

## COMTESSE DUBOIS IS FIRST VALOR 2YO WINNER OF 2011 IN SOUTH AFRICA, NATIONAL YEARLING SALE BUY CRUISES HOME BY 2 ¼ AS 3 TO 5 FAVORITE, NEIL BRUSS-TRAINED FILLY HEADED TO GRADED RACES NEXT IN DURBAN



Comtesse Dubois became Team Valor International's first 2-year-old winner in South Africa this season today when she absolutely cruised to a 2 ¼-length victory in the first race at Kenilworth race course in Cape Town.



Sent off at odds of 11 to 20 (virtually 1 to 2), the powerful bay miss was meant to race under cover for the first part of the 6-furlong race. She broke so alertly, though, that jockey Corne Orffer found himself close to the lead with no horse to follow. Orffer had no trouble settling the filly and he rode her with utter confidence. The jockey allowed the filly to creep from third into second and then into the lead in the final couple of furlongs.

With her rider sitting chilly (race caller Rouvaun Smit characterized the rider's role as "steering"), Comtesse Dubois easily assumed command with little fuss, opened up a sizeable lead as runner-up Princess Alberta was hard-ridden to no avail, and was geared down in the final stages to run out a most impressive winner.

In her racing debut, Comtesse Dubois was used early and came up empty when second to the 2-time unbeaten winner Trinity House, who is reckoned by her trainer Joey Ramsden to be a serious filly. This time Comtesse Dubois was more sensitively handled and allowed to run her own race.

Neil Bruss, who is based at Clairwood race course in Durban and brings a few horses to Cape Town for the prestigious summer meeting, will now take the filly home and point her for Graded races for the remainder of the season.

Comtesse Dubois is the first of 5 fillies to run that were bought by Barry Irwin from last April's National Yearling Sale in South Africa. She is by Count Dubois out of a half-sister to Grade 1 winner Biarritz.



*Comtesse Dubois was a well-balanced filly as a yearling when Barry Irwin bought her at the National Yearling Sale in South Africa.*

A likely short-term goal for the new winner is the April 17 renewal of the 5-furlong Strelitzia Stakes, which has been moved from Scottsville to Clairwood, where the filly will be training. Team Valor and Bruss combined to win that race with both Sally Bowles and Stately, two more bargain purchases made by Irwin from the National Yearling Sale. Prize money for the Grade 3 Strelitzia Stakes has been increased to \$20,000 for the 2011 renewal in Durban.