

# BELLADONNA RACING LLC

NO.5 – VOL.5  
MAY 2025

THE RETURN OF OUR *Queen*

## VAHVA SET TO DEFEND HER DERBY CITY DISTAFF TITLE

VAHVA enjoyed her Florida winter vacation following the Breeders' Cup and has been working steadily throughout the spring to get back to the races. With several top-notch drills at Keeneland, including a pair of bullet works, she appears ready to defend her title in the \$1M Derby City Distaff (G1) on May 3rd.



**2024 DERBY CITY DISTAFF  
WINNER WITH CAREER  
EARNINGS OF \$1,802,810**



# VAHVA



# BELLADONNA RACING LLC

## THE RETURN OF OUR *Queen* (CONT.)

She has been a model of consistency from ages 2-to-4: breaking her maiden at Churchill Downs as a juvenile, getting her first stakes win in the rich Charles Town Oaks (G3) at three, and winning a pair of graded stakes at Churchill last spring. The Derby City-G1 was her breakthrough at the top level, and by the year's end, Vahva had amassed a stellar record of 4-1-1-1 in Grade 1 events, all in 2024.

And while her race-record has been something to behold, her pedigree keeps getting better as well. Vahva is currently the third-leading distaff earner for her sire, Gun Runner, with \$1,802,810, and ranks seventh on her sire's full list of offspring by earnings. She is one of 10 Grade 1 winners by the magical son of Candy Ride (Arg)-Quiet Giant, by Giant's Causeway.

Her dam, stakes-winning Holiday Soiree, by Harlan's Holiday, earned Grade 1 blacktype when third in the Humana Distaff (G1) at Churchill. Recently, the page got a big boost when our own AHAVAH (3YO F, City of Light) finished a gallant second to the KY Oaks (G1) favorite Good Cheer in the \$400,000 Fair Grounds Oaks (G2), in just her second career start. Ahavah became their dam's third stakes horse with this effort, as they have a half-sister named Signal From Noise (6YO M by Arrogate) who added a Grade 2-placing last fall.

Cherie had this to say about our 5-year-old star: "She looks great; her coat looks wonderful - dappled, shiny. She's been training very well, so plenty of works under her belt to make her debut in this spot and it's well within her wheelhouse to win it. And it's on the track she likes, so we got that in our favor." Irad Ortiz Jr. will retain the mount.

**"VAHVA is coming into this race very well...I have let her gallop out strong in each of her works and Sunday's was beautiful."**

— CHERIE

### Churchill Downs Race # 10, 4:50 PM

7 f, Dirt, Derby City Distaff S. presented by Kendall-Jackson Winery  
Fillies & Mares | 4 Year Olds And Up Purse: \$1,000,000

Daily Double / Exacta / Trifecta / Superfecta / Pick 3 (Races 10-11-12) Pick 5 (Races 10-14) / Super Hi-5

Get Churchill Downs Picks for all of today's races.

#	PP	Horse / Sire	Trainer / Jockey
1	1	Scylla Tapit	William I. Mott Joel Rosario
2	2	Kopion Omaha Beach	Richard E. Mandella Kazushi Kimura
3	3	Benedetta City of Light	Steven M. Asmussen Jose L. Ortiz
4	4	Awesome Treat Awesome Patriot	Justin Wojczynski Luan Machado
5	5	Haulin Ice Coal Front	Saffie A. Joseph, Jr. Micah J. Husbands
6	6	Mystic Lake Mo Town	Saffie A. Joseph, Jr. Edgard J. Zayas

7	7	Vahva Gun Runner	Cherie DeVaux Irada Ortiz, Jr.
8	8	Ways and Means Practical Joke	Chad C. Brown Flavien Prat
9	9	Emery More Than Ready	Brad H. Cox Manuel Franco
10	10	Dorth Vader Girvin	George Weaver John R. Velazquez
11	11	Positano Sunset Goldencents	Ian R. Wilkes Julien R. Leparoux
12	12	Hope Road Quality Road	Bob Baffert Juan J. Hernandez
13	13	My Mane Squeeze Audible	Michael J. Maker Luis Saez
14	14	Taxed Collected	Randy L. Morse Cristian A. Torres
15	15	Grand Job Justify	William I. Mott Junior Alvarado
16	16	Miss Susan B Constitution	Rogelio Labra Santo Sanjurjo



# BELLADONNA RACING<sup>LLC</sup>

ODDS ARE IN THE FAVOR OF *Fun!*

The Kentucky Derby, often called 'The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports<sup>®</sup>,' has a storied history dating back to 1875. Held annually on the first Saturday in May at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky, the race is the oldest continuously running sports event in the United States.

151<sup>ST</sup> KENTUCKY  
DERBY  
WOODFORD RESERVE

## POST POSITIONS

1		CITIZEN BULL	20-1	11		FLYING MOHAWK	30-1
2		NEOEQUOS	30-1	12		EAST AVENUE	20-1
3		FINAL GAMBIT	30-1	13		PUBLISHER	20-1
4		RODRIGUEZ	12-1	14		TIZTASTIC	20-1
5		AMERICAN PROMISE	30-1	15		RENDER JUDGMENT	30-1
6		ADMIRE DAYTONA	30-1	16		COAL BATTLE	30-1
7		LUXOR CAFÉ	15-1	17		SANDMAN	6-1
8		JOURNALISM	3-1	18		SOVEREIGNTY	5-1
9		BURNHAM SQUARE	12-1	19		CHUNK OF GOLD	30-1
10		GRANDE	20-1	20		OWEN ALMIGHTY	30-1

Post time Saturday: 6:57 p.m. ET

151<sup>ST</sup> KENTUCKY  
DERBY  
OAKS

## POST POSITIONS

1		EARLY ON	30-1	8		FIVE G	12-1
2		SIMPLY JOKING	30-1	9		TENMA	12-1
3		FONDLY	30-1	10		TAKE CHARGE MILADY	12-1
4		DREXEL HILL	30-1	11		GOOD CHEER	6-5
5		QUICKICK	30-1	12		ANNA'S PROMISE	30-1
6		BALLERINA D'ORO	10-1	13		BLESS THE BROKEN	30-1
7		LA CARA	6-1	14		QUIETSID	8-1

Post time Friday: 5:51 p.m. ET



# BELLADONNA RACING <sup>LLC</sup>

ONE TOUGH *Muddler!*

## Will to Prepare *was* Well Prepared for Debut

On a showery closing day of the Keeneland Spring Meet, WILL TO PREPARE made his career debut a winning one in exciting fashion over the sloppy main track.

Breaking well from the gate, Jose Ortiz let WILL TO PREPARE settle midway down the backstretch. Setting up outside of two other horses, they began to move at the ½-mile pole in tandem with another horse. WILL TO PREPARE made a big move seven-wide down the stretch, was caught by another horse and then dove forward when challenged. His extra effort in the closing strides earned him a ¾-length win in what was considered a very talented field of maidens.

Cherie commented, "WILL TO PREPARE was ready to run; this race came up in the book and we entered him. I was fully expecting him to need a race to be fully cranked, but he ran very well and was game down the stretch. That

was a pretty salty group of maidens he beat. I had some questions with his pedigree and how he works, if he was a turf horse, but for now, we will keep him on the dirt. You never know when you run in the mud, if they like the mud or don't, but WILL TO PREPARE sure did. I'm proud of the horse and this will give us a race to build on."

Ortiz added, "That colt ran super. He never gave up and when he was headed by the other horse, he kicked back in and would not let them pass him. I liked him a lot. We will see how he does next time with a little more distance and hopefully a dry track."

**RACE RECORD: 1-1-0-0 \$65,643**



▶ RACE REPLAY



# BELLADONNA RACING<sup>LLC</sup>

*What's* GOING ON

## *2025 Kentucky Derby Fun Fact*

TWO Triple Crown winners have runners in the Kentucky Derby: AMERICAN PHAROAH (2015 TC) has two sons, Luxor Café and Publisher, while JUSTIFY (2018 TC) has American Promise representing them in the 151st running of the Derby.



## Two-Year-Olds Learning the Ropes on the Track

Cherie and her team welcomed in seven of our two-year-olds to Keeneland in early April. The busy racetrack routine differs from their early training at the peaceful Eisaman Equine facility in Florida, but they were very well prepared by Dr. Barry Eisaman and his staff.



Check out the video here of the '23 Daisy and '23 Allusion colts working a quarter-mile. They both galloped out well and are ready to step up to three-eighths next workout.



Even more impressive were the '23 Surf Siren and '23 Bajan Girl fillies, as they went in tandem in a snappy :24 for a quarter-mile.



Watch the video here as they caught another working pair and passed them like professionals.

**Our next group of two-year-olds will ship in from Florida after the Derby.**



# BELLADONNA RACING LLC

TALKING *Derby!*



Journalism trains at Churchill Downs

Linda Doane

## Favored Journalism Draws Post 8 for Kentucky Derby

**T**he connections of Santa Anita Derby (G1) winner **Journalism** BH+ expressed relief after the anticipated Kentucky Derby (G1) favorite drew post 8 for the \$5 million classic May 3 at **Churchill Downs**.

◆ [CLICK FOR FULL BH STORY](#)



Good Cheer is the morning-line favorite for the Kentucky Oaks

Linda Doane

## Favored Good Cheer Draws Post 11 for Kentucky Oaks

**K**entucky Oaks (G1) morning-line favorite **Good Cheer** BH+ will begin her journey from post 11 when the undefeated daughter of **Medaglia d'Oro** BH+ faces an expected 13 other 3-year-old fillies in the 1 1/8-mile test May 2 at **Churchill Downs**.

◆ [CLICK FOR FULL BH STORY](#)

*Trivia Question*

ANSWER FROM PAGE 7

Q: The Kentucky Derby has not always had large 20-horse fields. Take a guess how many horses ran in the smallest fields (two years).

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE BELLADONNATB.COM

It is an all-source site for entries, results, updates, stats, current news, archived newsletters, and photos.

We encourage feedback so that we can provide the information you desire, so please let us know what you think of the overall content.



**CLICK HERE TO  
VISIT OUR SITE**





# BELLADONNA RACING LLC

*Around* THE TRACK



A: There were only three horses in the 1892 and 1905 Kentucky Derbies, tying for the smallest fields of the historic event.



# BELLADONNA

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### *Around* THE TRACK



two-year-old fillies



Depiction



Vivo Stavolta



Seaport Lane





# BELLADONNA RACING LLC

*Around* THE TRACK

