

# All the Pretty Horses

Tiffany creates The Foundation Polo Challenge trophy in honor of Prince William and Prince Harry's charity.



Prince William and his winning team received the trophy from his wife, the Duchess of Cambridge, and Tiffany Chairman and CEO, Michael Kowalski.

Friends of the Foundation of Prince William and Prince Harry, the result quite literally, had to be fit for royalty. And Tiffany artisans, of course, were up for the challenge.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge made their first official visit to the United States to attend the charity match at the Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club on July 9. Tiffany sponsored the event and lined the road leading to the venue with Tiffany Blue® flags in honor of the royal couple's arrival.

## A Brief History of Polo

Although often associated with Great Britain, polo actually began as an intense training exercise for royal and/or elite cavalry units in Persia (Iran today) more than 2,000 years ago. As many as 200 men and their mounts would take to the field for each grueling match. In time, polo became a national sport in Iran, played extensively by aristocrats, and kings and queens alike. Eventually, it made its way to India, China and Japan, reaching Great Britain in the 1860s. Over time, the number of players in a match decreased to a more manageable 14 until it reached today's eight. The first official polo match in the United States was played in 1876 at Dickel's Riding Academy at 39th Street and Fifth Avenue in New York City. Today, polo has a small, but elite following and is played professionally in 16 countries.

## The Magic Behind the Curtain

Before they come to life in the hands of Tiffany artisans, every custom-design order begins with meetings and consultations. The Foundation Polo Challenge trophy was no exception, taking approximately six months from negotiations to delivery. The trophy itself, which Tiffany donated to the club for permanent display, took more than 225 hours to complete.

The Foundation Polo Challenge trophy is sterling silver and features cast and applied polo pony head handles crafted by Tiffany silversmiths. The decorative bands encircling the trophy include an archival horseshoe motif intertwined with laurel originally designed by well-known Tiffany chaser Eugene Soligny in 1876 for the National Cup for Stallions.

Whether Tiffany is commissioned to create a custom piece for the President of the United States, a Hollywood celebrity or a private citizen, the same care goes into ensuring that every detail is exactly what the client envisioned. When Tiffany was presented with the opportunity to create the commemorative award for The Foundation Polo Challenge, which would benefit The American

Tiffany spinners spent close to 36 hours spinning the bowl and foot components. The lower half of the cup was spun and the upper half was hand-fabricated to match. It took silversmiths 145 hours to create the horseshoe bands, hand chase the horse hair detail into the castings, and fit and assemble all of the components. The horseshoe motif was rolled through antique dies and then formed into rings, with careful attention paid to the repeat of the pattern. The bands at the top of the foot and the interior of the cup were then plated with 24 karat yellow gold. Lastly, the finishers spent nearly 45 hours on preliminary and final polishing. The trophy weighs 14.7 pounds and stands 18 inches high, not including the base.

## A Worthy Cause

The Foundation Polo Challenge trophy was an honor for Tiffany to create, not only because it was for the British royal family, but because the event benefited a worthy cause. The American Friends of the Foundation of Prince William and Prince Harry was formed in 2011 to raise funds and awareness, and make donations to organizations that support charitable causes, including assisting disadvantaged youth, working to preserve and protect the environment, and providing assistance and support to those who have served or are currently serving in the armed forces of their respective countries.

The day ended perfectly for Prince William, as his team won the thrilling match and he received The Foundation Polo Challenge trophy from his new bride, the Duchess of Cambridge, and Tiffany Chairman and CEO, Michael Kowalski.

"All of us who had the privilege of working with the royal representatives will never forget what a unique opportunity it was," says Beth Canavan, Executive Vice President. "We believe we have forged an important relationship that will have a lasting impact on Tiffany & Co." ■

BY JUANITA ROBINSON



*Tiffany Creativity focuses on what goes into creating some of Tiffany's most beautiful and unique pieces.*