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## GITANO HERNANDO ARRIVES IN DUBAI TO PREPARE FOR 2011 WORLD CUP, WEICHONG MARWING INKED TO PILOT 2010 FAVORITE DURING CARNIVAL, TRAINER MARCO BOTTI IS HAPPY WITH JOCKEY ARRANGEMENTS IN UAE



Gitano Hernando, who was favored last March for the \$10-million World Cup in the United Arab Emirates, has arrived in Dubai from England to be prepared for the 2011 renewal of the 10-furlong fixture, which will be raced for a second time at Meydan race course in Dubai.

In related news, Hong Kong-based jockey Weichong Marwing (right) has been signed to pilot the Team Valor International and Gary Barber-owned chestnut in the three races scheduled for Gitano Hernando in Dubai.



“We wanted a top-class international rider that we had faith in and with whom we had enjoyed some good fortune in the past,” said Team Valor CEO Barry Irwin. “Weichong has always been a favorite of the stable and he has enjoyed considerable success for us in Hong Kong, Dubai and South Africa. When we put Weichong up, we do so with a feeling of confidence.”

Newmarket-based trainer Marco Botti has selected three races for Gitano Hernando, as follows:

- **Maktoum Challenge** G3 \$200,000 on February 3 going 9.5 furlongs
- **Maktoum Challenge** G2 \$300,000 on March 3 going 10 furlongs
- **World Cup** G1 \$10 million on March 26 going 10 furlongs

Botti sent the rising 5-year-old Hernando horse on the first available shipment from the British Isles, in a departure from the colt’s schedule in advance of the 2010 World Cup, when Botti kept Gitano Hernando in England to ready him for the Grade 1 fixture, in which he finished a close sixth.



*Gitano Hernando has won 5 of his last 7 all-weather starts.*

This year, Botti trained the English-bred colt at home, prepared him for the World Cup with a record-breaking performance in the Derby Trial Stakes on Lingfield’s all-weather track and sent him to Dubai just in advance of the race in the desert.

“We had experienced some difficulties with the air pollution the year before when construction of the new track became a problem for one of our horses that developed a respiratory problem, which is why we kept Gitano Hernando in England,” said Irwin. “Well, we zigged when we should have zagged, because it was evident by the performances that the horses trained and raced in Dubai had an edge over the invaders. So next year we will train and race in Dubai during the entire Carnival.”