

**QATAR  
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CLUB**DIMANCHE  
**31 MAI**

HIPPODROME DE CHANTILLY

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Press release

Tuesday, May 27, 2026

## **Qatar Prix du Jockey Club**

### **Trainer Mauricio Delcher and co-owner Christiane Head speak about their runner**

#### **Pearled Majesty**

(Trained in Chantilly – Oise)

On Tuesday morning, France Galop organized the first in a series of press conferences dedicated to the 2026 edition of the Qatar Prix du Jockey Club (Group 1, the highest international level). Created in 1833, this major classic of world flat racing will take place on Sunday at Chantilly Racecourse.

Run over 2,100 meters, this prestigious race is restricted to three-year-old colts and fillies. It offers €1.5 million in prize money.

This first media meeting notably highlighted the entourage of the French colt Pearl Majesty, trained in Chantilly and one of the contenders for the title:

- Co-owner Christiane Head, nicknamed "Criquette"
- As well as co-owner and trainer Mauricio Delcher Sánchez.

The occasion allowed both to discuss the preparation and ambitions of their representative ahead of this major spring event.

Pearled Majesty comes into the race following a victory in a preparatory race for the Qatar Prix du Jockey Club, the Prix Noailles (Group 3, 2,100 meters), run in April at ParisLongchamp.

#### **First participation in the race for Mauricio Delcher Sánchez, Spanish trainer based in Chantilly**

Mauricio Delcher Sánchez is a Spanish trainer based in Chantilly since 2013. A former gentleman rider (amateur jockey), Mauricio Delcher Sánchez has gradually established himself as one of the leading professionals in his country. Several times crowned champion trainer in Spain, winner of the Grand Prix de Madrid and mentor to several Group race

winners, he moved to Chantilly in 2013 to benefit from training facilities recognized worldwide.

Although he has never previously participated in the Qatar Prix du Jockey Club, he already boasts several Group 1 victories, notably in France in the Prix du Cadran and Prix Jean Prat, and in England in the King's Stand Stakes (renamed the King Charles III Stakes in 2023) at Royal Ascot.

*"We have always thought highly of Pearled Majesty. Last year, he showed us very promising things in the mornings, but he was still very immature in his behavior. He was not always focused and needed time to mature. That is also why we ran him at two years old: to give him racing experience without asking too much of him in training. His first two races already showed his*



*quality and, this year, from two to three years old, he has really stepped up. He has gained physical and mental maturity. Since his comeback, he has continued to improve. His latest victory [on April 12 in the Prix Noailles] was a genuine confirmation race against already serious opposition. Today, he arrives at his peak: he is doing very well, in top form, and has enough experience. All the lights are green. Now we are entering the major European races and he will have to confirm at this level, but we are very proud of him. As we cannot have Christophe Soumillon [who partnered him in his last three starts], Pearled Majesty will be ridden by Cristian Demuro. We are very happy to have him. He is a jockey I know very well, someone very pleasant and already highly experienced in these types of races.*

*I believe horses should be allowed to gallop in their natural action. I do not like to restrain them. This horse has a huge stride, he likes to move forward and that has to be respected. Last time, he took the lead because there was not much pace, but he is not a horse who absolutely needs to be in front. What matters is that he can gallop freely and in his own rhythm. Whether he is in front or behind will depend on how the race unfolds. I am never afraid to let a horse do what comes naturally to him.*

*Regarding the ground, we mainly hope the track will be good and consistent, which of course it will be. The horse has won on good ground and also ran very well on heavy ground, so I am not worried. Major races should be run on tracks where everyone has their chance. After that, the best horses win — it is as simple as that.*

*I have been based in France for more than ten years and having a runner in the Jockey Club means a tremendous amount. Of course, we have already had Group horses and experienced great emotions, but taking part in a race like this is exactly why we do this job. We get up every morning to live moments like these. With experience, however, you also learn to keep things in perspective. What matters most is being satisfied with the horse's journey and the work accomplished with him. If the horse is good enough, he will*

*win. If he is a bit less good, he will finish further back. That is not dramatic. There will always be other races, other horses, other opportunities. In this profession, you must keep moving forward, maintain your enthusiasm and passion. And the next day, you simply get back to work.*

*Working with Criquette [Head, his co-owner] is a real pleasure. She is someone with immense experience who knows this profession perfectly. She understands the joys, the difficulties, the daily pressure. But she also lets the trainer work. In the end, I am the one who sees the horse every day and makes the decisions, but being able to exchange ideas with someone like her is a real asset."*

### **Forty years after winning it as a trainer, Christiane Head dreams of winning it as an owner**



Nicknamed "Criquette," Christiane Head is one of the leading figures in French horse racing. She is also a pioneer in a world long dominated by men. In 1979, she made history by becoming the first woman to win the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe thanks to the champion filly Three Troikas.

Born into the famous Head family — her father Alec Head, who passed away in 2022, being regarded as one of the major figures in world racing during the 20th century — she grew up surrounded by horses and obtained her trainer's license in 1977.

During her career, she accumulated more than 128 Group 1 victories with champions such as the legendary Trêve, dual winner of the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe.

Retired from training since 2018, Criquette Head remains a major and highly respected figure in French racing, particularly committed to defending smaller stables and racing professionals.

Regarding the Prix du Jockey Club specifically, she won it in 1986 as a trainer with Bering, who carried the colors of her mother, Ghislaine Head. Forty years later, Pearled Majesty could now offer her a first Qatar Prix du Jockey Club victory as an owner.

*"At the time, with Freddy [Head, Criquette's brother], we bought Pearled Majesty's dam. Then, when the family's Haras du Quesnay was sold and all the horses went through the sales ring, the mare came into the ring with her foal at foot and was already carrying this horse. It was a mating that we ourselves had decided upon. Later, I bought back the foal, a filly I liked very much because it is a family I am deeply attached to. Then Fernando [Laffon, Criquette's grandson], who was in England, called me to say that this horse was going through the sales. He went to see him, liked him enormously, and we decided to buy him. Mauricio had exactly the same impression when he first saw the horse. That is how we became partners around him. Naturally, Mauricio kept him in training.*

*Stopping training was difficult, of course. And I still miss it today. I would still love to come every morning to Chantilly, but I live too far away for that now. Today, I am an owner and I let the trainers work. I know too well what this profession represents to interfere unnecessarily. A trainer's life is extremely complicated: you have to be there every day, understand your horses, cope with the pressure of results and sometimes also with the pressure from owners. So I certainly do not want to add stress to my trainers. On the contrary, I trust them completely.*

*Mauricio knows this horse perfectly. He is the one who shaped him and brought him to this level. The colt was not easy at first, he was somewhat immature, and Mauricio has done a fantastic job with him. I am delighted that he is training him and also delighted to have found a horse capable of running in such a race. When you buy a yearling or a foal, you never know how far they will go. So to find yourself at the start of a Jockey Club is already something fantastic. Personally, I have never liked looking for excuses. When I was a trainer, neither the draw nor the ground ever frightened me. If a horse is good enough, he can win under any conditions. I won the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe from stall number 22, so I have never believed in excuses. I also believe jockeys should be allowed to ride horses according to their own instincts. They are the ones on the horse's back and the best placed to feel what needs to be done during the race.*

*Being an owner today is different. The stress is not the same because I do not see the horse every day. I visit him from time to time in Chantilly, but all the daily responsibility belongs to the trainer. I can therefore enjoy the emotions more. Of course, winning the Jockey Club as an owner would be wonderful. I would be over the moon. But the most important thing is that the horse comes back safely from his race. Everything that happens on Sunday will be a bonus.*

*Today, my life is much calmer. I am retired, I divide my time between France, Switzerland and the Bahamas, and above all I enjoy my family, my children, my grandchildren and even my great-grandchildren. But racing remains a tremendous passion and it will always be part of my life."*



 FRANCE GALOP

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