

June 4, 2017

LA SARDANE STRIKES FOR GROUP 2 WIN SUNDAY IN CHANTILLY, FRANCE COMFORTABLE SCORE IN PRIX SANDRINGHAM ON FRENCH DERBY CARD CALIFORNIA-BOUND FILLY DELIVERS RIGHT OFF BAT IN HER TVI DEBUT

La Sardane swooped in powerfully to win the Group 2 Prix Sandringham on French Derby day at Chantilly on Sunday in her Team Valor debut.



The longest shot in a short field of five sophomore fillies, La Sardane tracked behind an early leader and made a strong move that essentially put the race away in a few strides, as she kicked away to win comfortably by a length for jockey Franck Blondel.

La Sardane became the 146th stakes winner (25 percent of all runners) and 90th Graded stakes winner (15 percent) for a public partnership organized by Barry Irwin over the last 30 years, and she joins a long list of diamonds in that group who have been discovered in Europe.

Trainer Neil Drysdale and his wife, bloodstock agent Shawn Dugan, had turned Irwin on to the 3-year-old filly in April after she finished second in the Group 3 Prix de la Grotte over the same course and mile trip at Chantilly. Irwin came away highly impressed with the hulking filly, who struck him as reminiscent of Team Valor's former English-based Grade 1 winner Euro Charline, in boasting a very strong body and hind end that looked more like those of a colt than a filly.

Irwin was on hand at Chantilly and dictated a different approach for the filly, who had led early and been overtaken in the stretch in the Prix de la Grotte. Irwin suggested that Blondel try to follow at least one horse in the Sandringham, and she responded by settling kindly and pouncing at the quarter pole to reel in pacesetter Speed As.

"What I really like about her is the way she accelerates," said Irwin, who already had a plan in place to send the filly to Drysdale in California a few days after the Sandringham to point her to the Grade 2 San Clemente and Grade 1 Del Mar Oaks this summer. "We have won both those races a couple times, and La Sardane would be the best horse I have taken to those races."

Mont de Marsan-based Bruno de Montzey oversaw La Sardane for a maiden win and four placings leading up to the breakthrough on Sunday, which was the veteran trainer's first-ever victory in a Group contest on the Flat.

"I have never cared about statistics like that," Irwin said. "I have always operated under the principle that a good horse can come from anywhere and this filly did just that!"

From the *Thoroughbred Daily News* comes the following:

Kingsalsa's La Sardane Springs Sandringham Upset

Successful on her third start when taken to the Polytrack surface at Pau in late December, La Sardane finished runner-up to the subsequent G1 Poule d'Essai des Pouliches fourth Wajnah (Fr) (Redoute's Choice {Aus}) in a conditions race over this trip at Bordeaux-le-Bouscat Mar. 5 before running ninth a fortnight later in the Listed Prix la Camargo at Saint-Cloud. Runner-up to Senga in the G3 Prix de la Grotte over this course and distance Apr. 16, she arrived here a fresh filly and duly reversed form with that rival to cause an upset. In second early under Franck Blondel, the bay was travelling much the best halfway up the straight and after taking control with 300 metres remaining asserted for a ready success with no excuses for those in behind.



Barry Irwin's wife, Kathleen, left, in the winner's enclosure with La Sardane.

said of Gold Luck, "We know now what her best trip is and ten furlongs was too far in the Saint-Alary. She has run an excellent race today and we know what to do now. We will try a group 1 over a mile if she comes out of this okay. It could be the [July 9 G1 Prix] Jean Prat against the colts here, or we could wait for the [G1 Prix de] Rothschild [at Deauville July 30]."

La Sardane is out of a listed-placed half to the Listed Criterium du Bequet-winning Milanais (Fr), whose second placing in the G1 Grand Criterium assured him a career at stud, as well as Veneto (Fr) (Panis) who was a short-neck second to Lucayan (Fr) (Turtle Bowl {Ire}) when 50-1 for the 2012 G1 Poule d'Essai des Poulains. Foresta's unraced 2-year-old colt by Air Chief Marshal (Ire) is named Montgaroult (Fr).

Video of the race is [here](#).

La Sardane looks set to attempt to become the latest in a long line of French expats to prospect for gold Stateside as Team Valor's Barry Irwin explained. "My trainer in California Neil Drysdale and his wife Shawn Dugan advised me on this filly and sent me pictures and I looked at the form. She is a gorgeous-looking filly and so we decided to go for it," he said. "The trainer has done an amazing job with her since the Prix de la Grotte and now the plan is to send her to California for the GII San Clemente H. at Del Mar July 23 and then a month later go for the [Aug. 19] GI Del Mar Oaks." The Wertheimers' racing manager Pierre-Yves Bureaux