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Will New Zealand take the 1964 Melbourne Cup again?

Fine Asian, Australian & European Arts & Design
Auction in Sydney 24 October 2017

Sotheby's Australia to auction the 1964 Melbourne Cup won by 'Polo Prince'



The 1964 Melbourne Cup presentation. From left: The Governor General, William Sidney, 1st Viscount De L'Isle, Sir Murray Tyrrell, co-owner Mrs Edna Davis holding the Cup, trainer John Carter, 'Polo Prince', jockey Ron Taylor, and Syd McGreal from New Zealand. Flemington Racecourse, Melbourne, Victoria, 1964. Image News Ltd / Newspix

Sotheby's Australia is honoured to be entrusted with the sale of the 1964 Melbourne Cup won by New Zealand horse *Polo Prince*. Held in a private Queensland collection since 1999, the 1964 Melbourne Cup was presented by the Governor General, William Sidney, 1st Viscount De L'Isle, to Mrs Edna Davis, co-owner of *Polo Prince*. The Cup will be auctioned by Sotheby's Australia on 24 October 2017 in Sydney with an estimate of \$70,000-90,000.

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A crowd of 85,000 braved bleak weather conditions to watch *Polo Prince* win the 1964 Melbourne Cup; onlookers included Dawn Fraser, who had won gold at the Olympics of the same year in Tokyo. *Polo Prince* entered the race at odds of 12/1, though in the lead up to Cup eve, punters backed him at over 20/1. It was an outstanding victory, as the gelding won by a length-and-a-quarter and was within a tenth-of-a-second of breaking the race record. *Polo Prince* became the eighth New Zealand horse in the previous thirteen years to win the Melbourne Cup.

Originally destined to be a hurdler due to his temperament, *Polo Prince's* trainer, John Carter, saw potential for flat races. Carter, encouraged by the six-year-old's performance during the two mile Auckland Cup in January 1964, decided to prepare *Polo Prince* for the

Melbourne Cup of the same year. *Polo Prince's* co-owner, Laurie Davis was known as 'Lucky' due to an extremely successful TAB bet, a lottery win, and his overall good fortune on the racecourse. He bred *Polo Prince* on a small property outside of Auckland that he had acquired with winnings from his TAB wager. Laurie's wife, Edna Davis, who received the Cup from the Governor General, was reputed to be the fourth female owner to win the Melbourne Cup.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Throughout history there has been a level of healthy rivalry between Australia and New Zealand. During the 1950s and 1960s New Zealand was gaining a reputation for the quality and success of its race horses. Their encroachment onto the Australian turf did not go unnoticed, with contemporary media reporting on the high number of New Zealand horses being fielded in races and their continual successive wins. In the history of the Melbourne Cup *Polo Prince* was the eighteenth horse from New Zealand to win, and the eighth in thirteen years. While the Melbourne Cup is Australian, its ownership and prestige is truly international.'

Recent sales of Melbourne Cups by Sotheby's Australia include;

- The 1985 Foster's Melbourne Cup won by *What A Nuisance*, 18ct gold, Fortunato Rocca for Hardy Brothers. Sold for \$109,800 October 2016.
- The 1899 Melbourne Cup Trophy won by *Merriwee*, comprising a silver presentation tray together with a tea and coffee service, Walter, Michael, John, Stanley Barnard with Robert Dubock, tray London 1896 and service London, 1898. Sold for \$103,700 April 2016.
- The 1867 Melbourne Cup and the 1867 Queen's Plate Trophy won by *Tim Whiffler*, the Melbourne Cup by Thomas Smily, London 1866, the Queen's Plate by William Edwards, Melbourne, 1866. Sold for \$720,000 October 2011. Purchased by the National Museum of Australia, Canberra.



The 1964 Melbourne Cup won by *Polo Prince*, 9ct gold, James Steeth & Son for William Drummond & Co. Ltd. Estimate \$70,000-90,000

AT A GLANCE

The 1964 Melbourne Cup won by *Polo Prince*, 9ct gold,
James Steeth & Son for William Drummond & Co. Ltd
840 gms, 29.9 cm high, 37 cm high (with base)
Estimate \$70,000-90,000

Fine Asian, Australian & European Arts & Design
Auction at The Hughenden, 14 Queen Street, Woollahra, Tuesday 24 October 2017, 6 pm
Total auction estimate \$933,500-1,329,600 | 238 lots

Exhibition in Sydney, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra
19-24 October, 10 am to 5 pm

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