



## **CHAMPIONS SEASON 2008**

It's massive, it's spectacular and it's thrilling – it's Gold Circle's Champions Season 2008.

The champions are coming from far and wide for Africa's premier racing festival where the 48 feature races at 16 meetings spread over one hundred days carry total stakes of R17 150 000.

It is the most comprehensive programme of superior racing on the African continent and it's all taking place on the three race tracks in KwaZulu-Natal – Greyville, Clairwood and Scottsville.

It is the showcase of South Africa's racing industry and the jewel in the crown is the R3-million Vodacom Durban July, the most famous and most spectacular racing and social event in the country.

It's the ultimate gathering of the country's leading thoroughbreds and more than 300 horses from Gauteng and the Western Cape will move into stables at Clairwood and Summerveld to prepare for the major clashes that will determine the real champions of the land.

It all began 111 years ago when what is now the Vodacom Durban July was first run as the Durban Turf Club Handicap over 1 600m. As it grew in stature it attracted more and more horses to Durban and the big race has been run every single year since over various distances. Not even the war years could stop it and when torrential rain nearly stopped the racemeeting, the balance of the meeting was abandoned but the big race itself took place.

As it grew in importance so it began to attract horses from other provinces, first from Gauteng and then from wherever there were horses that showed champion potential.

And as more and more horses made the annual trip to Durban, so the programmes at the then three racing clubs in the province – Durban Turf Club, Clairwood Turf Club and Pietermaritzburg Turf Club – originally the City Sporting Club – began to expand. They staged races to cater for the various classes of horse from sprinters through milers and middle distance runners to stayers.

KwaZulu-Natal became the only region where all the top horses could finally meet and the real champions emerged.

Africa's Champions Season was born.

