

hat creations frolic from table to table greeting friends, while handsomely dressed men wander through the crowds, meeting current or potential business partners. Children also get the royal treatment, bouncing on huge inflatable cushions that are as busy as a beehive.

#### SPONSORING QUALITY

"The reason why we support polo is because on the one hand it's a very dynamic sport that attracts the attention of people that are sports-minded, but also people who may control a certain amount of wealth, therefore fitting into our potential clientele base," says Christoph Schärer, a member of the executive board at Bank Hoffman, the

leading sponsor of the festivities in Etyek. Bank Hoffman is a Zurich-based private bank, a subsidiary of Credit Suisse Group.

"Hungary is a country that we're very interested in because of its recent EU accession, interesting economic structure and its being a country set to grow," explains Schärer, adding that, "more even distribution of wealth and the growth of the country makes Hungary a healthy country to grow a business in."

While the noteworthy palette of quality sponsors brought the project from idea to fruition, they also view the event as the perfect opportunity to acquire potential new clients. However, a deluxe service has to be paired with equally high-standard

products. While some queue up to test-drive a Mercedes-Benz, one of the leading sponsors, from the fleet parked near the thoroughbred horses, others peck from the lush selection of hors d'oeuvres and sweets provided by caterer InterContinental. An extensive selection of coffee was served by Piazza D'Oro, champagne by Törley, mineral water by Szentkirályi Ásványvíz and juices by Rauch, each representing the high-end of their segment.

One of the most successful sponsors of the event in terms of raising product and company awareness was Herend Porcelain, a brand that has become synonymous with superior porcelain. Awarded Herend Trophies, the Herend team - consisting of Hans Georg Schiebel and Walter Scherb from Austria in addition to Argentinian Juan Clemente Marambio - took the first prize in the tournament. Guests could examine the exhibit of hand-made china and watch a demonstration of the meticulous art of porcelain painting. The display included a product designed specifically for the event, china that captures the aura and spirit of the sport and the event, painted polo-players in action. Certainly, after further exposure in such a prominent environment, the lengthy list of famous Herend owners, extending from the British royal family, the kings of Thailand and Spain and the Hapsburgs, to Margaret Thatcher and George W. Bush, is set to grow.

#### LAVISH TREASURE CHEST

"We attend social events like polo because on the one hand they are very entertaining, while on the other hand the strings and connections among the affluent social circle will meet at some point," says Eleni Korani, owner of the Ernst Gallery. "We have a different range of interests but since but our somewhat overlapping clientele base could be a meeting point for future cooperation or business, one that might end up becoming 'luxurious'."

On entering the glass-covered, mahogany-edged Ernst Gallery, you truly feel like you are stepping into a classical treasure chest, created by the art dealer couple, Austrian Ernst Wastl and Greek Eleni Korani. Collecting and exhibiting masterpieces, some of which were found hidden in a corner while others were bought at a salient price at auctions, the gallery has maintained its high-quality reputation since its opening in its current location in 2002. As the demand for luxurious art treasures has shifted from mostly the larger-scale, screened furniture and paintings to smaller objects of virtue

#### Exotic travel

The rapidly growing tourism industry offers several options for relaxation, but Planet Hungary ([planethungary.com](http://planethungary.com)) differs from the others. "From the beginning - one and a half years ago - the basic concept was to offer something special. We do not want to fall into the long line of tourist agencies," says László Vas, managing director.

What exactly is this peculiarity, which this young and small company sees as the key to its success? Planet Hungary's specialty is Asia, with destinations including China, India, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal. Not only Angkor Wat, the Taj Mahal or the Forbidden City in Peking are worth visiting, according to Planet Hungary. The beautiful secrets of Asia are waiting to be discovered, such as the Flower Valley in the Himalayas or the deserted Rajasthan.

"In the recent Travel Exhibition, we found that demand is growing for special and powerful travel experiences, such as a jeep tour on Himalaya. It is also clear that enquirers require personal care. Ladies like traditional Indian cosmetic treatments or Thai gastronomy courses."

Vas and his business partner, classmates at university, traveled a lot together in Asia, and decided to open a travel office focusing on all the countries of the region.

"A personal report about the destination is much more effective than the most beautiful brochure," adds Vas. - Beáta Eszter Banky

