

November 4, 2018

VA BANK CASHES BIG WIN DESPITE CONDITIONS IN PREMIO ROMA IN ITALY GERMAN-BASED 6YO GUTS OUT NECK VICTORY IN \$297,000 GRADE 2 RESTORED TO FORM BY WOEHLER, TAKES TVI'S 10TH STAKES WIN OF 2018

After consistently running well in stiff competition all year, Va Bank looked to be up against it for a change on November 4 when the turf course for his seasonal finale deteriorated to a water-logged mess at Capannelle racecourse in Rome, yet the game 6-year-old gutted out his biggest win to date in the \$297,000, Grade 2 Premio Roma.

The victory strengthened Va Bank's case for a championship in Germany, where he has been brilliantly restored to a high level by trainer Andreas Woehler after the Irish-bred chestnut missed most of 2017 due to injury. He was previously based in Poland.

Woehler's trusted jockey, Eduardo Pedroza, got the job done on Va Bank despite grim conditions at Rome, exemplified by the final time of 2:14.62 for 10 furlongs, or about 13 seconds slower than normal.

Pedroza had to ask Va Bank a bit early at Capannelle, as he was getting pushed toward the inside, which was the heaviest part of the course. Pedroza responded by sending Va Bank to the front, seeking better ground, and they opened up a clear advantage before Va Bank began to tire over the testing ground and switched leads with about 70 yards to go. Presley cut into Va Bank's lead in the final strides but could not quite catch him, finishing second by a head.

Last year's Premio Roma winner, Anda Machacho, followed another 2 1/2 lengths back in third, suffering just the second loss of his 10-race career.

Va Bank has been rubbing shoulders with accomplished horses all season, including the English-based Grade 2 winner Stormy Antarctica, the Grade 1 Dubai Turf winner Benbatl and the former German Horse of the Year Iquitos, who fired back to win a Grade 1 in Germany last week in his first start since finishing second by 5 lengths to Va Bank in the Group 3 Preis der Deutschen at Hoppegarten on October 3.

The Deutschen win came on a "good" course with just a bit of cut in the ground, and Woehler thinks Va Bank goes best on that type of going. The connections decided to wrap up his campaign in the Premio Roma and sent him to Italy only hoping that the course would not be "heavy." It was, and Va Bank certainly did not relish the footing as the field of 5 could be seen kicking up large clods of grass the entire race, but he would not be denied.



Va Bank holds on to win by a head in the Premio Roma, after he twice finished second by a nose in Group races in Germany this season.



Pedroza said, "If I could ride 5 horses a year that had Va Bank's character, I wouldn't need any other mounts!"

The legendary retired English jockey Lester Piggott presented the winning trophy.

Va Bank registered Team Valor's 10th stakes win of 2018, which is well clear of all other public racing partnerships.

Eduardo Pedroza accepts the winning trophy from Lester Piggott, one of racing's all-time great riders.