

LA SARDANE SEIZES PERFECT STING FOR THIRD WIN IN SEVEN WEEKS FRENCH IMPORT IS RAZOR SHARP FOR JOCKEY PRAT, TRAINER DRYSDALE SETS STAKES RECORD WITH FRONTRUNNING SCORE, EYES G2 AT THE SPA

La Sardane is a multiple Graded stakes winner and her big summer target is the Grade 2, \$400,000 Ballston Spa Stakes at Saratoga in late August, yet trainer Neil Drysdale was more than happy to tide her over in a Listed assignment on June 30 at Belmont Park.



La Sardane improved to 4-for-5 for her Team Valor partnership, with three stakes triumphs.

7.

Razor sharp after that sprint performance, La Sardane bounded to the lead in the Perfect Sting and shrugged off pressure from co-favorite Thais, who faded in the stretch while Prat and La Sardane were in the process of wrapping things up, holding strong to prevail by a half-length.

La Sardane's win also put a bow around a solid first half of 2018 for Team Valor, which racked up 21 wins and more than \$1.4-million in earnings from January through June, highlighted by five stakes victories. During the entire 2017 season, TVI runners won 32 races and earned \$1.8-million.

From *Daily Racing Form* comes the following:

La Sardane Caps Big Month in Perfect Sting

La Sardane won her second Belmont turf stakes this month, leading all the way under Flavien Prat in the \$100,000 Perfect Sting Stakes on Saturday.

"I would rather race her than train her," Drysdale said beforehand.

La Sardane obliged with what amounted to a paid public workout, as she fended off all challengers and made light work of running a mile in 1:33.19 (a new stakes record) to take Saturday's \$100,000 Perfect Sting under regular jockey Flavien Prat.

The French import recorded her third straight win and fourth overall in five starts for Team Valor, dating back to a French Group 2 triumph in her stable debut in June 2017. She also scored on the Belmont grass in the Grade 3 Intercontinental Stakes going 7 furlongs on June

La Sardane had stalked and pounced in the seven-furlong Intercontinental on June 9, but the tactics were right today as La Sardane got away with a very comfortable opening quarter-mile in 23.68 seconds. She went her half in 46.41, six furlongs in 1:09.58, and stopped the timer in 1:33.19 for one mile on firm going. Getting a final quarter-mile in 23.61, faster than her first quarter, after a 22.71 second quarter is solid stuff, and La Sardane was clearly best today.

"I always wanted to try and be on the lead with her," Prat said. "She won in France on the lead, so I thought on this turf, she would like that a little bit better. She's very fast and has a high cruising speed. When I asked her to go, she gave me that great kick."

Trained by Neil Drysdale for a Team Valor International partnership, the 4-year-old French import paid \$5.60 as the favorite.



La Sardane came out of provincial French racecourses with an off-brand pedigree (by Kingsalsa and out of Foresta, by Forestier) but showed group-stakes form during the spring of 2017. She attracted the attention of Team Valor principal Barry Irwin and was purchased privately with an eye toward racing at Del Mar last summer.

Instead, La Sardane required a break from the racetrack, then was slow to get to race again this year. She endured an abysmal trip at Keeneland in her North American debut but won her next race at Churchill before capturing the two stakes this month.

Thais, the second choice, stuck close to La Sardane early but ran poorly and faded out of contention. Pas de Soucis, three or four paths wide on the turn, made a decent bid to nearly reach the leader in upper stretch, but her run was relatively short lived, and In the Lee, who was last early, came late to nail her for second.