

By

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Nothing Shocking about huge Coast celebrations

The heels were kicking up on and off the track at a spectacular, sun-soaked 2009 Melbourne Cup meeting at the Gold Coast Turf Club.

While Shocking, jockey Corey Brown and trainer Mark Kavanagh raised the roof at Flemington with their stunning breakthrough win, high fashion dominated the function rooms, marquees and lawns of the Coast club.

A bumper crowd of over 11,000 filed through the gates to take in all the excitement of the time-honoured Melbourne Spring Racing Carnival feature event and a full eight-race program of local racing under cloudless skies.

"It was a classic Gold Coast Melbourne Cup event," said Turf Club acting CEO Kevin Ahrens.

"The brilliant weather brought with it a huge crowd and a sensational vibe around the track...incredibly upbeat and probably one of the happiest, relaxed crowds we've seen," he said.

Mr Ahrens said a number of recently renovated club facilities passed their first real test with flying colours.

"The upgraded members facilities and bar areas worked magnificently today and our no-glass policy in the public areas was another huge success," he said.

Punters en masse headed trackside from 9am to enjoy the live racing and the

interstate coverage on the big screens. A steady stream of people came through the gates right up until the Melbourne Cup runners were at the barriers.

In the Fashions on the Field stakes, judges Chloe Maxwell, Mat Rogers, Jade Sutcliffe and Jay Pask had their work cut out selecting winners in the categories of best dressed female, best dressed male and most fashionable hat.

And as it turned out, the winner of the best dressed lady on course was a real traffic stopper.

Brisbane 25-year-old Jacqui MacArthur spied her Principessa silver pleated dress while waiting in a traffic jam at Fortitude Valley.

"I saw it, I knew it was fate and I pulled up straight away and bought it," Jacqui said.

The debutante winner combined the dress with a purple floral Morgan and Taylor fascinator, purple gloves and shoes to take home gifts from the Surfers Paradise Marriott, Dr LeWinn's, Watermark Hotel, Esteem Day Spa, Roses Only, Star Shots and hundreds of dollars of other prizes and fashion gift vouchers.

Melbourne holidaymaker Christina Cainday (24) took out the best hat category, wearing a black feather and net fascinator she bought "on a whim" at Marina Mirage.

The best dressed male was Tom White

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from the Isle of Capri who scored hundreds of dollars of prizes by going 'family retro'.

The 23-year-old solicitor combined a grey suit custom-made in Singapore with his father's 1962 vintage tweed tie, some comfortable black Julius Marlow shoes and wire-framed Dita 'Midnight Special' shades from the Sunglass Shop.

Barely had the final race been run when Turf Club attentions turned to January's Magic Millions Carnival.

"We've just released our dining packages and bookings are already coming in thick and fast," Mr Ahrens said.

"We start with the iconic Goldmarket Raceday on Friday, January 1, we head into Ladies Day on Saturday, January 2 and then all stops are out for the 2010 Magic Millions Raceday on Saturday, January 9.

"The packages include the Corporate Chalet which offers private functions for up to 40 guests, two-day packages in the Skyline Gold and some sensational hospitality in the Emporium Marquee, Trackside Village and Magic Millions Lounge, to name but a few.

"Our advice is for anyone considering booking for any of those racedays, that they get in and do so quickly," Mr Ahrens said.

Bookings can be made by calling the club on 07 5538 1599. ●



The Gold Coast kicked up their heels in true Melbourne Cup style for the race that stops a nation Fullframe photo