

December 29, 2008

TEAM VALOR INTERNATIONAL ENDS 2008 WITH RECORD WIN TOTAL OF 67, NEW TALLY OBLITERATES PRIOR STANDARD BY MORE THAN 50 PERCENT, GRADE 1-WINNING GYPSY'S WARNING EASED UP WINNER IN SOUTH AFRICA, WINNING STRIKE RATE FOR THE YEAR CLOSES WITH 20.12 PERCENT MARK

In the final race on the card at Turffontein on the last day of the racing in 2008 in Johannesburg, Team Valor International was represented by Gypsy's Warning, who provided the stable with a seasonal record of 67 wins for the year.

In 22 seasons of campaigning horses syndicated by Team Valor owner Barry Irwin, never prior to this year had the stabled managed to win more than 44 races. In 2008, however, the stable of syndicated racehorses won 23 more races than ever, obliterating the old mark by more than 50 percent.

The victory by the 3-year-old filly allowed Team Valor to finish the season with a winning strike rate of 20.12 percent. Seasonal earnings finished up at \$3,548,761, the second-best on record behind only the \$3,888,233 the outfit earned in 2007. Team Valor has earned more than \$3 million in 4 of the last 6 racing campaigns.



Team Valor associate Robin Bruss greets the filly and Piere Strydom after allowance score.

Gypsy's Warning, in her most successful races, was at her best when dropping as many as 25 lengths off the pace, as when she won the Grade 1 Thekwini Stakes last season when she was the top-rated staying filly of her generation. Richard Fourie, who rode her to victory in that Clairwood race, said that he had learned in the filly's previous race that she does not want to be too close early.

In her first start for new trainer Ormond Ferraris and for owner Team Valor International, the daughter of Storm Cat's unraced son Mogok was also allowed to drift well off the pace in the early running. She took hold late, but ran out of gas approaching the wire, while carrying a hefty weight assignment in the Grade 2 Ipi Tombe Stakes over a mile against her elders.

"It was a good race," said Barry Irwin, "but both the trainer and the rider felt that her burst of speed would be more effective if she didn't have to come from so far back."

Ferraris advised veteran reinsman Piere Strydom to keep her closer to the action today in non-winners of 3 allowance race, in which the staying filly moved up from 8 to 9 furlongs for the first time. Strydom positioned his dark bay filly about half a dozen lengths behind pacesetter 4-year-old filly Aquitaine. The leader tried to make all, bringing the field into the home straight, but Thin Red Line was ready to pounce.

To her credit, Aquitaine withstood the challenge of Thin Red Line, but had no answer for the 3 to 5 favorite Gypsy's Warning, who swept by her in the final furlong to win eased up with Strydom looking back at the runner-up as he geared down his mount. "I could have won by a lot more," he said.



Gypsy's Warning reported home 1 ½ lengths on top, with Aquitaine winding up with 2 ½ lengths to spare over Thin Red Line. The form of the race indicates that Gypsy's Warning is improving at 3, as today she beat Thin Red Line by 3 ¾ lengths while giving her 5 ½ pounds, an improvement over her last meeting in the Thekwini, when she beat that \$480,000 Redoute's Choice import by 5 lengths at level weights.

Thin Red Line is a solid "form" horse, as she entered the conditions race with back-to-back seconds in stakes races over 7 and 8 furlongs. She was second last time out to Ferraris' fine 3-year-old filly Sweet Theresa in the Grade 3 Hertz Fillies Mile, beaten 3 ½ lengths at level weights.

Bloodstock agent Robin Bruss, a longtime associate and racing partner with Team Valor and the agent that brokered the deal to acquire the filly on behalf of its new owner, said "It looked for a moment as though it might turn out to be a horse race, but when Strydom let Gypsy's Warning loose, she went into a different gear and the race was over instantly. It really was quite impressive. She has every chance of being another Irridescence for Team Valor based on this performance."

Team Valor has made no secret of the fact that it would like to win the Grade 1 SA Fillies Classic with Gypsy's Warning and Ferraris (left) may prep her in another conditions race, as that 9-furlong fixture is not renewed again until March.

"She is still learning and could use a little more experience," said the veteran trainer. "I would prefer to run in a couple of races like this, where she doesn't have to carry too much weight, rather than put her in races where she is weighted down. This race was a good experience for her."

Gypsy's Warning follows Graded stakes winner She's on Fire, handicap winner Trojan and maiden winner Catch the Wind as winners trained during the current calendar year for Team Valor by veteran Ferraris, who has a pair of Jet Master 2-year-olds for the stable that will be seen in action later next season on the Highveld.

Barry Irwin, owner of Team Valor International, would like nothing better than to win the SA Fillies Classic and the Woolavington Stakes, the same two races Irridescence won en route to becoming the Champion Filly of her generation at 3 in South Africa.

Team Valor plans to send the filly to Dubai next year to be trained by Mike de Kock.