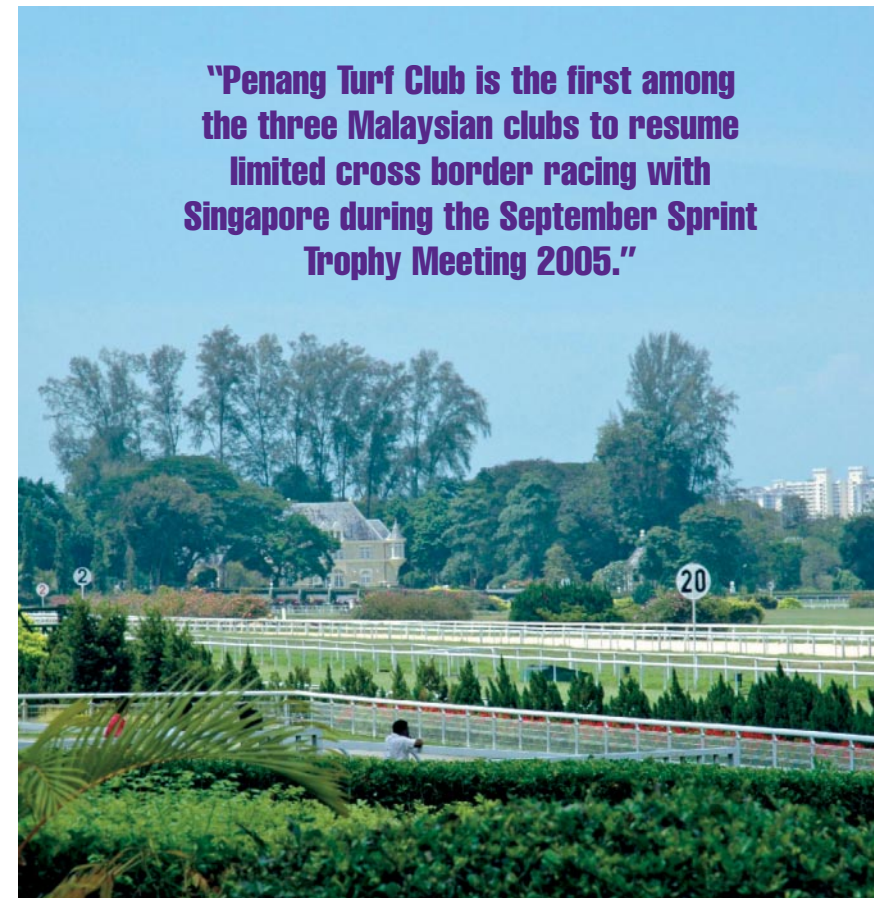
The Meeting was significant well beyond



Dato Teh Choon Beng is a legend



Horse, jockey & owner are always proud when they win in Penang



**"Penang Turf Club is the first among the three Malaysian clubs to resume limited cross border racing with Singapore during the September Sprint Trophy Meeting 2005."**

its blue ribbon event – the (Malaysian Group 1) RMS1,000,000 Sprint Trophy; the weekend celebrated the resumption of cross-border racing with Singapore; the racing was televised; a large number of international guests from as far as Australia, South Africa and the United Kingdom were in attendance, and an impressive number of international sponsors supported the races.

"Penang Turf Club is the first among the three Malaysian clubs to resume limited cross border racing with Singapore during the September Sprint Trophy Meeting 2005," Teh said. "Hopefully, this will be the beginning of more cross border races to follow so that our races can be more exciting, competitive and colourful."

Australia's historical relationship with Malaysia was no more evident than in the sheer number of Australian horses that constituted the two-day race card. Of the 10 races on Saturday 10 September, Australian-bred horses won six of them; on Sunday 11/9 Australian-bred horses won eight of the 10 races (and scooped the trifecta in 6 of them!).

Australian race sponsors included Dawson Stud, Clear Mountain Fairview, William Inglis & Son, Magic Millions, Mitavite, Western Australian Turf Club and Wadham Park.

The sprint was won by Jeram New Village (Faltaat-Encarta) which was bred by Widden Stud.

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