

CATHERINE DETTORI

by Jonathan Powell

LADIES
DAY



Catherine Dettori

Catherine Dettori thoroughly deserves her turn in the spotlight at Epsom this weekend as the face of the Derby Festival. Slim and stylishly elegant Catherine has enjoyed the odd day's modelling for magazines in the past alongside her husband Frankie, one of the best known sportsmen on the planet.

This time she is the one who will be centre stage at the course where Frankie romped to victory on the well backed favourite Authorized twelve months ago.

Catherine chose to use some of her own clothes plus smart new hats during an entertaining two day shoot at the Dettori home at Stetchworth a few miles from Newmarket.

"I loved every minute of it. We did lots of shots inside and outside the house. Some of them included the miniature skewbald pony we bought for our youngest son Rocco", she says.

The not inconsiderable business of bringing up five young children aged between eight and three has inevitably restricted Catherine's appearances at the Derby. Not to mention the nagging feeling that her presence on the big day might have put a jinx on his chances in the race that had eluded him for so long. But all that has changed since Frankie ended his drought on Authorized.

She says "Things haven't tended to go well for Frankie in the Derby in recent seasons. He used to get quite depressed on the run-up to the race.

But as he gets older he has become more relaxed about these things".

Catherine was joined at her home by her parents a year ago as they watched Authorized and his jockey triumph in unforgettable style. She recalls "I was still shouting once they had gone past the winning post because I couldn't quite believe it".

This time she will be on hand at Epsom to cheer him on. Yet you sense she speaks for so many hard working housewives as she says "Normally if I am having a day off from the children I like to do something else than stand around all day in high heels and look at horses.

"But this is different and I am definitely going to enjoy the experience. It's really nice to be asked to be the face of the Derby though I probably will not see much of Frankie. He likes to get to the course early and head for the weighing-room."

Catherine was briefly a jockey, too. Three years ago she won a charity race at Newbury on Cristoforo then promptly retired from the saddle. These days her riding is restricted to accompanying her eldest children Leo, 8 and Ella, 7, on their ponies.

She met her future husband when she led him up in a race at Haydock while on holiday from a course in Classical studies at Surrey University. On their first date he took her to the cinema in Cambridge followed by a pizza. They have been inseparable ever since.

