MARKUS GRÄFF is unique among the ranks of owners attached to Mark Johnston Racing, for he is the only one who is allowed to ride out with the string! That’s because he is one of the most successful Swiss amateur jockeys of all time - and the only one to have taken part in the Grand National at Aintree, unfortunately falling at the 9th in 1981. He is also a major figure in the world of polo. A talented and successful player, he is the founder and president of the Polo Park Zurich, scheduled to play host to the European Championship in 2012.

Markus has enjoyed great success with the stable over the years with horses such as Darasim, Akbar, Mardani and Royal Island.

Date and place of birth: Zurich, Switzerland - 21st February 1952
Married: Irene, Zurich August 1996.
Children: Thommy 12, Cinja 9
How were you introduced to horseracing? At around 15 years of age, in the next village to us, an owner had a small private training centre. I was already a rider but started to ride racehorses there. At the age of 17, I took the theory and practical tests, as we do in Switzerland, to acquire my amateur jockey’s licence.

And to MJR? When Double Diamond won Swiss 2000 Guineas at Dielsdorf in 1996. I was a director of the Dielsdorf track and responsible for foreign affairs. Later that year Mark bought me a yearling at Tatts, Long Bond by Kris. I went over to Middleham to see my yearling and, while there, bought Celestial Key from another owner in the yard.

What is your main occupation? Independent Asset Manager
If you could choose any other career, what would it be? Racehorse Trainer (in order to make a lot of money!)
Where do you live and what took you to that area? Born in Zurich and still there. Ideal place for my profession.
What was your most exciting racing moment? Riding in the Grand National
What is the best horse you have owned? Darasim
What are your racing colours and why did you chose them? Colours are blue, white spots, white sleeves with blue armlets, blue cap with white spots. Blue is my favourite colour. White is a good contrast. I had to find a pattern acceptable in Switzerland, Ireland, France, Germany and the UK. That was not easy.

What is the best name you have given to a horse and why did you choose it? Flight To Quality. This is what we see in the current world financial markets, a ‘flight to quality’. I often give my horses names related to my business.

What is the best race you have won and what did it mean to you personally? Goodwood Cup in 2004. I love the staying races and Goodwood is a great place to win.

Which one race would you chose to have replayed on TV? The Grand Prix St. Moritz 2011 won by Winterwind. I haven’t seen it yet!

1996. I was a director of the Dielsdorf track and responsible for foreign affairs. Later that year Mark bought me a yearling at Tatts, Long Bond by Kris. I went over to Middleham to see my yearling and, while there, bought Celestial Key from another owner in the yard.

What is your main occupation? Independent Asset Manager
If you could choose any other career, what would it be? Racehorse Trainer (in order to make a lot of money!)
Where do you live and what took you to that area? Born in Zurich and still there. Ideal place for my profession.
What was your most exciting racing moment? Riding in the Grand National
What is the best horse you have owned? Darasim
What are your racing colours and why did you chose them? Colours are blue, white spots, white sleeves with blue armlets, blue cap with white spots. Blue is my favourite colour. White is a good contrast. I had to find a pattern acceptable in Switzerland, Ireland, France, Germany and the UK. That was not easy.

What is the best name you have given to a horse and why did you choose it? Flight To Quality. This is what we see in the current world financial markets, a ‘flight to quality’. I often give my horses names related to my business.

What is the best race you have won and what did it mean to you personally? Goodwood Cup in 2004. I love the staying races and Goodwood is a great place to win.

Which one race would you chose to have replayed on TV? The Grand Prix St. Moritz 2011 won by Winterwind. I haven’t seen it yet!

1996. I was a director of the Dielsdorf track and responsible for foreign affairs. Later that year Mark bought me a yearling at Tatts, Long Bond by Kris. I went over to Middleham to see my yearling and, while there, bought Celestial Key from another owner in the yard.

What is your main occupation? Independent Asset Manager
If you could choose any other career, what would it be? Racehorse Trainer (in order to make a lot of money!)
Where do you live and what took you to that area? Born in Zurich and still there. Ideal place for my profession.
What was your most exciting racing moment? Riding in the Grand National
What is the best horse you have owned? Darasim
What are your racing colours and why did you chose them? Colours are blue, white spots, white sleeves with blue armlets, blue cap with white spots. Blue is my favourite colour. White is a good contrast. I had to find a pattern acceptable in Switzerland, Ireland, France, Germany and the UK. That was not easy.

What is the best name you have given to a horse and why did you choose it? Flight To Quality. This is what we see in the current world financial markets, a ‘flight to quality’. I often give my horses names related to my business.

What is the best race you have won and what did it mean to you personally? Goodwood Cup in 2004. I love the staying races and Goodwood is a great place to win.

Which one race would you chose to have replayed on TV? The Grand Prix St. Moritz 2011 won by Winterwind. I haven’t seen it yet!