

He Still Belongs

Veteran Belong to Me among the leading sires of stakes winners in 2007

by
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The month of February was a very productive one for the veteran Danzig stallion Belong to Me. He was represented by four blacktype stakes winners during the shortest month of the year, two of them earning that distinction for the first time.

The three year-old filly Forever Together, a member of Belong to Me's 10th crop won the OBS Sprint S. on February 12. It was the first blacktype win for the filly who is out of a mare by Relaunch. Two weeks later at Turfway Park another Belong to Me sophomore filly, Our Dancing Babe, took the listed Valdale S. over the Polytrack. In earning her first blacktype, she provided further evidence of the success of the Danzig-Roberto blend. She is out of a mare by the Roberto grandson You and I (by Kris S.).

Belong to Me has another recent stakes winner out of a mare by the Kris S. son Prized. Corrupt earned his first stakes win in the Grand Canyon H. on the turf at Churchill Downs last November. The three year-old colt then came back to take the Mardi Gras H. at the Fair Grounds in late February.

Earlier in February, the Belong to Me six-year-old Capitano won the Turf Paradise H. for the second consecutive year. Out of a mare by Tabasco Cat, the horse has now picked up a check in 10 black type races and his bankroll now exceeds half a million dollars.

Belong to Me stood his first few seasons in New York before graduating to Kentucky. The Black Tie Affair stallion Formal Gold has had the reverse career trajectory, moving to a regional program (California) after starting off in the Bluegrass. The move has clearly benefited West Coast breeders as Formal Gold is already the sire of two new stakes winners and a new graded winner in 2007.

Adore the Gold earned his first graded win in the Grade 2 Swale S. at Gulfstream Park on February 3. The three-year-old colt had previously won the Dover S. as a juvenile. His win in the Swale earned him another try on the Derby prep trail and he finished a close fourth in the Grade 2 Fountain of Youth on March 3.

At Oaklawn Park in early February, Formal Gold's five-year-old gelded son Semaphore Man broke through with his first blacktype win in the King Cotton S. for older sprinters. Last year in Hot Springs, Semaphore Man ran third to Bordonaro and Friendly Island in the Count Fleet H (G3). He'll no doubt be back for another try at Oaklawn's signature sprint race when the Racing Festival of the South returns in April.

The first of Formal Gold's 2007 stakes winners came back on New Year's Day, when Heart Throbbin' took the listed Dancing Count S. at Laurel. The newly turned three-year-old was coming off a second place run to Hard Spun in the Port Penn S. at Delaware Park.

Heating Up

Cherokee Run has been a bit quiet of late (only four stakes winners in 2006), but he seems poised to bounce back in a big way in 2007. He is already the sire of the stakes winners Bare Dancer and Indian Flare and has some three-year-old colts that could very well develop into headliners.

The three-year-old filly Bare Dancer captured the Wide Country S. at Laurel on February 10 and followed that effort with a third in the Busher S. at Aqueduct 15 days later. On March 3, the impeccably-bred five-year-old mare Indian Flare won her second blacktype race in the Flower Girl H. at Santa Anita.

The stable of exciting Cherokee Run three-year-old colts include Zanjero, second in last fall's Remsen S. (G2) and third in the Risen Star S. (G3) in his sophomore debut. There has been a bit of a buzz surrounding Cherokee Run's sophomore son Chelokee since last fall and he seems to be living up to that promise after overcoming an impossibly brutal trip to defeat a stakes quality allowance field at Gulfstream Park on March 3. An actual stakes run in the near future will surely be in the cards for the Michael Matz trainee.

It's been a rough year for past winners of the Kentucky Derby. Not long after the demise of Barbaro, 1998 Derby winner Real Quiet found himself at the New Bolton clinic due to a pair of hind hoof abscesses.

After a year in which the son of Quiet American sired four graded winners and the Grade 1 winners Pussycat Doll and Wonder Lady Anne L, his progeny continue to rack up stakes wins in 2007. Pussycat Doll captured another Grade 1 in the Santa Monica H. in late January and two Real Quiet sons became new stakes winners over the next few weeks: Shuffling Madness in the mid-February Champagneorashley S. for New York-breds at Aqueduct and Silent Pleasure in the Delta Mile S. at Delta Downs on March 3.

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