

## Dubai World Cup 2011 - All systems go for Gitano Hernando

### *Gitano Hernando looks fantastic value ahead of the Dubai World Cup*

By Nick Wilby (reprinted from [Racingbase.com](http://Racingbase.com))



The Dubai Racing Carnival kicked off under the lights at the extravagant Meydan racecourse last Thursday and for flat racing enthusiasts the meeting looks set provide an entertaining sideshow to the whirlwind of excitement surrounding this year's Cheltenham Festival.

The enthralling finish to the 2010 Dubai World Cup lives long in the memory and the 3-way photo between winner Gloria De Campeao, Lizard's Desire and Allybar was typical of the sort of drama and excitement that has become associated with the world's richest horse race. Ante post involvement in the Dubai World Cup is only for the bravest of punters with in-running catastrophes, poor draws and jockey misdemeanours all problems that take a hand in the finish of the \$10 million showpiece.



This year's ante post favourite is Henry Cecil's admirable Group One winner Twice Over who could only finish tenth in 2010. Sent off a well fancied 11/2 shot he was done no favours by his draw and raced far too freely out wide meaning his trainer will be keen to have another crack at the race. With earnings already approaching £2 million, Twice Over certainly knows how to do it on the big stage and he was last seen winning the Champion Stakes at Newmarket in October. Cecil has already confirmed that his stable star will arrive at Meydan in time for 'Super Thursday' and he is sure to be in the shake up on March 26th.

Next in the betting, and probably of more interest, is dual Oaks winning heroine Snow Fairy who will be looking to continue her globetrotting exploits with another Grade One win in Dubai. Victories in the Hong Kong Cup and the Queen Elizabeth II have marked her down as one of the world's leading middle distance performers and if she was sure to handle the surface at Meydan then she would surely be the one to beat in the World Cup. It will be interesting to see if Ed Dunlop is eyeing a crack at the much-coveted prize and if she were to win the race her achievement would be made all the more remarkable by the fact she would be the first of her sex to do so.

Durban July winner Bold Silvano represents formidable Mike de Kock and will be on the premises if he is as good as his trainer believes, while Gio Ponti will wave the flag for the US. However, the ante post value looks to lie with Marco Botti's Gitano Hernando who can be backed at an attractive 12/1.

The classy 5-year-old son of Hernando acts on turf but is more famous for his exploits on all-weather surfaces and he was sent off a 100/30 favourite for this race last year. A Grade One winner on dirt in America, Gitano Hernando was particularly unlucky in-running at Meydan and it was incredible that he managed to finish as close as sixth in the race. Coming off a very slow pace and with a wall of traffic in front of him, his momentum was halted 200metres from home and the pace with which he finished the race suggested that he could have been even closer. He remains lightly raced and ultra-powerful and possesses all the required ability to win a race like the Dubai World Cup.

Connections are leaving no stone unturned in his preparation for this year's race and he has already arrived in Dubai with two prep races already outlined for Botti's horse. Owners Team Valor International have confirmed that Hong Kong-based jockey Weichong Marwing will ride the horse in all of his races and with plenty of time to get used to his surroundings and with his trainer sure to have him roaring ahead of the race, he looks astonishing value at 12/1.