

ROMAGNA MIA JUSTIFIES STATUS AS CHOICE TO WIN GRADE 3 DOWAGER TEAM VALOR'S EUROPEAN IMPORT RALLIES TO WIN EASILY BY 3 LENGTHS

In spite of Barry Irwin's worries about the moisture in the grass yesterday at Keeneland for a filly that has only thrived on firm ground, B. Eye in the final analysis was swayed by trainer Graham Motion's obvious enthusiasm over the 4-year-old filly's chances in the \$260,000 Dowager Stakes, the Grade 3 grass marathon over a mile and a half.

Pummeling the wickets as though losing was completely out of the question, horseplayers hammered down Romagna Mia from 6-to-1 to the solid 2-to-1 choice at post time. In a lone North American outing the English-born, Italian-developed and French-raced import had finished third in the Grade 1 Beverly D Stakes at Colonial Downs behind Fev Rover and Gina Romantica. Those horses won Grade 1 races at Woodbine and Keeneland in their next start, imbuing the form with a high patina of success.



Romagna Mia, as usual, broke slowly and raced towards the back of the 7-horse field as they toured 3 turns en route to completing the 12-furlong journey. It was not until the filly reached the backstretch for a second time that she began to pick up the pace.

Velazquez bided his time, gradually ranging up to closer attendance to the pace heading into the far turn. Rounding the turn wide, he arrived in the home stretch with only one rival behind him. The filly, using her rhythmic action and long, straight strides, was not far back. Approaching the furlong pole she had hit her best stride and put a head in front in the final sixteenth of a mile when she suddenly drew off to win in hand by 3 lengths.

The \$155,000 first prize money increased the Mastercraftsman filly's career gleanings to more than \$363,000. It was her second stakes win following the Group 2 Premio Lydia Tesio last season in Italy.

Romagna Mia was bought in December of 2022 at the Arqana December Sale for \$550,000.

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Romagna Mia is all alone as Johnny Velazquez stands in the saddle in the Grade 3 Dowager Stakes at Keeneland