



LIVE RACING RETURNS ON
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Caprice Hill Is a Pro in \$410,000 Peaceful Way

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By Karen Briggs

Photo by Clive Cohen

CAMPBELLVILLE, ON – Two-year-old trotting fillies can be a capricious group, but there was nothing flighty about Tom Hill's Caprice Hill on the night of Saturday, September 19th. She was totally professional as she cruised to a one-and-a-quarter length victory in the \$410,000 (Cdn) Peaceful Way Stakes at Mohawk racetrack, living up to her even-money price and her easy win in last week's elimination.

With #6, Ultimate Shopper, scratched sick, nine fillies went to the gate in the Peaceful Way, four of which, including Caprice Hill, were daughters of the stalwart Ontario sire, Kadabra. Leaving from post four, Tim Tetrick eased Caprice Hill comfortably into fourth off the start, with Celebrity Eventsy and Brett Miller firing to the front. Could It Be Magic (Wayne Henry) picked up the early pocket spot, but by a first quarter in a respectable :27.1, Sylvain Filion had Emoticon Hanover on the move to overtake. Celebrity Eventsy stayed stuck on Filion's helmet, while Could It Be Magic applied pressure coming up to the three-quarter pole in 1:27.0.

Tetrick had to swing Caprice Hill four wide as they turned for home, but the strapping filly, having benefited from an energy-saving trip, had more than enough step to smoothly take command down the stretch. She stopped the timers in 1:56.1, with Celebrity Eventsy grabbing the place spot, and #9, Dewdle All Day (Chris Christoforou) stepping up for third some five lengths back.

"It worked out great," said Tetrick. "It was a second-over trip following a couple of nice fillies there. I got led up right where I needed to be, there was a little racing when Brett (Miller) shook loose, and she showed how good she is and how she wants to do it. She just gets the job done."

Tetrick had yielded the drive on this filly to Yannick Gingras earlier this year, and was grateful to be back in the bike for this trip. "Good things happen when everything works out right," he said. "Lucky for me I got a chance to get back on ... that was one of my biggest mistakes, picking off her early in the season."

Caprice Hill now has a record of six wins and a second in seven lifetime starts, and has more than doubled her bankroll with this win. Owner Tom Hill celebrated his 65th birthday by hoisting the Peaceful Way trophy. "It's great to win a big race, especially on your birthday," he said.

"When Yannick (Gingras) drove this filly, he said she was 'Mission Brief with brains'. She's proven it tonight. She's a gift from God. Kadabra has proven to be as good a sire as any trotting sire in the world. I don't know a whole lot about trotters – I just asked Tony (Alagna) to get us a nice filly. He went and picked her out, and he deserves all the credit and all the praise." Hill then amended that statement, saying, "His mother (Donna Alagna) deserves a lot of the credit as well!"

"I went to Hanover (Shoe Farms) to look at their consignment (prior to the Harrisburg sale, where Caprice Hill sold for \$55,000)," said Alagna. "I actually went to look at the colts. She was the only trotting filly I turned out that day. She just had a presence about her, and a natural balance in the paddock.

"My mother trains all of Tom Hill's yearlings back in Illinois. Mid-winter, she said to me, 'this is some kinda filly'. Around April, she said, 'she's too good for me to keep here at Balmoral Park. I'm sending her to you.' The first time I sat behind her in the bike, I thought, 'this filly's something special'."

Caprice Hill returned a modest \$3.90, \$2.40, and \$2.20 for the win.

San Pail Retires in Style

Prior to the Peaceful Way, Mohawk's fans were treated to a farewell visit from the retiring San Pail, three-time winner of the Maple Leaf Trot in 2009, 2010, and 2011. Canada's Horse of the Year in 2011 and a multiple O'Brien Award winner, with earnings of over \$3 million, the 11-year-old San Pellegrino gelding is a fan favourite who was locally owned and trained, and driven throughout his career by Randy Waples. San Pail later led the post parade for the Maple Leaf Trot.

"It was a tough night to have him here looking so fit and feeling so good, and not be racing him," said trainer Rod Hughes. "Everywhere we go, people ask about the Pail. I wish they'd ask about my other horses! He put me in the spotlight for sure. We still jog him from time to time and he gets ridden a little too. He's just going to enjoy life from here on out."

Mission Brief Makes Short Work of Eleganceimage Stakes

Even with a Hambletonian Oaks winner in the field, there wasn't much question who was likely to dominate in the \$404,000 Eleganceimage Final, for sophomore trotting fillies, this evening at Mohawk. The overwhelming bettor's choice was the ebony miss, Mission Brief – and she didn't disappoint, sailing home five and a half lengths to the good in a smart, but not stakes-shattering, 1:52.4.

Second choice, Muscle Baby Doll (Doug McNair) and Wild Honey (John Campbell) surged off the gate to lead the early proceedings, while Yannick Gingras tucked Mission Brief into the fourth spot and played a waiting game. Wild Honey quickly got tangled in traffic, but Gingras managed to keep Mission Brief clear, and she was on top before the half in a brisk :55.2 and sailing away from the pack. From there it was plain sailing for the fleet-footed filly who delivered on her 1-9 odds, though Wild Honey surprised by fighting gamely back to capture second.

Elegant Serenity, trained and driven by Roger Mayotte and owned by Doug Millard of Woodstock, Ontario, crossed the line third; she is a daughter of Eleganceimage herself, by Kadabra.

Ron Burke trains Mission Brief, who has earned more than \$1.1 million but struggled with breaks in her freshman season (including a costly one in the 2014 edition of the Peaceful Way). At three, she is coming into her own, with seven wins in nine starts this year, including a 15-length romp in last week's Eleganceimage elimination. The filly is owned by the Burke Racing Stable, the Our Horse Cents Stable, Weaver Brussemi, and J and T Silva Stables. The same connections own Southwind Frank, another Muscle Hill offspring, who captured the William Wellwood Memorial Stakes for two-year-old trotting colts earlier in the evening.

Gingras remarked, "She was amazing tonight. I didn't even start her up. The (ear) plugs were still in. She's toying with them; she's just in a different class.

"Tonight she was really relaxed. She drove two fingers. I was able to put Jody (Jamieson, driving Danielle Hall) in the hole around the first turn and I took control of the race after that.

"She makes the game plan," Gingras added. "Last week she decided she was going to go all the way, and tonight she was a little more easy to handle, so we just let the dust settle and moved on up. I can't make plans on her. She makes the plans."

"It is a thrill (to be involved with this filly), confirmed co-owner Jerry Silva, "but what Yannick said is important. When you have a special lady, she dictates how she's going to go and what she wants to do. Yannick understands her. We're just there to keep her happy, and we don't have last year's problems with breaking, thank God. I can't wait for Lexington, to try to break 1:50!

"With Mission Brief, our plans are to race her at four, if everybody still agrees, and to bring her to the Elitlopp at five."



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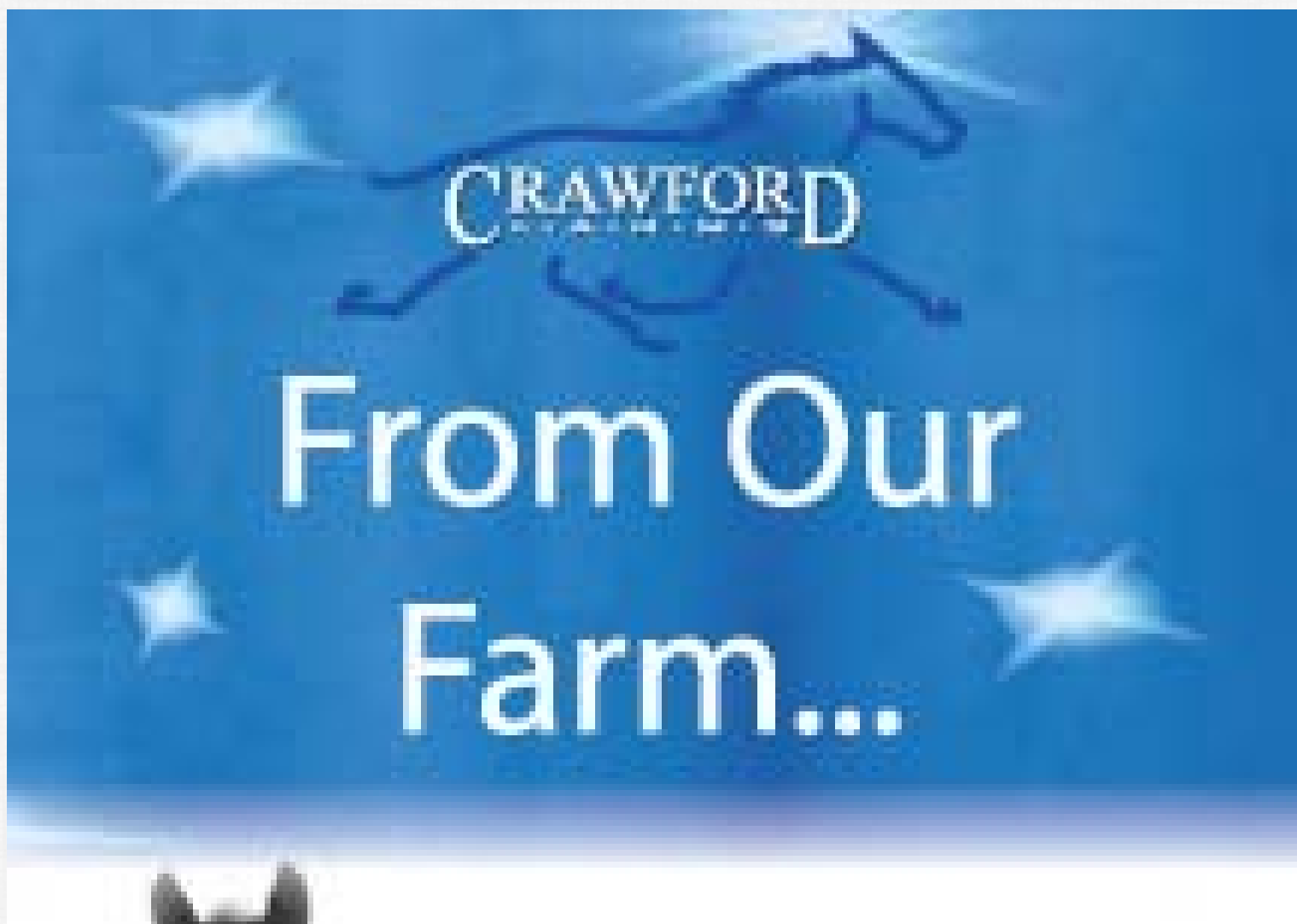
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