

July 7, 2010

BECRUX HAS BEEN RETIRED FROM RACING BY TEAM VALOR/GARY BARBER, MILLIONAIRE CHAMPION FLOWN TO MARGAUX FARM IN THE BLUEGRASS, BARRY IRWIN MAY LOOK TO FIND A SECOND CAREER FOR THE SOUND 8YO



Becrux runs the race of a lifetime under an inspired ride from Patrick Valenzuela to win the Grade 1 million-dollar Woodbine Mile in Canada, in the most important of his 10 career scores. Becrux was a Champion, millionaire and winner of a Grade 1.

Bred in Italy by Scuderia Siba, from whom Team Valor recently acquired the yearling half-brother to Becrux and the unbeaten 3-year-old filly Marseria, Becrux had won his initial 4 outings before TVI took a half-interest in partnership with Siba. Although unplaced when fancied for the Group 1 Gran Criterium, Becrux nonetheless was voted Champion Colt at 2 in Italy.

Sent to Dubai, Becrux won once for Mike de Kock, who sent the colt to the United States, after telling a Team Valor partner that “this colt isn’t all that you think he is.” When Becrux won the Grade 1 million-dollar Bell Woodbine Mile in Canada, Barry Irwin enjoyed reflecting back on Mr. de Kock’s statement, thinking to himself, “Yes, you are right Mike, he is even *better* than we thought he was!”

The road to redemption was fraught with ups and downs. When trained in New York by Kiaran McLaughlin, Becrux made a noise and a wind operation was performed. McLaughlin sent the colt to California, where Neil Drysdale (who had him for 48 hours) took credit when Becrux won a division of the Oceanside Stakes at Del Mar. Team Valor decided to keep the horse in California. Team Valor and Barber, a minority partner, bought out Siba and campaigned the horse on a 55-45 basis over the next 5 years.

Becrux has been retired from racing. Barry Irwin said “Becrux experienced a full career, he reached the heights of the sport and he retires sound. Gary Barber and Team Valor International are very proud of what he accomplished. I worked out a deal with Gary to take over responsibility of the horse. We got Tex Sutton to fly him from California to Kentucky for free. He arrived on Wednesday. He is off the partners’ expense tab now. I may try to find an opportunity for him to have a second career in a non-racing endeavor. I have a lot of contacts and I plan to put a full effort into insuring that the quality of his life remains high.” Becrux made 44 starts for a record of 10 wins, 4 seconds and 9 thirds. On turf, he made 36 starts, winning 8 and placing first-second-third in more than half of them. He was a winner in Italy, Dubai, the United States and Canada. He also raced in Japan. His career earnings amounted to \$1,170,651.



Barry Irwin and Gary Barber lead in Becrux after his victory in the Grade 1 Bell Woodbine Mile S. It was one of several Grade 1 wins for the duo since they hooked up in 2000 in Los Angeles.

In an inspired and tactically advantageous move, Barry Irwin told Neil Drysdale to geld the horse, even though he was a stakes winner. “He was getting too heavy, the weight adversely impacted his breathing in my opinion and he was way too high strung, so to speak! She we made the unkindest cut of all. And it worked out well for us.”

A lighter, kinder, more settled Becrux scored the biggest victory of his career when winning the Mile at Woodbine. Team Valor and Barber were able to help Patrick Valenzuela get licensed in Canada, even though he was not eligible in California because of various offenses relating to the use of drugs that were not legal for recreational use, even by professional jockeys!

“P. Val had not ridden in a race in months,” recalled Irwin. “I met him in the jocks room at Woodbine and was shocked at what I saw. He looked like a skeleton over which some skin had been tightly stretched. The only visible hair on his body was about a three-quarter-inch long pony tail protruding from the back of his head near the neckline. He looked completely wired. He reminded me of RoboCop in silks. I spoke to him for 5 minutes. He was in a seated position, but I don’t think his rear end ever touched the chair. He hovered over the chair, with only his own naturally nutsy energy serving as some sort of electric buffer between his tush and the leather of the chair.”

“In the race itself, P. Val literally willed Becrux from eighth to first and across the line on top. It was one of the most exciting races in the history of the stable and a great achievement.”



Becrux had a true affinity for the Jimmy Durante Turf Course at Del Mar, where he became a North American stakes winner in the Oceanside Stakes and twice won the Wickerr Handicap.

Becrux won on dirt, turf and all weather. He romped on dirt by 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ at Nad al Sheba, but his excitable temperament did not allow him to show the same form against top horses in races before and after that allowance win.

The Italian-born runner won on Pro Ride on the Breeders’ Cup undercard two seasons ago at Santa Anita in one of his better performances.

It was on turf that Becrux displayed his best form. He never won a race at Santa Anita, where he was placed many times without winning. He was unable to land himself in the winners’ circle at Hollywood Park either, although he was a good third in the Grade 1 Citation Handicap.

Becrux loved Del Mar. Not only did he win the Oceanside at 3, but he won the Wickerr Handicap at 4 and 5. He also placed in stakes at Del Mar, most notably when a good three-quarter-length second in the Grade 2 Del Mar Mile Handicap and when second at age 7 when trying to win the Wickerr for an unprecedented third time at the seaside course. He ran a remarkable race when beaten only 2 lengths into fifth after an eventful trip in the Grade 1 Del Mar Derby.

“He developed into a very generous horse and he ran for any jockey,” Irwin said. “He was one of the most consistent horses to ever race for us. Even as he got older and lost a step or two, he continued to run virtually the same mid-90 Beyer speed figures. We had a lot of fun with him and he will be sorely missed by his owners.”