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## TEAM VALOR BUYS VERY PROMISING 3YO FILLY MY NAN NELL IN BRITAIN, ENGLISH-BASED SOPHOMORE IS FULLY SYNDICATED WITHIN A FEW DAYS, MARCO BOTTI WILL START OFF WITH FILLY BOUND FOR NORTH AMERICA



My Nan Nell, who was bought late last week in England by Team Valor, has been fully subscribed. Barry Irwin and Aron Wellman consider this diamond in the rough to have unlimited potential.



*My Nan Nell won her second career outing with her ears pricked, looking for more to do, in a maiden run at Wolverhampton that was identical to the one won by Gitano Hernando.*

money. This has never happened before, but I sure could get used to this!”

Team Valor, like everybody else that buys horses, has been unable to buy suitable young prospects for quite awhile, because in an ever-changing marketplace that is now on the upswing, nobody wants to be caught leaving as much as a farthing on the table.

“The only young horse we’ve managed to pluck this year was the 3-year-old filly Marseria in Italy,” Irwin said. “So being able to find a filly of this one’s potential all wrapped up and ready to go is nothing short of a miracle for us. We don’t know what we did to deserve this luck out, but we’ll take it.”

My Nan Nell made an auspicious racing debut in February when sent off at 40 to 1 over a mile on the all-weather surface at Lingfield race course. *Racing Post* wrote as follows: “My Nan Nell, who cost just 1,000 pounds and is out of a winner at up to 1m4f, ran a remarkable debut. Having broken from the gates, she then seemed reluctant to race and took an age to break into a gallop, thereby gifting her rivals a huge advantage. She then pulled hard when back in touch with the others but then met trouble rounding the home bend, which knocked her back to last. Despite that, she was noted finishing strongly down the centre of the track and is well worth keeping an eye on.”

The chestnut had been prospected, vetted and contracted for purchase by a speculator that could not come up with the money to finalize the acquisition and Team Valor gladly stepped into the breach to save the day!

“How sweet is this?” said Barry Irwin. “We didn’t have to negotiate the price with the principal. We didn’t have to wait to get the filly vetted or find a qualified horseman to look her over for us. We just stepped up to the plate an hour before the bank’s cutoff time for submitting wire transfers and sent the



*Gitano Hernando won the same kind of race, on the same race track and at the same distance as My Nan Nell. He went on to become one of the best synthetic runners in the world in 2009.*

make room for herself, went very wide into the homestretch without any loss of momentum, exploded to reach the leaders and simply blew them away with a turn of foot that was electrifying. She won with her ears pricked and looking for more to do. She won as though a different class of animal entirely.

*Racing Post* wrote as follows: “The first three were unexposed, but the fourth had solid maiden form on turf. My Nan Nell, who showed promise on her debut, had learnt plenty from that experience and put it to good use. Brought widest of all in the straight, and well suited by the extra distance, she picked up with relish and deserves to be given credit for this rather than being dismissed as a fluke winner.”

The next three home all seem well above average, headed in the right direction and received positive comments from *Racing Post*, which rarely has much good to say about any horse, especially a maiden that does not win.



My Nan Nell was a 1,000-pound yearling. Don't misread this—she didn't weigh 1,000 pounds, she cost that much! She was sired by a New Zealand stallion and was the second foal produced from a French mare. So it is understandable that British horsemen were unable to relate to her catalogue page. She would not be the first major winner bought by Team Valor that sold for peanuts as a yearling or a weanling. Grade 1 Beldame winner and \$1.9-million earner Unbridled Belle sold for the equivalent of 2,000 pounds and she had a very nice pedigree. She was just gawky at the time. And there have been plenty of others.

My Nan Nell has been sent immediately to Marco Botti in Newmarket. “We asked Marco to train her for awhile, evaluate her and then we will come up with a game plan. Right now all we really know about her is that she has a ton of raw ability and blazing finishing speed. Before we formulate a plan going forward, we want Marco to breeze her on the grass and see how she handles that surface.

The filly split a 12-horse field and was beaten less than 4 lengths. The filly then switched trainers for her second start.

Returning just shy of a month later on the Polytrack at the same Wolverhampton racetrack and over the same 9 ½-furlong distance that Gitano Hernando broke his maiden, My Nan Nell was 9 to 1 in what turned out to be a hot little contest featuring maidens of both sexes.

Briefly stated, the “Comments in Running” cryptically stated “Held up and behind, headway just over 1 furlong out, led well inside final furlong, ran on well.” What it doesn't say is that when she was ready to make her move heading for home, she moved one horse out of her way to



“If she doesn’t act on grass it will be startling to say the least. We are going to be flexible over the next 6 to 8 weeks with the filly while we evaluate her.

“Once we think we know what we have, we will point her in the best direction. I can see her running once or maybe twice abroad, then heading to run in a big stakes race off the plane in North America. Her first start might be at Woodbine on the Polytrack, or it might be on turf at Belmont Park or it might be at Saratoga on grass. A start at Del Mar in the Grade 1 is not out of the question. We’ve done that successfully before.”

Team Valor bought the filly to make her mark in the United States, but the stable plans to take full advantage of her being in England with Botti, who will be able to get her fitter than any trainer can in North America. No trainer will be chosen for the filly until it is time for her to come to America.

My Nan Nell now gives Team Valor a very strong hand in the 3-year-old filly division with Marseria being her counterpart in France, where she is training under a similarly flexible program with trainer John Hammond. My Nan Nell is proven on synthetics and probably will act on turf. Marseria is proven on dirt and turf. My Nan Nell figures to be effective from 8 ½ to 12 furlongs. Marseria figures to do her best between 8 and 10 furlongs.

Barry Irwin said “This filly has a sneaky good pedigree if one bothers to delve into it and she is one that slipped through the cracks. Both her sire and dam could run and they are both very young.”

The new Team Valor colorbearer was sired by Danroad, a top son of the ill-fated Danehill, who was the world’s most sought after stallion at the time of his death a couple of years ago. Danehill arguably would have become the world’s most influential sire had he lived a full life. As it was, he went right past Sadler’s Wells in the Coolmore hierarchy and was getting their best mares at the end of his life. Danehill rewrote the record books in Australasia and was beginning to dominate in Great Britain and Europe when his brilliant light was snuffed out.



His son Danroad was the second highest-ranked 2-year-old colt of his crop in New Zealand, where the Group 2 winner won 5 stakes.

Well-muscled Danroad was installed at stud in New Zealand, where he has gotten off to a fast start. With 29 runners from his first crop, he was sent out 5 stakes horses, including a Group 1 winner, as well as a Group 2 winner that was beaten a nose in the Group 1 New Zealand Derby. With his second crop, he led all New Zealand sires with his 3-year-olds.

My Nan Nell comes from a very productive branch of one of the most successful female lines in the English Stud Book. Her fourth dam Hardiemma was responsible for several Champions and Derby winners, including Horse of the Year Shirley Heights, the English Derby winner that became Leading Sire in both Great Britain and Europe, including siring English Derby winner Slip Anchor and French Derby winner Darshaan (himself a Leading Sire and Leading Broodmare Sire).



One of Hardiemma's daughters Millieme, a full sister to Shirley Heights, is responsible for some of the top runners in France over the past 20 years, including the brilliant Divine Proportions, a 5-time Group 1 winner of the French Guineas and Oaks that was Champion Filly in France at both 2 and 3.

Hardiemma also is responsible for Divine Proportion's full brother Whipper, a 3-time Group 1 winner and Champion Older Horse in France, and the successful filly Ocean Silk, a Co-Champion Stayer and English stakes winner that was second in the Group 1 Yorkshire Oaks.

***My Nan Nell hails from a family that is steeped in stamina and brilliance. Shirley Heights (up) was a Derby-winning sire of Derby winners. He was the Leading Sire in England and Europe. Divine Proportions was brilliantly fast, yet she had the bottom and quality to stretch her speed a Classic distance, as shown below, when she won the Group 1 French Oaks in a common canter. She won five Group 1 races.***

Bempton, an unraced daughter by English Derby winner Blakeney and the third dam of My Nan Nell, is responsible for 11 stakes winners. Her daughter Gulf Nook, who like her half-brother Shirley Heights was sired by Mill Reef, won the Group 2 Ribblesdale Stakes at Royal Ascot, a race second in prestige only to the Group 1 English Oaks among races for Classic 3-year-old fillies in England. Gulf Nook in turn was the dam of Pentire, a 3-time Champion in England, where she won the Group 1 Champion Stakes at Newmarket and the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II Stakes at Ascot. Other top runners from Bempton's brood include Konigstiger (Champion Colt and Group 1 winner at 2 in Italy), Spring (a mare good enough to consistently beat males in English Group races over ground), Karavel (Group winner and second in the Group 1 German Oaks), Kala (French Group-winning filly), Blanket (winner of the Group 3 Princess Royal Stakes in England over ground), Mr. Pintips (staying Group winner and second in the Group 1 Irish St. Leger).

Significantly all 11 stakes winners hailing from Bempton won stakes going long on grass and in many instances, the big races they won were over extended ground.

Chirrup, the second dam of My Nan Nell, produced Tiviolo, winner of 7 of his 14 starts in France, including the mile-and-a-quarter Prix de de Vase d'Argent.

Princess Sonia, the dam of My Nan Nell, won twice in France at 3, from a mile and an eighth and a mile and a mile and a half. Her best race came against older males over 2 ½ miles when she was fifth at Longchamp in the Group 2 Prix Jean Chaudenay.