

## **MUSCLE HILL'S SWEEP NJSS CHAMPIONSHIP**

Mission Brief, last year's champion two-year-old filly trotter, started furthest out in the field of 10 and Gingras let her find her stride while crossing over to the middle.

Marion Millionair, an 18-1 long shot who had the rail, set the early pace with an opening quarter mile of 28 4/5. Gingras, who had his horse second by 1¼ lengths, grabbed the lead and had a two-length advantage after a half in 58 2/5. But Model Behavior, a 28-1 outsider driven by Tim Tetrick, was making a serious move at the 1-5 favorite and led by a nose after three quarters of a length in 1:27 1/5. Model Behavior increased the lead to a head in the stretch, but Mission Brief stayed strong and flat and passed her challenger on the inside to win by a half length.

Mission Brief, trained by Ron Burke, who owns the fabulous filly with Our Horse Cents Stable, Jerry and Theresa Silva and Weaver Brusceci, won in a time of 1:54 3/5, finishing the final quarter of a mile in 28 4/5. Model Behavior placed second, followed by Riley's Dream. Mission Brief, with her second consecutive win of the season and 11th in 15 lifetime starts, collected \$50,000 to raise her bankroll to more than \$653,000.

She paid \$2.40, \$2.10 and \$2.10. Model Behavior paid \$10.80 and \$4.40. Riley's Dream paid \$2.40. The exacta paid \$22.60 and the trifecta \$67.40.

"Warming up she actually felt pretty good," Gingras said. "In the race, you know she's not 100 percent. Now we've got a month and Ronnie can try a few things with her and see what's going to work.

Honestly, that's as fast as I could go. She didn't feel like she was liking it too much. Timmy got a head in front of me, but I knew if she's still trotting in the stretch she's going to win the race. I was [patient](#) with her, let her settle. She's so much more mature. I can race her any which way I want to right now. I can race her out of a hole, out of cover, but the way it's been going right now. It's a lot better to let her relax and get her gait straight. That's the biggest problem."

The filly is not scheduled to race for a month. The big question is whether she will be entered against the boys later in 10 weeks time for the Hambletonian.

## **Canepa Hanover Sizzles**

Canepa Hanover, a half-brother to 2006 Horse of the Year Glidemaster, raced a monster mile in a \$100,000 NJSS race for three-year-old male trotters, stopping the teletimer in a swift 1:51 1/5, stamping himself as a serious contender for the Hambletonian.

Driven by Gingras for trainer Jimmy Takter, who is in Sweden for Maven's race in the Ellitloppet, Canepa Hanover made an early move for the lead from the four hole and was never headed, setting fractions of 28 for the opening quarter mile, 56 2/5 for the half and 1:24 through three quarters. With every step he took, Canepa Hanover simply drew away from the field, finishing the race 3½ lengths to the good. French Laundry, also trained by Takter, finished strongly for second, while Aldebaran Eagle finished third. Canepa Hanover, third choice in the field at just over 5-2, paid \$7.40, \$3.40 and \$2.40. French Laundry paid \$3.20 and \$2.20, and Aldebaran Hanover paid \$3.60.

The exacta paid \$22.40 and the trifecta \$71.40.

The win was only the second in 10 lifetime starts for Canepa Hanover, who has banked less than \$100,000. He was purchased as a yearling for \$300,000 and is owned by Katz, Brittany Farms, Al Libfeld, Sam Goldband, Brixton Medical Inc. and Christina Takter.

Canepa Hanover raced only six times last year, winning once and finishing second in another. Takter practiced patience with the colt, and had the owners' full backing.

“Before Jimmy left for Sweden, he told me he had this horse as good as he could be,” Gingras said. “He got a little playful in the stretch, so I popped the plugs just to give him a reminder and he found another gear...This horse is ready to rock right now. It’s just a matter of getting him a little bit better and having him ready in 10 weeks.”

Katz, still in awe of Artspeak’s race earlier in the card, was equally impressed with Canepa Hanover. “Jimmy liked him a great deal training down as a two-year-old,” Katz said. “He was very high on him. He won early as a two-year-old and showed devastating ability. He just wasn’t mature enough. He’s a big colt. To Jimmy’s credit, he stopped early with him without beating him up. He kept him on his farm and started back with him and has always felt this horse has a ton of ability. He was very high on him, and by mid-winter he spoke glowingly of him. He qualified him in 1:52 2/5. You don’t qualify trotters in that time unless they are exceptional. It’s a tribute to Jimmy’s talent and experience and skill as a trainer.

The plan was for Jimmy to drive him all along like he did with Trixton (last year’s upset winner in the Hambo). Jimmy called it the Trixton program. He’s been on a very similar program. The fact Jimmy was driving him was just to make sure he knew what he was doing on the racetrack and could be protected when necessary. He clearly came to race tonight. Obviously.”