

BELVOIR BAY BLAZES TO GRADE 3 WIN IN FIRST START ON DIRT ENGLISH IMPORT WIRES \$100,000 TORREY PINES AT DEL MAR REPELS REPEATED CHALLENGES, VALIDATES A SERIES OF TWISTS, TURNS

Belvoir Bay blazed a new dimension in her career and showed admirable courage on August 28 in a determined victory in the Grade 3 Torrey Pines Stakes for 3-year-old fillies at Del Mar.

In leading from start to finish over four rivals in the mile event, the English import validated a gamble from her connections with the switch from turf to the main track based on how well she had trained at nearby San Luis Rey Downs Training Center. The bay filly also rewarded a change in plans after they considered a less conventional assignment for her dirt debut—she had been entered earlier in the week against males in the Shared Belief Stakes over the same trip at Del Mar. She was 10-to-1 on the morning line for that race and also was 10-to-1 when she was cross-entered in the Torrey Pines, with its original cast led by the imposing and undefeated California-bred filly Enola Gray.



Belvoir Bay, racing in the silks of co-owner Gary Barber, registered her second stakes wins in three starts in Southern California with trainer Peter Miller.

Trainer Peter Miller, Team Valor CEO Barry Irwin and co-owner Gary Barber decided against the Shared Belief and were leaning against the Torrey Pines as well until word came the morning of the race that Enola Gray had been scratched due to illness. Waiting in the wings to take full advantage of her absence was rejuvenated jockey Norberto Arroyo Jr., who had strongly encouraged the connections to switch Belvoir Bay to dirt after working her twice recently after she struggled while rank on the lead with a different jockey in her first start of the season in the Grade 2 San Clemente Stakes on the Del Mar turf on August 20.

With no Enola Gray, Belvoir Bay broke like a shot and found clear sailing to take the initiative at 7-to-1 in the Torrey Pines, setting a reasonable pace this time, and Arroyo kept finding more in the face of a series of challenges from Bellementary, who had assumed the role of odds-on favoritism, coming off a second-place finish to the champion Songbird in the Grade 2 Summertime Oaks in June. Between the backstretch and the turn for home, Bellementary made four runs at Belvoir Bay from the outside. Pressured along the rail, Belvoir Bay never relented and Arroyo provided an inspired assist with a ride that reminded Irwin, hearkening back to his racing roots in Southern California, of the vintage work of Bill Shoemaker.

"It was an incredible ride," Irwin said, "He just let out a little with every challenge and kept discouraging Bellementary. When he set sail for home, he went wide and took that filly out, and that was it."



Norberto Arroyo Jr. delivered an inspired ride in registering his first Graded stakes win in 10 years.

Incredibly, Arroyo was ending a 10-year gap between Graded stakes wins in a career that has been disrupted by personal troubles. He has been as hot as ever late in the Del Mar meet, winning four races on Sunday's card alone. It was a complete reversal for Belvoir Bay, who was found to be suffering from a cut in her mouth when she fought with her rider and threw in the towel early in the San Clemente, her first start since a 7 1/4-length win in the Blue Norther Stakes at Santa Anita last December in her California debut.

Miller said, "Her last race was a complete throwout. I felt like she would run well today. We switched bits on her and did a few things differently."

Belvoir Bay joined a long list of English horses who have been reinvented on dirt in America for Team Valor partnerships, including Santa Anita Handicap winner Martial Law, Santa Anita Derby winner The Deputy, Kentucky Derby fourth-place finisher Went the Day Well and Belmont Stakes runner-up My Memoirs. Irwin has seen it work numerous times with his horses in California, in particular.

"I think the tracks in California are most conducive for a turf horse switching to dirt," Irwin said. "They are real dirt and easier to get a hold of, compared to the sandier tracks back East. Sandy tracks are very difficult to get a hold of. What makes a turf horse is they run on top of it, they don't run through it like on dirt. The California tracks are firmer and they can run more on top of it than having to plow through sand.

"We bought this filly in England and were very high on her ability, with Richard Hughes in a race last summer, to come from last to first in a heartbeat on turf. When she came to the U.S., she first went to the East Coast and we ran her once and she wouldn't rate. We sent her then to California and she ran off and won by 7 on the turf. Now she is a Graded winner on dirt, so she has been an interesting horse for us."

Belvoir Bay is the sixth different stakes winner for Team Valor this season. All told, she is the 89th Graded stakes winner for a public partnership organized by Irwin over the last 30 seasons, from a total of 563 runners (16 percent).

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