



HORSE POWER

With polo season fully upon us, **Hugh Francis Anderson** joins Maserati and La Martina at HAM Polo Club in Richmond to celebrate their ongoing collaboration

Few brands can boast the collective pedigree of Maserati and La Martina. Independently, they represent the suave, the understated and the blissful elegance of a bygone era. Together, their formidability exudes in droves: they are the purveyors of sophistication – the epitome, if you will, of the savoir-faire. So it's little wonder that they have become business partners, and together are elevating the image of motoring, sartorial design and sportsmanship to new heights.

Since 2011, Maserati and La Martina have collaborated to produce the 'La Martina for Maserati' capsule collection, a luxury, polo-inspired range for those looking to merge fashion with sports apparel. Their partnership furthers still with the four-stage Maserati Polo Tour, sponsored by La Martina, where the world's top players – including HRH Prince Harry for the Jerudong Park Trophy stage – cross the globe playing high-level polo in a move that only furthers the dominance of these two

powerhouses. After all, polo is the sport of kings.

So to celebrate their collaboration, and the release of their new collection, I joined Maserati and La Martina at HAM Polo Club in Richmond for a polo lesson from professional player and assistant polo manager, Charlie Wood.

Arriving at the club in true Maserati style, in a black Quattroporte, Wood is patiently waiting for his eager students to arrive. With the overcast sky threatening to ruin our enjoyment, I am handed a child-sized mallet to practice some basic shots: offside, nearside forehand and backhand, which mainly revolve around me trying to wallop the ball as hard as I can.

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Nevertheless, with my excitable energy somewhat expelled, I am offered the privilege of moving to a full-size mallet on a full-size wooden horse. As Charlie concisely explains the basic rules again, a little of my lost childhood memory from when I played polo comes back and I find myself feeling confidently adept to move to the big leagues, to a racing-tuned polo pony that comes in the form a majestic masculine bay gelding named Castor. Masculine, that is, until I discover that ‘castor’ is Spanish for ‘beaver’.


So within a couple of hours I’ve progressed from jovially galumphing around swinging a tiny polo mallet to a fully fledged polo player atop a horse named Beaver. Laughable at best, the last pass of the session requires some actual polo playing, with a miniature chukka and a couple of agreeable goals scored, too. All too soon I have to bid farewell to Castor, but I feel a beaming smile grow across my face as I say my goodbyes, thinking how Maserati and La Martina are truly a match made in heaven.  *La Martina, 23 Jermyn Street, SW1 (lamartina.com; maserati.com)*



IMAGE: GETTY