



PUNCHESTOWN

Tuesday 24th - Saturday 28th April

# FESTIVAL OVERVIEW 2018



RACING • SOCIAL •  
STYLE • CORPORATE • FAMILY

# Punchestown Festival 2018

The 2018 five day Punchestown Racing Festival takes place from Tuesday 24th to Saturday 28th April and is expected to attract a record crowd of 125,000 people. The Festival is a unique combination of top class sporting action, brilliant live entertainment, style and glamour, wonderful family fun activities, delicious food and all topped off with that famous buzzing atmosphere. The Festival is now firmly established as a social and sporting highlight in the Irish calendar and the event contributes an estimated €64 million to the economy.

## Racing: Punchestown is Where Champions Go

The Punchestown Festival is considered the grand finale of the jump racing season and subsequently attracts the best of Irish and British racing talent. Home grown champions Willie Mullins, Ruby Walsh, Davy Russell, Gordon Elliott and Jessica Harrington take on the might of the British raiders Nicky Henderson and Colin Tizzard among many others.

## Champion Trainers Battle

Once again the Irish Champion Trainers title will be a hard fought battle right to the wire. Last years' champion trainer Willie Mullins, who has dominated proceedings at Punchestown in recent times, is fighting his corner against Gordon Elliott. Elliott is currently in the lead by € 550,801 and became the first Irish trainer to send out 200 winners in a season at Fairyhouse on easter Monday. Nevertheless, Willie Mullins won 9 races throughout the week at Festival 2017 of which 5 were Grade 1 contests, beating Elliott on the line by just under €200,000. With the recent enhancement in prizemoney and €275,000 up for grabs in each feature race, the 2018 title race is most certainly an exciting one. The season's champions, trainers, owners and jockeys are crowned on the concluding day, Saturday 28th.

The races get underway each day at 3.40 apart from Saturday when the first goes to post at 2.35. Each day has what is referred to as a feature race and title sponsors are as follows:

Tuesday 25th April – Boylesports Champion Chase Day

Wednesday 26th April – Coral Punchestown Gold Cup

Thursday 27th April – The Ladbrokes Champion Stayers Hurdle Day

Friday 28th April – The BETDAQ Punchestown Champion Hurdle Day

Saturday 29th April – The AES Festival Family Fun Day – First Race 2.35

# Whats The Big Deal – Business at Punchestown

Like any business the Punchestown Festival is a numbers game and the numbers here are impressive. Regarded as one of Ireland's leading corporate hospitality events, the Kildare venue will play host to over 17,000 corporate clients who will sit for lunch in one of the 30 venues including trackside pavilions, private suites and the newly introduced Corinthian Restaurant. There are almost 1,000 companies directly involved with the event as clients, sponsors, suppliers or corporate partners. Of this number almost 25% of the corporate hospitality product was purchased by UK based companies in 2017.

A wide variety of sectors including construction, pharmaceuticals, financial, insurance, legal and agri business consider Punchestown an invaluable client relations experience and as one long term customer put it "if you're not at Punchestown you can be sure your competitors are!"

2018 marks a year of growth at the home of Irish jump racing. Prize money levels have hit record highs with just over €3 million up for grabs in the 38 sponsored championship races. The massive venue has also just completed phase two of the redevelopment programme and the brand new 'Hunt Stand' situated in the reserved enclosure will be launched on the opening day of the festival.

This will mean racegoers can enjoy much improved facilities within the 'social-hub' of the festival as a brand new Bollinger Bar, Festival Bar, Corinthian Restaurant and much more are unveiled.

The benefits of the festival spill over into the towns, villages and locality with independent research showing an economic impact figure of over €64 million from the five festival days alone. The competitive value, top class racing and famous vibrant atmosphere has not gone unnoticed by our British neighbours who travel in their thousands to attend the jump racing season finale each year. This combined with a nation-wide attendance and an average visit of three days means accommodation suppliers, restaurants, transport, leisure, clothing and beauty treatment services all benefit hugely.

## Famous Social Scene

Punchestown prides itself on the 'festival' aspect of the event and as a result the enclosures are filled with live music and street theatre before and after racing each day. Stilt walkers, fire eaters, dancers and performers greet racegoers as they arrive at the track.

There are 24 public bars on the site and they include the refurbished Loft, Archive, Open Gate, Double Bank and Sports Bars in the grandstand. You can also make your way to the relaunched reserved enclosure, considered the social hub of the festival, and you will find the famous clear roofed Sky Bar, brand new Bollinger & Festival Bars.

Over 15 live music acts and D.J.'s will perform during and after racing not to mention the tipster panels, celebrity interviews, parades, presentations, unveilings and of course the Bollinger Best Dressed Lady Competition

The Baldonnel Singers will perform the National Anthem on the opening day and local stage schools in Leah Moran & Vicki Barrys will perform on the mainstage at our AES Family Day.

# The Bollinger Best Dressed Lady Competition:

The search for the Bollinger Best Dressed Lady will be held over the first four days of the Punchestown Festival, while judges and style scouts will be tasked with finding the most stylish ladies in attendance and selecting a number of finalists each day. The daily winner will then progress to the grand final on Ladies Day, Friday 27th of April.

Finalists on each day will receive fabulous gifts that include a €100 Topflight voucher, Cocoa Brown products, a bottle of Bollinger Champagne and other exclusive goodies, while the overall winner each day will also receive a €200 Topflight voucher and a luxury hamper from Cocoa Brown Tan.

Bollinger's philosophy is that "Life Can Be Perfect", and the family-owned Champagne House stays true to form with a bespoke prize created especially for the winner of Ireland's most coveted fashion title. The 2018 Bollinger Best Dressed Lady at Punchestown will receive a VIP trip for two taking in the Bollinger Estate, Reims and Paris complete with private chauffeur, Michelin-starred dining and luxury accommodation, not to mention a year's supply of Bollinger to top it all off!

Judges include Made In Chelsea star, Rosie Fortescue, GAA Sweetheart and Dancing with the Stars Runner Up Anna Geary, RTÉ TV Presenter and 2FM DJ Bláthnaid Treacy have all been announced as the celebrity judges for throughout the week.

It's important to note that gates open at 12 noon each day and scouting will commence early, festival organisers are encouraging ladies to be on site from 1pm if they are interested in the Bollinger Best Dressed Lady Competition. Judges will choose a selection of those deemed best dressed from the crowd.

## Family Fun at Punchestown with AES

Festival Saturday has become a real success story and it now holds the largest attendance with over 30,000 attending in 2016. It is firmly established as family day, with a vast entertainment and activity programme for children, all of whom race for free of course. Title sponsors AES, part of the Bord Na Mona group, have played a huge role by involving local schools, residents and families. There are 18 primary schools, 7,000 students taking part in the Punchestown Art competition. During the festival a total of 5,000 art entries will be displayed at the racecourse.

In the AES Junior Jockey Fun Club there will be 60,000 square feet of bouncy castles, face painting, pony rides, fancy dress and a huge funfair making it a brilliant and most importantly budget friendly day out for all the family. A key feature of the AES Family day programme is the mascot parade. Children from each of the schools taking part in the art competition will accompany the jockeys from the weigh-room to the parade ring where they will get the official photograph taken on the winner's podium. Punchestown was the first racecourse to introduce this initiative. All children 14 and under race for free. This is all part of the Punchestown policy to encourage the next generation of racegoer.

# Festival Shopping Village

The famous shopping village at the festival has also had a 'revamp' and will now be known as 'The Street'. Over 40 exhibitors showcasing brands from Ireland, the UK and France will now be located in an indoor marquee on the way to the reserved enclosure. Exhibitors will offer a wonderful mix of products and services. So from kids clothing to jewellery, fine art to garden furniture, home wares, underwear, outerwear and everything in between the Festival Shopping Village has it! Festival goers have ample time to wander through the village and make some purchases as gates open two hours before the first race.

## New To Town at Festival 2018

Punchestown Festival 2018 is a time of new beginnings for the course as since last years' festival, phase two of the re-development programme has been completed. With a spend of over €4 million euro a brand new reserved enclosure experience for festival-goers awaits. The launch of the multi-million euro 'Hunt Stand' is highly anticipated for Festival 2018 with exciting new facilities added to the 'social-hub' of the event.

Additions to the reserved enclosure include a beautiful new Bollinger Bar, a brand new Festival Bar and delicious food available in the Fox Den Café. The famous Sky Bar will remain intact and it will surely be buzzing as on previous years with DJ's and live music playing throughout the week.

Punchestown have also launched the brand new Corinthian Restaurant and Goffs Owner's and Trainer's Lounge within the stand. The Goffs Owners and Trainers Lounge has been sponsored by Goffs for the festival and forthcoming season, whilst the brand new 160 diner Corinthian Restaurant is the flagship setting of the new €4 million development. Sold out since December 2017, The Corinthian has appealed to customers because of the incredible views over the final furlong.

## Admission

- €30 General Admission – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.
- €40 Reserved Enclosure Admission – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.
- €40 general admission €50 Reserved Enclosure – Friday.
- From €30pp Party Packs for groups of 10 or more include admission, racecard, betting and drink voucher.
- From €20 Student and OAP Package.
- From €17 Teenage Admission 15/16/17 year olds.

**GATES OPEN 12.00 EACH DAY except Saturday when they will open an hour earlier at 11.30 for family day.**

For further information and a full archive of press releases please visit  
[www.punchestown.com](http://www.punchestown.com)