

[interview]

From Somerset to Shanghai, Steve Wyatt has maintained a love of horses and found a way to make his passion his career.

Steve Wyatt

CHAIRMAN
NINE DRAGONS HILL POLO CLUB

BORN?

Keynesham, which is in Somerset, between Bath and Bristol. A totally nondescript town in a most beautiful part of England. But I really grew up in Dorset, messing around on farms, riding horses, milking cows and plucking turkeys for Christmas.

FAMOUS FOR?

Most famous for going on about the incredible experiences I had riding around the world on a motorbike about 11 years ago before it became a celebrity pursuit. Second claim to fame is being the madman trying to get international standard polo going in China. That will probably be the title of a posthumous book on the subject!

A MAN OF THE WORLD?

I first came to China in the late 1980s as part of a study tour for my Masters course in Management Engineering from Cambridge University, which was an amazing experience allowing me to meet with chairmen and CEOs across the Asia Pacific region at a time when Asia was still being discovered. I have also lived, worked or studied in Italy, France, US, Singapore, Hong Kong and I run my own polo ranch in Australia.

FLUENT IN SHANGHAISE THEN?

After so many years traveling the region and living in China, I am running out of excuses for not being able to speak Mandarin, especially now that I have a vocabulary that I'm passionate about – polo and horses. So, I am finally moving beyond only being able to order beers.

WHAT'S THE STRANGEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU HERE?

Receiving 'room service' from the Portman while in jail overnight at Hongqiao. Details only provided over beers at the polo club bar.

PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I am very fortunate in that my passion is polo and horses and I get to be with these two passions most days. In addition, I spend as much time as possible with my two young daughters, which of course is also helped by having such a kid-friendly and beautiful countryside environment.

FAVOURITE WORDS OF WISDOM?

Be passionate in all things that you do and you will have achieved success already.

HOW'S THE JOB?

The big milestone that we are now working towards is the international tournament (Oct 19-21), known as the "Royal



Salute Polo Gold Cup – 2007." This is a very significant event, the first time that international standard polo teams have played in China. As with any first, there are many challenges, not only for our organisation, but also for the local support services and interaction with the government authorities. We are, however, receiving tremendous support. In fact, the President of the FIP (the World Polo Federation) Mr Patrick Guerrand Hermès, will be here in support, as well as the Duke of Argyll and royalty from a few other countries.

TOP TIPS FOR DOING BUSINESS IN CHINA?

- Keep investing your time and energies with the people who work for you.
- Not everyone is against you, not everyone will collaborate with you.
- Run harder, run faster.
- The future will be different from today, ensure that you are relevant tomorrow.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Our goal is to help establish international polo in China and have the Nine Dragons Hill Polo Club be the reference for the rest of the country. In doing this, we hope that we will also help to nurture a better understanding of nature, horses, and beautiful scenery and to support this with a club atmosphere which promotes and enables family members to spend time together. This is a big goal and I don't expect to have finished this task within the next few months or years.