

SPORTS

Keeneland's Christa Marrillia: Luxury Woman to Watch 2020

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Christa Marrillia

By STAFF REPORTS

Luxury Daily annually honors 25 smart women executives who show the potential to make a difference next year in the luxury business. This year's list features honorees who have set ambitious goals to achieve in a luxury market that, while growing, is also challenged by rapid changes in consumer behavior and technology.

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Here is one honoree:

Christa Marrillia, vice president/chief marketing officer, [Keeneland](#)

"We live in an experiential economy and this has impacted every facet of our business, including luxury"

What do you most like about your job?

The passion I have for my job is fueled by the mission of my organization.

Keeneland is unique in that 100 percent of our profits are invested back into the thoroughbred industry and our community.

Whether we are auctioning off hundreds of millions of dollars in thoroughbreds, conducting world-class race meetings or hosting spectacular events, investing with Keeneland is an investment in the future of our sport and our community.

It is incredibly fulfilling to further this mission and be a part of this amazing organization.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

The Keeneland brand is revered in the industry and steeped in tradition.

As a marketer, there is always the challenge of protecting the history and mystic of Keeneland, while being innovative and fresh.

What was once thought of as a boutique race track and global auction house is now applauded for hosting music

festivals, culinary experiences and creating cutting-edge digital solutions to better understand the sport.

We've innovated in our 83-year history, but do so while being mindful of the protection and enhancement of our brand.

What is your work priority for 2020?

We're looking forward to a tremendous 2020 for Keeneland as we will be the host site for the Breeders' Cup World Championships. This spectacular event attracts the best horses from all over the world competing for \$30 million in purse money.

Keeneland and the city of Lexington shone during the 2015 Breeders' Cup when American Pharoah secured the first and only Grand Slam in history.

We are thrilled to have the opportunity to once again host this prestigious event and are focusing our efforts on the delivery of a spectacular experience for our participants and guests.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

My proudest achievement is one that continues to evolve in the delivery of a luxurious experience to our buyers and sellers participating in Keeneland's four thoroughbred auctions.

Keeneland is the world's largest thoroughbred auction sales company, selling over \$600 million in horses annually to buyers across 30-plus countries.

Our team is relentless in the level of service we extend to these customers with culinary experiences, VIP hospitality lounges and on-site concierge amenities.

The delivery of a chilled bottle of Dom Perignon even to your barn to celebrate the purchase of a million-dollar horse is also a nice touch.

We continue to evolve these offerings and love surprising and delighting our guests.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2020?

As we all know, we live in an experiential economy and this has impacted every facet of our business, including luxury.

The Keeneland team continues to find ways to connect our guests to our brand through unique and, often times, exclusive experiences.

From intimate farm-to-table dinners in the picturesque Keeneland paddock, behind-the-scenes sales tours or watching a race from the winner's circle, we have extended the opportunity to experience luxury and exclusivity to all our fans.

These moments create lasting memories and ultimately fans of Keeneland and our sport.

[Please click here to see the entire Luxury Women to Watch 2020 list](#)

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