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## TEAM VALOR PURCHASES 3-YEAR-OLD ENGLISH COLT GITANO HERNANDO, NEWMARKET-BASED MARCO BOTTI COLT TO AIM FOR BELMONT STAKES, HERNANDO COLT IS OUT OF GRADED U. S. STAKES WINNER GINO'S SPIRITS



Team Valor International has acquired English-based Gitano Hernando and will point him to the Triple Crown in the United States. The Kentucky outfit syndicated him in a matter of 3 days last week.

Gitano in Spanish means “gypsy” and a gypsy he will be. Plans call for the strapping chestnut colt to prepare in his native England to run “off the plane” in the third leg of the Triple Crown in the \$1-million Belmont Stakes over 1 ½ miles.

The game plan moving forward is to leave the colt in England until a week before the Belmont Stakes. Team Valor will keep its

options open so as not to shut the door on a race like the Blue Grass or the Wood Memorial, in case the colt comes around quicker than anticipated.

The most probable scenario finds Gitano Hernando racing March 18 at Kempton Park on a synthetic track in the \$150,000 [Kentucky Derby Trial Stakes](#) going 9 furlongs. He mostly likely will race again in April and make his final start in advance of the Belmont Stakes on May 7 (the Tuesday after the Kentucky Derby) in the Dee Stakes going 10.3 furlongs on grass.

Gitano Hernando remains with his developer, 32-year-old ex-Italian jockey Marco Botti, son of leading Italian trainer Alduino Botti. In three starts—two on grass and one on all-weather—the colt split the field in his debut and ran second, both going about a mile, then romped by more than 4 lengths going 9 ½ furlongs on the synthetic track at Kempton Park.

“I like the Dee Stakes as a prep for the Belmont,” Irwin said “because Chester is the most American-style race course in England, with lots of turning. The distance of 10.3 furlongs also is an ideal trip for the pre-Belmont prep. It is run on turf, so he should get a good cardio workout, while preserving the freshness in his limbs. Jolly good, what?”

His name may sound foreign, but his origins certainly are not, as all four sires in the third generation of his accomplished pedigree are products of North America, namely Nijinsky, Cure the Blues, Danzig and Miswaki. He is inbred to Buckpasser and Hail to Reason.



His dam Gino's Spirits won a stakes and ran second in the prestigious Group 2 Sun Chariot Stakes in England, then won 4 more stakes in the United States, including the Grade 3 Noble Damsel at Belmont Park to complete a career in which she won 9 races and earned more than \$415,000.