

NEW SERIES of CARRIAGE COMPETITIONS



The Australian Carriage Driving Society has recently initiated a nationwide Series of Concours d'elegance competitions, and is pleased to announce that the first qualifying event in the series will be run at Woolmers Estate near Longford, Tasmania, on 12th March 2006. This is a stately home surrounded by the National Rose Garden and a more appropriate setting for a parade of beautifully presented horse-drawn carriages, it would be hard to imagine. With many suitable venues and a particular interest in the preservation of carriages, it is entirely fitting that the Tasmanian Carriage Driving Society should have the honour of hosting the first in a series designed to resurrect the horse-drawn culture of Australia.

It has become obvious that both the show ring and competition carriage driving are seeing the increasing use of purpose built carriages, and the varied horse-drawn carriages which once travelled our streets and roads are consequently vanishing into sheds and museums. Admittedly once there they are saved for the future, but the skills associated with presenting them in their former glory could very well disappear within less than another generation. A carriage displayed in a museum is static and "dead", only one quarter as good as it can be. It is not until you add the horse/s, the appropriate harness, a driver and "take it for a spin" that the real picture emerges.

The Concours d'elegance concept has been adapted from a similar competition for vintage cars. It will not be judged by an artist, but by knowledgeable people already recognised as having a full grasp of the importance of the kind of correctness that equates to safety in every horse-drawn turnout.

The ACDS encourages affiliated clubs to stage the competitions in conjunction with fairs, festivals, equestrian events, and other suitable locations where they are likely to be viewed by the general public. The second qualifier in the Series is to be run at Mornington Racecourse in conjunction with the Country Life Festival on 16th April (Easter Sunday), conducted by the Mornington Peninsula Pleasure Harness Club.

The general aims of the Series are:

- To provide additional competitive opportunities for members of the ACDS and for non-members who can avail themselves of the Society's One Activity membership.
- To put the activities of the ACDS before a wider section of the general public.
- To foster the skills associated with the restoration, preservation and presentation of carriages.
- To create a competition widely respected by competitors.
- To raise awareness and appreciation of the style, elegance, comfort and pleasure associated with travel in a correctly presented horse-drawn carriage.

After the completion of approximately six or eight qualifiers a National Final will be organised when a suitable time and venue become available. The three first prize-winners at each Qualifier will be eligible to contest the Final. It is actually the driver who qualifies and he/she does not necessarily have to bring the same turnout to the Final but must compete in the category in which he/she qualified. If a driver wins two or more qualifiers, the second placed drivers in that category at the second and subsequent qualifiers will be eligible for the Final.

Further information will be posted on www.acds.org.au

Enquiries

Federal Secretary Barry Garment Ph: 02 6862 2880, e-mail bg512428@bigpond.net.au

Federal President Judy Dwyer Ph: 02 6382 2290



THE AUSTRALIAN CARRIAGE DRIVING SOCIETY'S SERIES OF CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE COMPETITIONS

Guidelines for conducting a Qualifying Event

Concours d'elegance competitions run according to the following guidelines by ACDS Clubs will be recognised as Qualifying Events in the above series. After a number have been conducted, the winners of the three categories at each Qualifier will be invited to compete in a Final to be conducted when a suitable venue and opportunity arise.

Mandatory Requirements:

- The event is to be a minuted activity of an ACDS club.
- A request to conduct a qualifier to be lodged with the relevant ACDS State Branch, including an outline of proposed venue and other arrangements. Results to be notified to the State Branch Secretary and State Publicity Officer.
- Drivers must be members of the ACDS and horses/ponies taking part may be registered with the ACDS (Registration will be compulsory after 1/1/07).
- Appropriate Risk Management procedures shall be implemented by the Organising Committee. Competitors are obliged to abide by and respect any direction given by the OC's representative/s in relation to potential or apparent safety issues.
- The Judges' decision/s shall be final.

Aspects at the discretion of the Organising Committee:

- Publicity (all publicity should include reference to the ACDS).
- Selection of appropriate venue
- Acceptance of entries.
- Allocation of Prize-money.
- Selection of Judge (It is recommended that the Judge be selected from the current ACDS Lists of Show and Presentation Judges, however this does not preclude the choice of an eminent harness authority ie. visiting overseas driver or judge)
- Delegate sufficient competent stewards to conduct the competition (It is recommended that a minimum of two stewards be appointed).
- Provision of ACDS One Activity membership.

Competition Categories:

In order to maintain a level of consistency across all qualifiers, the following categories shall be offered as a minimum. Each category is open to ponies and horses in single or multiple harness.

Awards of first, second and third to be made in each category.

- Authentic carriages with wooden wheels, in original condition or faithfully restored. Leather harness.
- Reproduction carriages with wooden or steel wheels. Leather or synthetic harness.
- Heavy horse and trades-type turnouts.

The Organising Committee may at their discretion offer other categories to suit local demand, however it is not envisioned that winners of these categories would qualify for the Final.