

## CHIQUITA LIVES UP TO VALOR'S OPINION IN SCINTILLATING DEBUT TRIUMPH, WESTERN WINTER FILLY WINS BIG DESPITE COLD GEOFF WOODRUFF BARN, VALOR/THE SINGHS NOW HAVE THREE TOP CHANCES FOR GUINEAS GLORY



Chiquita was the highest-priced filly bought two years ago at the National Yearling Sale in South Africa by Barry Irwin, who always had the highest hopes for her. She got off to a bit of a late start to her career, mostly owing to the fact that her trainer Geoff Woodruff has been plagued with a suspected virus in his yard and he was extra careful about pushing some of his most promising youngsters before they were ready..

The delayed start was well worth the wait, as Chiquita restored a bit of confidence to the yard when she put in an electrifying move in the final quarter-mile to put away what appeared to be a strong field and win under wraps by 3 lengths in a 6-furlong maiden race on Wednesday in Durban at Clairwood.

Anant Singh, who lives in Durban with his wife Vanashree, was on hand and came away impressed that he and Team Valor International now had its third Classics prospect of the current crop of fillies bought as yearlings. Chiquita now joins Grade 1 heroine On Her Toes and debut Cape Town winner Jet Park as a bona fide candidate for Grade 1 races starting later this season in South Africa.

Barry Irwin signed a ticket for 1.2-million rand or about \$175,000 for the filly at the sale, which makes her the most expensive filly he had ever bought at the yearling sale in South Africa. When he bought 10 yearlings, Irwin decided to divide them into a pair of 5-filly partnerships. Chiquita is in the group that already has Jet Park, whereas Grade 1 winner On Her Toes is in the other group. "That's nice," said Irwin, "because now both groups are loaded. I was starting to feel badly that one group might have an edge over the other. Now things have more than evened out."

Here is what appeared in Team Valor's "Headline News" after the sale:

Chiquita is a bay filly that cost 1.2 million ZAR (\$175,000). She is by Western Winter out of Caramanta, by Fairy King. She is the second foal from a 3-time winner in Germany. The dam is a half-sister to a Champion Stayer and winner of the German St. Leger over 1 ¾ miles and the dam was produced by the a stakes-winning daughter of German super sire Surumu. The filly's broodmare sire Fairy King is the highly successful full brother to Sadler's Wells whose own son Encosta de Lago was imported from Australia to Ireland to cover Coolmore Stud mares originally meant for Sadler's Wells, whose fertility is declining. Irwin said "She has the kind of pedigree I like, because she is by a hot, highly-bred American type stallion out of a coarse, stamina-bred German family. This often ignites a fire in the family." Irwin said that physically she is well balanced, strong, racy and has a beautiful cameo-like head."

Barry Irwin now says “The interesting thing about this filly is that she obviously has brilliant speed, but her pedigree gives her a right to expect even more when she is stretched out. A mile was never going to be a problem, but 9 or even 10 furlongs might be well within her scope, because physically she is atypical of the normally heavy-bodied Western Winters. She is quite elegant and lithe in her physique and gives one much hope for the future.”

In the post-race interview, a much-relieved trainer Geoff Woodruff himself mentioned that the filly should “get a trip.” The lone concern over the filly has been her mouth. A tongue tie was tried to keep her airway open, but she did not take kindly to having it tied down on her. Her racing debut, which was to have taken place a couple of times before, had to be delayed when she developed an ulcerated area where the tongue tie rubbed against her mouth.



*Luka Madikani, groom of Chiquita, leads the filly in.*

Woodruff switched to a figure 8 bridle and the problem was solved.

Chiquita has already caught the fancy of the racing press, as in the daily “European Breeders Newsletter,” the South African section this week was devoted in considerable part to mentioning the brilliant debut effort of the filly.

### **FOR THE NOTEBOOK**



At Clairwood on Wednesday, three-year-old Chiquita, a striking, almost black daughter of Western Winter, had the opposition stone cold at the quarter mark and, notwithstanding signs of inexperience in the closing stages, powered away to an easy three-length debut victory over 1200m.

Bred at Maine Chance Farms, the filly was a R1.2-million purchase by Barry Irwin of Team Valor International at the Select Session of the 2007 National Yearling Sale. She is the second foal and winner out of the German-bred Caramanta (Fairy King), a winning half-sister to German St Leger victor Caballo (Königsstuhl), the champion three-year-old stayer in Germany in 1994. The grandam Carmelita (Surumu) won the Festa Rennen and came fourth in the German 1,000 Guineas.

Chiquita is the latest offspring of Western Winter to start for Team Valor International, which last season won the Grade 1 Allan Robertson Fillies Championship in a deadheat with its National Yearling acquisition On Her Toes, who has been nominated for an Equus Award in the category of 2-year-old filly for the 2007-2008 racing season.

Last season the stable was also represented by the Western Winter colt Field Event, who placed in a Grade 1 behind Champion juvenile colt Argonaut. Field Event is now in training with Neil Bruss at his yard in England.

Team Valor has another pair of new Western Winter fillies coming up in the latest crop of 2-year-old fillies for the 2008-2009 racing season.