

RIDING HIGH

Sophisticated, uncompromising and performance-driven: Texas businessman and Lucchese Polo Team owner John Muse's Challenger 300 jet embodies the characteristics that have made Muse himself a captivating player at the office, on the polo field and in the air.

BY JENNIFER EVANS



For John Muse, enjoying downtime while traveling isn't an option. Between his roles as chairman of Dallas-based private equity firm HM Capital Partners and chairman of historic luxury-boot-maker Lucchese, husband and father of five, avid polo player and owner of the Lucchese Polo Team, every moment is spoken for – and that includes the time he spends flying. So when it came time to purchase a new business aircraft in 2008, the charismatic Forth Worth, Texas-born investor was instantly drawn to the Challenger 300 jet.

RAMP APPEAL

"The aesthetics certainly factor in. The defining moment was more about the performance envelope of the aircraft, but I have to tell you, I personally feel that drive-up and ramp appeal of the Challenger 300 jet. The interior is classic and contemporary. I think it's one of the most beautiful, sexiest airplanes out there."

STATS

Name
John Muse

Base
Dallas, Texas

Position
Chairman,
HM Capital
Partners; Owner,
Lucchese Polo Team

Aircraft
Challenger 300 jet



UP IN THE AIR

"I use the jet to go to and from board meetings as well as to look at new companies to invest in. We can fly from Dallas to Vancouver, where we have a company, and the jet can easily make London from the East Coast. On the flight over, we'll have the whole deal team talking about what we want to achieve on the trip. On the way back, we use the time to discuss our impressions of our meetings, rather than sitting on a commercial flight where you just can't discuss that kind of information. We added the option of a sliding door in the front, making the cabin even quieter."

DECIDING FACTOR

"I was looking at three different aircraft but what tipped the balance in favor of the Challenger 300 jet was its range [3,100 nautical miles, or 5,741 kilometers], fuel efficiency and the price points in the Smart Parts Program. I felt that the Challenger 300 jet met my needs and was the best value."

PHOTOS: DANNY TURNER (JOHN MUSE)



And by value, I don't just mean price, but the life cycle, including what it costs to operate. And with my family of seven, the option to configure the seating into nine passenger seats with a couch really worked."

ALL ON BOARD

"My family uses the jet to get to our holiday home in Aspen – skiing is my first passion, polo is my second – and we just did a family trip to South America. Customizing your travel is a plus: You get more time to spend with each other instead of hanging around at airports. I also mix a lot of my commitments together. So while I may travel to Brazil with family on vacation, I'm looking at investment opportunities some of the time.

The only time of year I take off is the six-week polo season in Santa Barbara. I've also flown the entire Lucchese Polo Team when it was difficult to make commercial arrangements. Recently, we used it to reach a snow polo tournament in Aspen. Aspen's hard to get into, so it made our lives easier. It's the first time I've ever tried playing polo in the snow. We had good fun but I think I'll stick to grass polo."

WELL-HEELED

"Historically, Lucchese boots have been Western heritage equestrian, everything from Western pleasure [riding] to rodeo, but if you think about Lucchese as being the high end of the Western boot business, it's very compatible with the demographics that polo attracts. We've been involved in polo sponsorship for the last two years and we are introducing a line of women's fashion boots that have a riding profile to them. They're gorgeous."

HORSE PLAY

"Growing up I played football, and in college I learned how to play intercollegiate lacrosse. I started playing polo in 2001 while living in England. I liked watching it, tried a three-day introductory package and just fell in love. Polo became my passion. It's got speed, danger, power. I guess I'm a bit of an adrenaline junkie. I started out slowly and stepped it up after I came to the U.S. Purchasing horses, putting teams together and developing the right strategy for a winning formula taps into my business skill set. There's a lot of strategy and investment decision-making that goes on." ■

ADOLFO CAMBIASO: POLO CEO

Meet the man leading the Lucchese Polo Team to victory.



You'd be hard-pressed to name a bigger polo star than 36-year-old player Adolfo Cambiaso, a polo prodigy from the age of 12 and currently ranked number one in the world. Some argue that the Argentinean sportsman has

done for polo what a young Tiger Woods did for golf, taking the royal sport into the 21st century.

Lucchese Polo Team owner John Muse supports the comparison: "Adolfo's incredibly exciting to watch." Cambiaso led the Lucchese Polo Team to victory last year at the 100th Bombardier Pacific Coast Open in Santa Barbara. Muse's strategy of bringing the legend on board was a winning one. Lucchese claimed the trophy without losing a single match, and Muse is as thrilled as the hordes of spectators who line the fields to catch a glimpse.

"A lot of people spend time talking about what a gifted and talented player Adolfo is, but I think what I appreciate about him is that he's the consummate professional in every way," says Muse. "He doesn't just rely on his talent. He works very hard to not only maintain his proficiency, but to raise it. He reinvests more in horses than anyone I know of in the game. He's also a very effective captain, a playing coach who wants to take your game to the next level. He's the best player in the world – a true inspiration."