

## **FRANCES ETHEL WINS GRADE 2 SOUTH AFRICAN OAKS IN TVI DEBUT TEAM VALOR “HITS FOR THE CYCLE” IN THE LAST WEEK OF RACING STABLE WINS GRADE 1, GRADE 2, GRADE 3 AND LISTED IN 4 NATIONS**



Frances Ethel, in her first start under the ownership and colors of Team Valor International, won today's Grade 2 Wilgerbosdrift Bridget Oppenheimer South African Oaks at Turffontein Racecourse by 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  lengths to complete a 4-race stakes skein in the last week for the USA-based racing operation headed by Barry Irwin in his 38<sup>th</sup> season of racing syndicated horses.

Purchased privately during the week, the 3-year-old daughter of Rafeef raced for an international group of owners that include Perry Sambor of Melbourne, Australia, Anant Singh, Daylan Chinsammy and Grant Knowles of South Africa.

The filly, second on debut, has now won 4 races on the trot, breaking the black-type ice with a Listed win in the Trial for the Oaks before coming good in the Oaks itself today. Trainer Brett Crawford's son Ed handled saddling and local training duties for his father and seemed to be pretty confident going into the race, as he predicted a big run from the tall filly.

Frances Ethel, which stands 16 hh 1 inch, is a strapping filly that is still maturing and filling into her big frame. Her first two wins came over a mile and her third one came over a mile and a quarter. Today her stamina came into full spectrum over the Classic Turffontein trip of 2450 meters.

Under a confident ride from Kabelo (King KB) Matsunyane, the bay filly saved ground every inch of her way around the big Turffontein course, as she hugged the rail while racing in mid-pack. Once in the home stretch, the jockey sat chilly until inside the final furlongs, when he moved his mount towards the center of the course looking for a split.

Frances Ethel fought for command, was engaged in a protracted duel with runner-up My Soul Mate, finally put her away in the last sixteenth of a mile and drew clear late to score by 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  lengths. Both the winner and runner-up were bred by Varsfontein Stud, a Western Cape breeding concern from whose bloodlines Team Valor International has enjoyed considerable success over the last 3 decades.

Plans call for the filly to point for the Grade 1 Woolavington Stakes and possibly the Grade 1 Durban July, after which she will be exported to England and eventually the United States and on to Australia.

In the last week, TVI has “hit for the cycle,” winning a Grade 1 (in Dubai), a Grade 2 (in South Africa), a Grade 3 (at Santa Anita in the U. S. A) and a Listed race (in Ireland).

[RACE VIDEO](#)