

# POLO

Equestrian



2007

# Polo calendar shares message of courage

By DONALD CAVANAUGH  
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM

No, this is not your typical Sierra Club wall calendar.

It's nothing like the historic Wellington calendar envisioned by Mary Ann Grant, chairwoman of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Equestrian of the Year fundraising campaign.

And that's a good thing.

"Who wants to look at historical Wellington?" said Maureen Ebel, last year's committee chairwoman. "The men are sexy!"

Thirty dollars gets you a glossy "The Men of Polo" calendar and the opportunity to stare at 13 polo players, who safely could be called rough, rugged and attractive.

The calendar covers 13 months, from January to January 2008, and is packed with photographs of international polo stars, including Agustin Molinas, Nacho Figueras, Brandon Phillips and Lolo Castagnola.

The money supports the society.

And what better time for a calendar than now, as thousands of visitors pack Wellington for both polo season and the Winter Equestrian Festival?

The portraits and action shots are the work of polo photographer Ricardo Motran of Snoopy Productions.

Last year, Grant and committee members Ebel and Laura Ngo devised the idea.

They launched it a few weeks ago with the start of polo season, and planned to sell calendars at a booth during matches at the International Polo Club.

As a bonus, those hunky guys who grace the calendar's pages would be available to autograph their photos.

Two anonymous donors underwrote the production of 500 calendars.

"They're hot," said Ngo, referring to the 13 polo players who are "The Men of Polo." "I don't know much about polo, but I know these guys are hot."

Grant is a Hodgkin's lymphoma survivor and founder and chairwoman of the committee to raise money for blood cancer research during Wellington's annual polo season. She also is a top dressage rider.

Ebel, also an equestrian, lost her husband to Hodgkin's lymphoma. She said of her friend: "When Mary Ann was sick and taking treatments, she saw a lot of other people and a lot of children who didn't do so well, and she made a promise that if she survived the cancer she would raise money to help others."

"We got the idea for the calendar from 'Calendar Girls,'" she said.

"It's a great British film about breast cancer survivors who created a calendar to raise money for breast cancer. It was more risqué that our calendar, but it was a great hit and we hope our calendar will do well, too."

When asked about favorite months, Ngo responded: "January. He's so gorgeous!"

"I think they're all handsome," Grant said. "I may have a favorite or two, but for me, their willingness to share themselves for this cause makes them all equally handsome."

"That's not what it's about," said polo player Brandon Phillips, who fills the March page.

"Mary Ann is doing important work and I want to help her. I'm a survivor, too. We need to help other people over-



**TIES THAT BIND:** Mary Ann Grant and Brandon Phillips are cancer survivors who want others to beat blood cancers and support the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's programs.

Staff photo/Jackie Gerena

come these diseases."

The calendar is only one of several parts of this year's Equestrian of the Year program. A cocktail reception and silent auction are scheduled Feb. 15, and an awards ceremony follows Feb. 18.

According to society

statistics, about 106,700 people in the United States will be diagnosed with leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma this year. Leukemia and lymphomas are the leading cancers in men under 35.

Calendars are available at the Tackeria, 13889 Wellington Trace,

Wellington. Call 561-793-2012 or 561-793-6422.

Beyond the Barn, 13860 Wellington Trace, also sells them. Call 561-333-5255.

For information about the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, call 561-775-9954 or visit [www.tlls.org/pbec](http://www.tlls.org/pbec).