

• Annual best-dressed competition at the Dubai World Cup was a celebration of colour

By **Yusra Farzan**,
Staff Reporter

Animal Kingdom and his fellow thoroughbreds were not the only winners at Saturday's Dubai World Cup: earlier in the evening it was the turn of fashionistas to take part in the Jaguar Style Stakes. Colour appeared to be the order of the day with many entrants sporting lime green, lemon yellow, turquoise blue, fuchsia pink and burnt orange, but the top prize of the night went to a demure pink suit and its wearer, Ilona Saleski.

Saleski, who won the use of a Jaguar for a year, an HTC smartphone and an N Style pamper package among other prizes — took us back in time to the '50s when Chanel suits were paired with pillbox hats.

"I perused magazines for looks I liked and picked elements from each to create my outfit. It's a custom-tailored suit. I even made my own hat for the day," said the German. "I love the event, it's such a wonderful combination of horse racing and fashion."

BEST DRESSED LADY

Judge Mandi Kingsbury says it was Saleski's adherence to racing fashion rules that made her ensemble the winning one.

"It's been very exciting and very difficult judging this year as there are a lot of contestants, thereby giving us different takes on how race wear should be worn. We tried to enforce a strict code at the Jaguar Style Stakes about how you should dress for a racing event. We wanted something slightly conservative, shoulders should be covered, hemlines to the knee," said Kingsbury. "We were looking for



Ilona Saleski, the Best Dressed Lady at the Jaguar Style Stakes, with Robin Colgan, managing director of Jaguar Mena, at the Dubai World Cup on Saturday.

Niayesh Ostad Hussain won the Most Creative Hat prize.

Photos by Abdel-Krim Kallouche/Gulf News



Judges had to choose winners in the Most Creative Hat, Best Dressed Man, Best Dressed Couple and Best Hat categories — a tough job, they'd vouch.

something elegant and chic in a colour from the spring palette with a fascinator or hat to add a bit of flavour. This year's best dressed winner was

chosen because her look was very ethereal and she didn't look like she was dressing in a very difficult sense. She reminded us of Coco Chanel."

Kingsbury was joined on the judging panel by fashion week expert Simon Lock, TV and radio personality Simone Heng and Nicola Gib-

son, marketing manager for Jaguar Mena, who also judged winners in the Most Creative Hat, Best Dressed Man, Best Dressed Couple and Best Hat categories.

It was second time lucky for Evelyn McDermott, a runner-up in the Best Dressed Lady category, who had won at a previous edition of the competition. McDermott's winning dress was from online boutique Asos. She paired the lime green fitted dress with Ted Baker shoes and a hat she made.

Niayesh Ostad Hussain walked away with the Most Creative Hat prize for her orange and black turban-esque piece.

The winners take it all



Fashionistas turned out in full force to participate in the hotly-contested Jaguar Style Stakes.



Style spotters chose Alina Polyakova as Longines' Most Elegant Lady.



Simon Hanft (left) was chosen as the Best Dressed Man.



Meredith and Mahdi Pour won the Best Dressed Couple award.

"It came as a surprise. My friend Nazgul Nejmi designed the hat for me. I wasn't planning on attending the races until this morning. I had a dream last night that I had won a competition. That's why I entered the contest when I came to Meydan," said Hussain. "When coming up with the hat, I wanted it to be multi-functional. You can shape this headpiece into different shapes. I like to play around with what I have and I like to come up with different ways of wearing them, whether it's a hat or a scarf. That's

how I came up with this piece that you can change to a scarf, a turban or a bag," said Nejmi, the designer of Hussain's winning creation.

Orange seemed to be a favourite with the judges, with the Best Hat prize going to Alisha Foley, who won for her orange creation with a leopard print underbelly.

"My sister made it. I wanted something in bright colours and something that would stand out since the races are always about the hat," said Foley, who travelled from the United Kingdom

for the races. She paired her bright headpiece with a smart white peplum dress from Zara.

Kingsbury said that Foley's creation was chosen because it was very fashion forward and had an informed millinery cutting edge to it without being too avant-garde.

The category of Best Dressed Couple put the judges in a bit of bother; they couldn't decide from the shortlist of candidates, but after much deliberation, Meredith and Mahdi Pour emerged the winners.

"When deciding on



Alisha Foley won the Best Hat prize.



Evelyn McDermott was a runner-up in the Best Dressed Lady category.

our matching looks, we wanted to be simple and classic. I am wearing an Alexander McQueen dress, he's one of my favourite designers," Meredith said.

"Her hat is from Louisa, an Australian designer. My suit is from Gianni in Italy and my shoes are from Ralph Lauren, my shirt from Prada and my tie is from Versace. The hat is something I picked up in the US," Mahdi said. "I put my outfit together in one night but it took longer for my wife. I landed at 2am last night and my wife asked me to put together something to complement her look and here we are, the winners."

Style spotters in the crowd picked Alina Polyakova as Longines' Most Elegant Lady.

She oozed style and grace in her Tycoon dress paired with Gucci shoes, a gold necklace, Diane von Furstenberg clutch and a cream hat whose creator she remained tight-lipped about.

TIMELESS FASHION

"I wanted something timeless for the races because this reflected my personal style. And since it's early summer, I wanted a dress in a bright colour," said Polyakova. "I had the dress in my closet so I paired my accessories to match. It didn't even take me a week to come up with the entire outfit so it really is an honour to win."

Another first-timer at Meydan to take home a prize was Best Dressed Man Simon Hanft, who said he had been planning his outfit for weeks, seeking advice from his mother and girlfriend. He wore a sculpted fedora hat by Rod Keenan, a fuchsia bow tie from Swedish designer Eden, a seersucker jacket in lime green, white linen pants, spectator shoes by Billy Reed and a macramé leather belt. "I loved winning. I liked the emphasis the Dubai World Cup puts on style," said Hanft. "It means a lot to me because the look is not something that I rolled out of bed and put together, it took preparation and time."