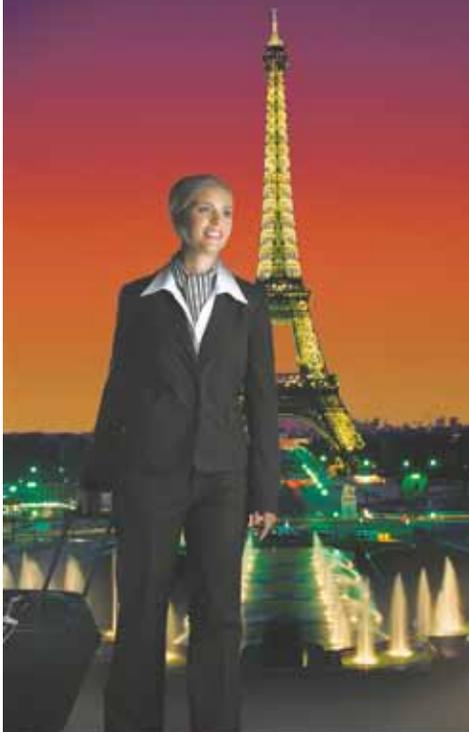


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# Ready to race

Alex Bernard interviews leading trainer Rob Heathcote about his Brisbane Racing Carnival preparations

**A**ward-winning race horse trainer Rob Heathcote has the best office in Brisbane. It's in the St Leger stand at Eagle Farm. I arrive before sunrise for track work and it is a crisp autumn morning; I can see the horses' hot breath steaming as they trot past after a run, their fuchsia saddlecloths emblazoned with the RH initials. Sitting at the 200m mark, Rob has his laptop on to write his blog and his mobile is at his fingertips. The racing channel blares on an old transistor radio.

These are essential tools for the trainer of superstar horses Woorim and Buffering.

"I email my owners updates before and after races, keep them informed how their horse is doing, send photos, keep

them involved in all aspects of what I'm doing. They love it! Buffering, for example, has connections ranging from professional sportsmen to blue collar workers. Racing is far more accessible to people from all walks of life now, not just the wealthy," he says.

Heathcote's mobile rings constantly during our conversation with track riders across the racecourse asking for additional instructions. The excitement about the upcoming Brisbane Racing Carnival is building.

"The carnival is brilliant. The course always looks great, the weather is perfect. We race every week of the year but it's Brisbane's chance to shine for eight weeks. We take centre stage, Buffering will be a

main player," says Heathcote.

He is buoyed by the number of people coming back to the track in recent times.

"There's no doubt that Black Caviar has been great for racing, marketing gold in fact! That horse, which I believe is the best horse in the world, has put racing on the back and the front page. Australians love a hero and that's certainly the case with Black Caviar. Now when I look around at race meetings I see people of all ages leaning over the railing of the mounting yard. It's fantastic," he says.

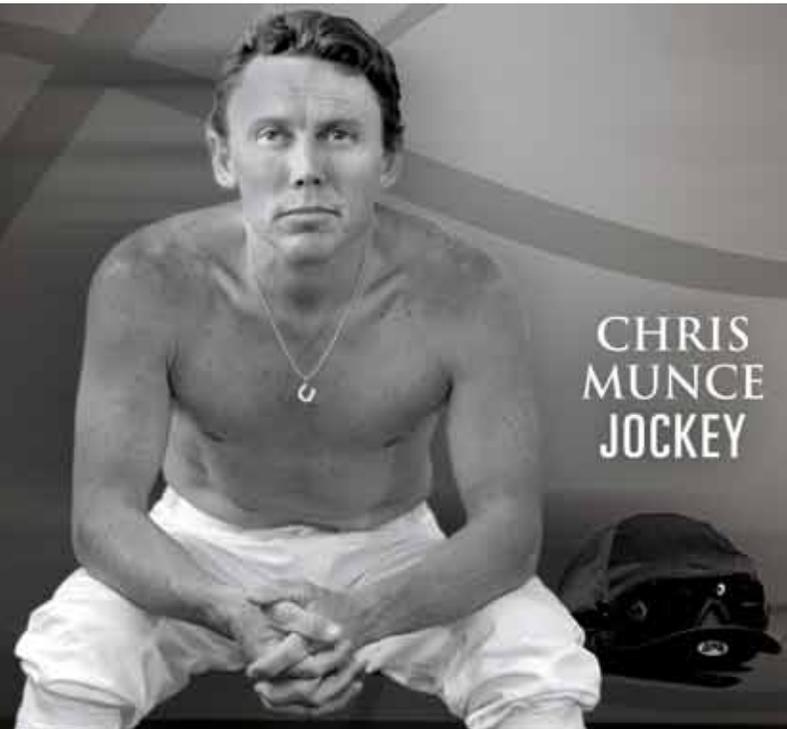
"Australians also love their racing...you wait and see how successful the carnival will be this year. I reckon they'll get the biggest crowds in years."

## Fashions on the Field events

DATE	EVENT	CATAGORY
Saturday 12 May	Racefest feat. the Group 1 Bundaberg Distilling Co. BTC Cup	Westfield Chermside Fashions on the Field Viewer's Choice
Saturday 19 May	Kirks Doomben Cup Day	Westfield Chermside Fashions on the Field Family Category
Saturday 26 May	Carlton Mid Doomben 10,000 Day	Westfield Chermside Fashions on the Field Couples Category
Saturday 2 June	Treasury Casino Queensland Oaks Ladies' Day	David Jones Fashions on the Field Womenswear
Saturday 9 June	AAMI Stradbroke Day	David Jones Fashions on the Field Open to Men and Women



"The Carnival is my chance to take centre stage"



CHRIS  
MUNCE  
JOCKEY