

October 5, 2009

**JUNIA TEPZIA REWARDS FAITHFUL WITH IMMEDIATE PAYDIRT IN STAKES, JUVENILE ROCK OF GIBRALTAR FILLY CAT HOPS IN LISTED RACE IN ITALY, TIMEFORM RATES STERLING PERFORMANCE 105; BREEDERS' CUP UP NEXT**



Team Valor has done it again. The international stable headed by Signore Barry Irwin has hit immediate paydirt with recent German-trained, Italian-raced Junia Tepzia. The Rock of Gibraltar filly, who was prospected and acquired by Team Valor after a debut win on a second-rate circuit in Merano, romped home by a widening 3 ¼ lengths on Saturday in the \$91,000 Premio Coolmore at San Siro in Milan in just her second lifetime outing.

The Kentucky-based stable now has bought two fillies from the German yard of Peter Schiergen and both won stakes races in their first outings, as previously the Schiergen-trained Touch My Soul was a Group 3 victress in The Rhineland before running second in a Graded race in her American debut.



“Peter is a consummate horseman and an admirable professional to deal with,” said Irwin. “He has done a fine job in preparing this filly for her effort last weekend. We will now have him ready her for an invasion to California.”

Junia Tepzia is the latest success story from Italy for Team Valor, which has done some serious damage in The Boot, including Italian ex-pats Sweet Stream and Becrux, both of whom went on to become Grade 1 winners outside their native land while donning the crimson and green.

Junia Tepzia is the newest star for the stable, which has made a habit out of plucking diamonds from obscurity and producing them for wins on the global stage. In the aftermath of Junia Tepzia's scintillating victory on Saturday, she appears destined for the spotlight on the biggest stage the world has to offer, the Breeders' Cup, where she will likely face the starter at Santa Anita on November 6 in the \$1-million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf at a mile around the Arcadia oval.

*Timeform* confirmed the quality of Junia Tepzia's runaway procession in the Listed Premio Coolmore when it rated the win with a 105p, the "p" indicating that the performance might actually be even better than the venerable British ratings service has been able to rate it. The rating validates the impressiveness of the race from a visual perspective and catapults Junia Tepzia to an elite position among her age and sex.

"We knew the race was good," said Irwin. "But, as excited as we all were, we didn't want to get too far ahead of ourselves. When we learned of the 105 *Timeform* rating Monday, the Breeders' Cup became a no-brainer. For this filly to do what she has done in such a short period of time is amazing. Her win on Saturday was superb and what really gets the juices flowing is that she looks one to improve with age and seasoning."



*Junia Tepzia powers to Premio Coolmore win at 7 ½ furlongs.*

Junia Tepzia's sire, Rock of Gibraltar, is white hot at the moment, having on the same weekend sired the winners of the Group 1 Prix de la Foret at Longchamp in an upset of Goldikova and the Grade 1 Epsom Handicap in Australia.

The dam of Junia Tepzia is a half-sister to one of the leading freshman sires in the United Kingdom in English Two Thousand Guineas hero Footstepsinthesand, who just this past week had his 17<sup>th</sup> progeny visit the winners' enclosure. The Listed win by Junia Tepzia has boosted her value exponentially.

"This is a coup," Irwin proclaimed. "Without question Junia Tepzia's value has soared in a matter of a couple of weeks. Should she step up and win a Graded race, and she certainly has the look of a Graded caliber filly, there's no telling where her value might level off. We are happy for our partners who put their faith in us once again and are now reaping the benefits. We plan to put the wheels in motion to send her to California to compete in the Breeders' Cup."

On Saturday, Junia Tepzia was faced with significant adversity. A late scratch at the gate forced the race to be delayed some 15 minutes. Junia Tepzia appeared to be peeved by the delay and when the assistant starters summonsed her for her turn to enter the gate, she threw a bit of a hissy-fit, pinning her ears back and balking repeatedly. Fortunately, the gate crew exhibited patience with her and after at least a minute of coaxing, convinced her to enter the stalls.

Once in the gate, Junia put on her game face and was all business. She broke sharply from her inside stall and was keen to contest the early pace. In the opening hundred yards it appeared as though she might become rank and fall victim to a pace duel, but fill-in jockey Gabrielle Biotelini did an admirable job persuading the filly to relax and allow the other speed to clear off.

Within a sixteenth of a mile, Junia had settled into a comfortable rhythm while racing in second, approximately 3 lengths off the pacesetter. Biotelini was sitting still as a statue and his arms were motionless as Junia galloped along at a good cruising speed while racing well against the bridle. Biotelini's confidence halfway through the race could be seen from across the pond and when he remained still at the head of the stretch and the other jockeys started flailing on their mounts, it was clear he was loaded for bear.

When the field straightened for home, Biotoleni had yet to give Junia her cue, yet the filly managed to maintain her position with dead-aim on the leader despite the fact that the other 9 runners were already being asked for their best. At the quarter-pole, Biotelini crouched down in the saddle ever so slightly and squeezed on the reins a bit. The response he got must have been akin to riding on a hover plane.



*Trainer Peter Schiergen beams after Touch My Soul's win German Group 3 in a lone start for Team Valor as a 3-year-old filly in The Rhineland.*

Junia Tepzia lowered her head, lengthened her stride and leveled out her body in majestic style as she accelerated and immediately put daylight on her competition. The final margin of victory was 3 ¼-lengths, but the mere number does little justice for the consummate ease with which Junia disposed of her foes.

The strong Irish-bred bay filly stopped the official teletimer in 1:30 and change, which was a full 2 seconds, or 10 lengths faster than 3-year-old colts completed the same circuit earlier on the card at the San Siro race course in Milan.

Junia Tepzia is not nominated to the Breeders' Cup, but her sire, Rock of Gibraltar is a Breeders' Cup nominated stallion, so Team Valor and its partners will have to pay a 9 percent supplementary nomination to the \$1-million fixture.

This fee includes all starter fees and makes Junia Tepzia eligible for all Breeders' Cup races with bonus purses for the remainder of her career. Furthermore, the \$90,000 supplementary fee is added to the purse and if she were to finish in the top 5, she would earn her respective percentage of the added money on top of the base purse. The filly is expected to be sent to the United States about 6 days before the Breeders' Cup. When she is finished with the Breeders' Cup, she will be turned over to trainer Christophe Clement.