

SBLS

Santa Barbara Life & Style Magazine

July/August 2023



10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

PERFECT MATCH

PHOTOGRAPHER *Angelo Sgambati* | STYLIST *Daniella Clarke*
MAKEUP *Nichole Servin* | MODEL *Sarah Siegel-Magness & Team Dundas*
HAIR *Andre Gunn* | LOCATION *Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club*

MOVIE MOGUL TURNED POLO PATRON SARAH SIEGEL-MAGNESS
IS TRAILBLAZING A NEW TRAJECTORY IN THE SPORT

BY Nicole Johnson

The high-brow worlds of Hollywood red carpets and polo fields share notable overlaps in their elite exclusivity, their time-honored luxe, and their esteem. Sarah Siegel-Magness, the film producer-turned-polo patroness, is among a select few who have held both an Academy Award and a polo mallet. She may very well be one of the only women to exchange movie studios for horse stables—and spearhead shifts in both fields.

A custom saddle with black leather wings sprouting from beneath her petite build, the fierce redhead and her purebred mares bring a competitive edge and chic flair to the Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club. If not distinctive enough in her bold presence and formidable resumé, at the top of which is the 2009 Oscar-nominated *Precious*, the polo patroness is pioneering a league of her own. In the company of Mia Cambiaso—daughter of the sport's premier player, Adolfo Cambiaso—Siegel-Magness's team, Dundas, will be the first two-woman seed *ever* in a 12-goal tournament.

Nearly riding solo as a female in mixed matches for upwards of six years, Siegel-Magness has jumped constant hurdles brought on by the sport's age-old male domination. Her latest undertaking? Women's polo, and ushering in a new era of female participation in the sport at large via financial incentives and leadership initiatives. "Women's polo players truly rival the guys, and the reason women haven't infiltrated the pro scene is financial inequity," she says. "I pay all my [Dundas] female pros the same I would pay males, and in women's tournaments, where players don't get paid a lot in the first place, I pay more in an attempt to help with the gap. But we've got a long way to go," she firmly admits.

A longtime partner in Peter Dundas's namesake design house, Siegel-Magness's sponsorship of her Dundas polo team is a natural extension of her foundations in fashion. The highly decorated squad is a medley of American and Argentinian powerhouses, and a force to be reckoned with as they tackle their upcoming summer series. "We operate like we're playing in Palermo, Argentina everywhere we go. We make sure we have the best horses, the best grooms—competition is not something we take lightly, and we truly take pride in what we're doing," Siegel-Magness expresses.

Honing her prowess with the guidance of polo legends like Memo Gracida, Siegel-Magness holds a palpable hunger for competition, rooted a stalwart dedication to her craft and the simple conviction that, "If it's not more fun than polo, [she's] not doing it." She trains with the first-rate intensity and intentionality of her pro teammates and recently packed on three pounds of pure muscle while rebounding from a fibula fracture in March. "We're doing two hours a day of physio and strength training as well as cardio, in addition to a few hours of actual horseback riding," she reports. Though Siegel-Magness sprung into the sport decades later than her counterparts hailing from polo dynasties, she finds this "race against the clock" riveting. "I'm humbled every time I get on the field, and I'm never, ever satisfied," she admits, while listing off the meticulous changes—including regimented meditation and diet—she recently appended to her pre-match routine.

To say the least, she keeps busy. A self-described polo vagabond, Siegel-Magness is nothing short of a globe-trotter on horseback: after her early summer post in Santa Barbara, she'll jet off to Colorado, followed by Argentina, then Florida for a multitude of matches. Frequenting her various polo estates but never calling one home, Siegel-Magness finds solace in never being stationary. "This lifestyle has allowed me freedom I've never had before, and I've learned that I can adapt to any place I am as long as I'm in this small traveling polo community. There's nothing like it," she grins.

It certainly helps, too, that her travel companion and close competitor is her 18-year-old son, Cable. To Siegel-Magness, the sport is an invaluable family affair. "Polo is a lifestyle; we're living our lives outdoors, and operating in a space with multiple generations, which [allows for] incredible bonding," she gushes. "And being able to get on a horse, communicate with an animal, and function as a unit every day is more than I could have ever dreamt up."

Though doing so in fleeting periods, she wouldn't trade living and riding in Santa Barbara for anything. "Polo clubs with an ocean view are few and far between," she chuckles. "The local polo community is extremely enthusiastic: each Sunday there are beautiful cars, beautiful outfits, and people are truly having a good time, which you don't see everywhere." This combination of pure grit and glamour makes for quite the scene on match days, all season long.*



Faux fur coat DUNDAS



Bodysuit **ALCHEMY**
Jacket **SAINT ART**
Leather pants **ALL THINGS GOLDEN**
Hat **ÂCHEVAL**

