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Magazine - Ricky Aitken Curator To The Stars!

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By [Editor](#) in [Cricket](#) on [6th Jun 2008 6:00](#)

Cricket is like a religion in India, and former Coaster Ricky Aitken gets to hang out with the gods.

He just mentions in passing spending nights out on the town with Adam Gilchrist and a smattering of the stars of international cricket. The Burnie boy has come a long way from green keeper at the South Burnie Bowls Club. His art is in demand in India, where cricket is big business.

Aitken has just completed the Indian Premier League Twenty20 cricket season with the Deccan Chargers, in Hyderabad. "In the time I have been here I have been involved with many social outings with the Deccan Chargers as I am considered part of the group," Aitken said. "Many of the experiences have led to the early hours of the morning which has been interesting in more ways than one." The Chargers are owned by local newspaper the Deccan Chronicle, and unfortunately finished last in the inaugural season.

But it was still a blast for ground curator Aitken. "The atmosphere at the matches is electric, they have a similar feel to the Premier League soccer matches in England," he said. "Cricket is almost like a religion here in India, almost everyone has a keen interest in cricket here, and everyone likes to be involved in some way or another."



Being a ground curator is a high-powered role. "As a foreigner, almost everyone has an interest in what I am doing and wants to know all about the pitch and its playing characteristics, just so they can get an insight into the match and how it might pan out," Aitken said.

He ordinarily works at the Hong Kong and Kowloon Cricket Club, and that is how he found this role. "As the Indian Premier League is a newly constructed competition with all new teams, there were many positions to be filled. Robin Singh was appointed as coach as the Deccan Chargers (and is also he fielding coach of India) who also coached Hong Kong. "When Robin was in Hong Kong I built up a relationship with him there and he, in conjunction with the franchise owners, offered me a two month contract for the tournament duration." Cricket is recorded in Hong Kong as far back as 1851 when the Hong Kong Cricket Club was formed. League cricket was established in 1903 with teams from the Hong Kong Cricket Club, the first recorded match played by the KCC took place on 15th October 1904. Today the club boasts the best ground and cricket facilities in Hong Kong and is home to the Hong Kong International Cricket Sixes tournament. KCC regularly hosts international cricket matches and visiting teams from overseas.

And it added a little more international flavour to their outfit. "With so much scrutiny on the pitch, curating is considered a profession, particularly when the trade is applied by a foreigner," Aitken said. He prepared the wicket for seven home matches at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium which was formerly known as Visakha International Stadium. It's the principal cricket stadium in Hyderabad, India and is the home ground of the Hyderabad Cricket Association. It is located in Uppal, & holds 55,000 people.

Now, Aitken is heading back to Hong Kong to start preparing for the season ahead at the HKCC.

Aitken is a very well qualified and experienced curator. He first completed a trade certificate in greenkeeping over four years through Burnie TAFE in conjunction with the South Burnie Bowls Club and Burnie City Council.

He then completed a turf diploma by correspondence through the North Melbourne Tafe over three years. Aitken has also worked at Lords, the home of English cricket.



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