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VISIONAIRE HAS RETURNED IN “GOOD SHAPE” FROM GRADE 3 GOTHAM WIN, MATZ GIVING HIM SOME EASY DAYS, WILL WATCH HIM CLOSELY NEXT WEEK, BLUE GRASS MOST LIKELY FOR NEXT RACE, BUT ILLINOIS DERBY POSSIBLE



*Connections are pleased with the way Visionaire has exited his Gotham Stakes victory.
(Photo courtesy of Jessie Holmes)*

Visionaire, advises trainer Michael Matz from his winter base at Palm Meadows training track near Boynton Beach, Florida, has returned in “good shape” from his weekend victory in the Gotham Stakes at Aqueduct.

Next on the agenda for the chestnut son of Grand Slam is most likely the Blue Grass Stakes. There is a possibility he could run in the Illinois Derby. The Wood Memorial has been ruled out.

“I am giving him some easy days,” revealed Matz. “He’s been back under tack Thursday and Friday. I had him take a trail ride that is available here at Palm Meadows. Next week he will go back to the track and start galloping.

“I am very happy with the way he has come out of the Gotham. We were a bit concerned because the track was very wet and the horses were going right down to the base. Plus Jose Lezcano told me the colt was not getting a hold of the track for the first part of it. But he looks fine to me so far.”

Owned by Team Valor International and Vision Racing LLC, Visionaire ran fast in the Gotham, recording a Beyer number of 98 and a Ragozin Sheet figure of 5 ½.

Barry Irwin, principal of Team Valor, said “He’s run his big race. Ideally we would like to have him run well without peaking in his last race before the Kentucky Derby. But as Michael says, this colt knows only one thing and that is running hard, so it behooves us to make the correct decision about where we run him next.”

Irwin likes the Blue Grass, because it will afford Visionaire 5 weeks between the Gotham and the Keeneland race. “He had a fast race, he ran hard and he had to be flown roundtrip,” Irwin said. “That takes something out of a horse and they usually need time to recover.

“The 3 weeks between the Blue Grass and the Derby may be a little close for this particular colt, but because it comes on Polytrack, it should lessen the impact to his body.”

Matz will watch Visionaire closely over the next 2 weeks. “The colt will tell us what he wants to do. If he bounces back quickly, maybe it would make more sense to run him in the Illinois Derby, which gives him 4 weeks between races for both of his next 2 races.

“Let’s see how the colt acts in the coming weeks. This will also give us a chance to see which horses are going where and what transpires in races over the next couple of weekends.”

Visionaire has \$180,000 in Graded earnings after taking down \$150,000 for the win at Aqueduct. He previously earned \$30,000 for finishing third behind Pyro in the Grade 3 Risen Star Stakes.

