

April 11, 2009

MY KAZZIE BREAKS HER MAIDEN BY 8 ½ LENGTHS AT THE BIG T IN JOBURG, NATIONAL YEARLING SALE GRADUATE LOOKS SPECIAL FOR TEAM VALOR, PROVIDES BARRY IRWIN WITH HIS 700TH WIN FOR A RACING PARTNERSHIP

My Kazzie scored a stylish 8 ½-length victory on Saturday in the first race at Turffontein race course in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The 2-year-old Western Winter filly, who was a troubled fifth beaten 1 ¼ lengths two weeks ago debuting in a Grade 3 stakes, was bought at the National Yearling Sale by Barry Irwin.

The juvenile provided a milestone victory, as the win was number 700 for a runner racing for a partnership formed since 1987 by Barry Irwin, the owner of Team Valor International of Versailles, Kentucky.



My Kazzie, Gavin Lerena up, strides clear to break her maiden at Turffontein race course on Saturday for an Irwin partnership's 700th milestone triumph.

The first starter to represent a partnership of 14 fillies bought at the National Yearling Sale last year, My Kazzie broke smartly, was 2 lengths on top coming out of the bend in the 1200-meter race and doubled that margin when tapped once by Gavin Lerena.

“She thought she had done enough, Gavin told me,” said trainer Mike Azzie, “so he wanted to keep her mind on business. He used the whip again because she was just loafing and pricking her ears. That’s when she went well clear. She’s a special filly, as I’ve been saying all along.”

Irwin honored Azzie in naming My Kazzie, as the Gauteng trainer developed two Grade 1 fillies for Team Valor International last season. National Yearling Sale graduate On Her Toes scored a dead-heat triumph in the Allan Robertson Fillies Championship and the older runner Stratos won the stable’s second consecutive Empress Club Stakes.

“The South Africans, much like the English, have a speech pattern that drops the end of the first name and adds it to the beginning of the second name,” laughed Irwin. “So I thought I would honor Mike and toss a little word play into the bargain.”

The timing of the victory was propitious, as Team Valor is in the final stages of finalizing its 2009 draft of fillies from the National Yearling Sale that was completed earlier in the week, when Irwin bid in 8 new fillies. Among the newcomers is a half-sister to Captain’s Lover, an inexpensive National Yearling Sale grad that went on to win the Classic Grade 1 Cape Fillies Guineas en route to being named Champion Filly at 3 the year before last. Captain’s Lover won a Group 3 in France for Andre Fabre last summer and now is close to her United States debut for Todd Pletcher.