

October 14, 2012

TEAM VALOR YEARLING BUY CHANGINGOFTHEGUARD WINS GRADE 3 DASH CHANGINGOFTHEGUARD HAS GRADE 1 QUEEN'S PLATE MILE ON HIS SLATE PARTNER GAYNOR RUPERT AND HUSBAND JOHANN SPONSOR WFA CLASSIC



Barry Irwin bought only one colt at the National Yearling Sale in South Africa three years ago and today he became Team Valor, Anant and Vanashree Singh, Gaynor Rupert and partners' latest Graded stakes winner, when 9 to 1 Changingoftheguard took over at the furlong grounds, opened a lead and kept finding more to record a neck victory over previously once-beaten Champion colt King of Pain to win the Grade 3 Matchem Stakes.

Jockey Felix Coetzee, 53, was recording a milestone victory number 3,500 aboard the bay colt. The South African native has enjoyed a distinguished career while plying his trade around the globe and was especially successful in Hong Kong, where he was the regular rider for the legendary sprinter Silent Witness.

"Felix had to use all of his skills to pull this one off," said Barry Irwin, who plucked the colt from the sale's consignment of sometime partner Mrs. Gaynor Rupert. "The colt has a world of talent, but he is still green. Felix was patient, held him together, pushed the button at the right instant and kept him straight to the line. He is a master and he showed it once again here."



Mrs. Rupert asked Irwin if she could participate in the racing partnership after Irwin had bought the winner as a yearling in Germiston. She has been rewarded for her sporting nature by now having a bona fide contender early in January for the Grade 1 Queen's Plate, a weight-for-age Classic that is sponsored by Johann and Gaynor Rupert's l'Ormarins wine estates. Among horses campaigned in partnership with Team Valor and Mrs. Rupert is the Amazon, multiple Grade 1-winning Ebony Flyer, who is expected to return to the races for her 5-year-old season, with the Cape Summer Season as her target.

Changingoftheguard broke alertly and was hustled a bit by Coetzee into a forward position, as he was riding to instructions from trainer Justin Snaith. He raced in fourth and fifth for much of the 7-furlong journey, got a split just inside the quarter-mile marker and was asked for acceleration a furlong from the line. Coetzee praised the colt for his temperament, saying that the colt saves his energy for the drive when it matters the most.



Barry Irwin, who bought the colt for just under \$100,000, usually buys fillies at the South African sales, but he loved the way the colt walked. "His sire Go Deputy was an okay horse in the United States, but this colt was produced by a sister to Crimson Palace, a horse we raced once, then sold to Godolphin, for whom she won the Grade 1 Beverly D Stakes at Arlington Park," he said. "I have some great partners in this colt and I am happy he was able to win another stakes for them. Hopefully he has bigger things on his agenda."