

October 11, 2008

TASHA'S MIRACLE FIRST, MISS SINGHSIX FOURTH IN GRADE 3 RAMSER 'CAP, TEAM VALOR HAS 11 STAKES WINNERS IN 2008—ALL OF THEM ARE GRADED



A step past the wire, Gorgeous Goose was in front, but on the wire, Tasha's Miracle prevailed by a nose in Grade 3.

Tasha's Miracle courageously put away pace-setting Dawn Before Dawn and maintained a narrow lead in the final 70 yards of the \$100,000 Harold C. Ramser Sr. Handicap to become the eleventh stakes winner of the season for Team Valor International. All 11 of the victors scored in at least one Graded fixture.

Owned in partnership with the Budget Stable of Syd Belzberg, the 3-year-old filly was winning her first Graded race of the season, after having won the Grade 3 Sorrento Stakes last season at Del Mar, where she would have been even-money or less to win the Grade 1 Del Mar Debutante, if she had not tied up a couple of days before the race and had to be scratched.

The Harlan's Holiday filly has been consistently competitive this season, placing in 5 of 6 Graded races, notably the Grade 2 Hollywood Oaks, in which she lost by a head. She was a most deserving winner of the Ramser, as she put away the favorite, then held sway over the fast-closing Gorgeous Goose, to whom she was conceding 2 pounds in actual weight. She also placed in the Grade 1 Las Virgenes, Grade 2 Railbird and Grade 2 San Clemente Stakes, her first start on the grass.

Tasha's Miracle is remarkably versatile, showing the same form on all three synthetic surfaces in So California at Del Mar, Santa Anita and Hollywood Park, as well as the turf at Del Mar and Santa Anita.

The winning pot of \$63,660 increased the filly's career earnings to \$398,492. From 11 career outings, Tasha's Miracle has 3 wins, 3 seconds and a pair of thirds. Her only unplaced efforts have come when a solid fourth last year in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies, the Grade 2 Beaumont Stakes at Keeneland and a close fifth in the Grade 1 Oak Leaf Stakes.

In a field that scratched from 8 down to 5 sophomore fillies, Mike Smith allowed second choice and lone speed Dawn Before Dawn to set modest fractions and did not go after her until settled into the lane. Smith asked his filly to accelerate when a length behind at the furlong grounds. Favored Tasha's Miracle easily collared the front runner and put her away. However, no sooner did the Belzberg colorbearer reach the lead than the grey challenger on the rail put her own nose right next to that of the John Sadler-trained Tasha's Miracle. The pair raced locked in battle to the wire in the final moments of the race.

Tasha's Miracle may stick to turf for now, but could join Miss Singhsix for the La Canada Series for 4yo fillies on the Pro Ride surface next winter at Santa Anita. Miss Singhsix finished a decent enough fourth, beaten 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ lengths, but left no doubt that a mile was too short for her and synthetic surfaces are her meat. When it came time to quicken like a turf horse, the Singspiel filly was caught for speed. When she returns to the main track and stretches out a bit, she will win her Graded stakes.

From Santa Anita's publicity department comes the following:

WIN BY TASHA'S MIRACLE GIVES SIZZLING SADLER TRAINERS' LEAD

Seeking his third straight training title at a major Southern California race meet, John Sadler gained the lead in Oak Tree's competition Saturday when favored Tasha's Miracle won a desperate nose decision over Gorgeous Goose in the Grade III, \$106,100 Harold C. Ramser, Sr. Handicap.

With Mike Smith aboard in the one-mile turf event for 3-year-old fillies, Tasha's Miracle, after wresting the lead from pace-setting stablemate Dawn Before Dawn in deep stretch, gamely withstood the robust rail rally by Gorgeous Goose, ridden by Rafael Bejarano.



Dawn Before Dawn, tactically rated by Garrett Gomez, wound up third, one length behind the runner-up. The winning time was 1:34.83. The outcome elevated Sadler to a one-win lead over Doug O'Neill, 8-7, in the trainers' race.

Sadler held a strong hand entering the Ramser. His grip seemed to become even stronger when Sweeter Still, the 3-1 second choice behind 5-2 Tasha's Miracle on the morning line, was a late defection.

The public made Tasha's Miracle, despite a 6-race losing streak against stellar competition, the 13-10 favorite entering the gate with Dawn Before Dawn next at 2-1. The field was reduced to 5 by 3 scratches.

Photo: what photo? Tasha's Miracle wins by almost a full head!

The victorious daughter of Harlan's Holiday paid \$4.60, \$3 and \$2.60. Gorgeous Goose paid \$4.20 and \$2.40 while Dawn Before Dawn returned \$2.40 to show.

Sadler said he had to sweat the photo. "It was very, very tight," he observed. "When I watched the race, it was hard to tell. But when I saw it in slo-mo, it looked like we got the bob."

With two prime contenders, Sadler had carefully discussed strategy with his two riders. Dawn Before Dawn was expected to get the early lead. "I told Mike Smith it looked like he would by laying second, and he was," said Sadler. "The race went like it looked like it would on paper. The wild card was that horse (Gorgeous Goose) that ran so good on the inside."

"I thought I had won," noted Smith, "but I wasn't sure because the other filly (Gorgeous Goose) was way down inside."

Sadler's quest for a third consecutive training title follows like accomplishments at Hollywood Park and Del Mar earlier this year.

Second twice and third once in her previous three starts, all graded stakes, Tasha's Miracle registered her first victory since taking the Grade III Sorrento Stakes at Del Mar in August of 2007. In her eleventh career start, Tasha's Miracle earned \$63,660 for Budget Stable and Team Valor. She expanded her record to 3-3-2 and her career bankroll to \$398,452.

From *The Blood-Horse* comes the following:

Tasha's Miracle Finds Wire in Ramser

by Jack Shinar

Favored Tasha's Miracle nipped Gorgeous Goose by a nose in Oak Tree's \$106,100 Harold C. Ramser Sr. Handicap (gr. IIIT) (VIDEO), snapping a seven-race losing streak in game fashion on the Santa Anita turf course Oct. 11.



And the wins just keep on 'coming for John Sadler, Southern California's leading trainer.

Making her second start on turf, Tasha's Miracle, racing in second, dismissed John Sadler stablemate Dawn Before Dawn past mid-stretch to gain a narrow advantage. Ridden by Mike Smith, she was all out to get the wire just ahead of Gorgeous Goose, who had darted to the inside for jockey Rafael Bejarano and finished with interest to just miss. The final time for the one-mile event for 3-year-old fillies was 1:34.83 on firm going.

Dawn Before Dawn, who set a slow pace of :24.02, :47.80 and 1:11 07, was a length behind the runner-up in third. She edged the Irish-bred Miss Singhsix, who made a menacing move in upper stretch but flattened out in the final furlong.

Smith said Tasha's Miracle was anxious down the backstretch. "I had her relaxed going into the final turn, but when we turned down the backside she thought the race was on and I tried to talk her out of it," he said. "I really wasn't concerned about the filly on the lead (Dawn After Dawn) and I didn't want to go at the four-and-a-half. I was concerned about the closers. I thought I won, but I wasn't sure because (Gorgeous Goose) was way down inside."

Tasha's Miracle tallied her first victory since capturing the Sorrento Stakes (gr. III) in her third start 14 months ago on the Del Mar's Polytrack. But she had been highly competitive while facing top caliber competition. The daughter of Harlan's Holiday--Ms. Cuvee (by Relaunch) was grade I placed in the Las Virgenes Stakes at Santa Anita this winter. In her last start, she finished a good second to Storm Mesa in the San Clemente Handicap (gr. IIT) at Del Mar July 26, her first try on turf.

"It was very tight, very tight," Sadler said of the photo finish. "When I watched the race, it was hard to tell, but when I saw it in slo-mo, it looked like we got the bob. The race went like it looked like it would on paper. The wild card was that horse (Gorgeous Goose) ran so good on the inside."

Owned by Syd Belzberg's Budget Stable and Team Valor International, Tasha's Miracle improved her career record to 3-3-2 in 11 starts with earnings of \$398,452. Martin Stables bred the winner in Florida.

It was three-quarters of a length to Miss Singhsix, who was followed by Solar Miss in a scratched down field of five. Porto Marmay, Sweeter Still and Set of Wings did not run.