

Hussonet's champion son joins Mornmoot roster

MORNMOOT STUD has beaten off strong competition to secure Hussonet's Champion Two and Three-Year-Old son and dual Gr.1 winner El Cumbres (CHI).

The handsome 16.2 hand bay horse, whose dam is the winning Cresta Rider (Northern Dancer) mare Mascara Roja, was never out of the first three in eight starts on turf in Chile where his wins included that country's 2000 Guineas-Gr.1 (8.5f) by a staggering 8.5 lengths. That success was followed by another at the elite level when he won Gran Premio Nacional Ricardo Lyon-Gr.1 by 1.5 lengths before his sale to the US.

The son of Hussonet (Mr. Prospector), a multiple Champion Sire in Chile and now an instant success in Australia with first crop runners including five-times Gr.1 winner Weekend Hussler and 2008 Blue Diamond Stakes-Gr.1 hero Reaan, started his career in spectacular fashion with a 2.5 length win on debut at two (beating Amador and Porfido) over five furlongs on turf in 56.40.

Off the scene for two months, he has beaten a head by Bastian in a Listed event (6f in 1:07.40), with Porfido third, and was then a neck second to his great rival Porfido in a Gr.3 event (6.5f in 1:15.0).

Stepped up to Gr.1 company in the Gran Premio Alberto Vial Infante (8f), El Cumbres was not at home on the heavy track but still put up a gutsy performance to run second to Porfido. El Cumbres and Porfido were named Co-Champion Two Year Olds at the end of the season.

El Cumbres met heavy ground again when first up at three, finishing third to Porfido in the Gran Premio Criadores-Gr.3 (8f).

Facing the country's best three-year-olds next start in the Polla de Potrillos (2000 Guineas), El Cumbres made it a one-act affair, clearing out to win by 8.5 lengths from Frente Russo and Porfido and running 1:42.10 on a good track.

Club Hippico de Santiago, the venue for all his starts, was also the scene of his final run in his homeland and El Cumbres went out on a winning note in the GP Nacional Ricardo Lyon-Gr.1, running the 10f in 1:59.97 for trainer Oliverio Martinez and regular rider David Sanchez and with Porfido fourth. Although sold to race in America early in the season, he was still named Champion 3YO Colt on turf.

El Cumbres, who is inbred 4mx5f to Native Dancer, was bred by Patricio Zaldivar's Haras Santa Marta, who raced the horse with Francisco Bertin's Stud Viejo Perro.

His new owners Roy and Gretchen Jackson's Lael Stables (they also raced ill-fated Kentucky Derby winner Barbaro) sent the horse to Michael Matz and he had his first start in the US on June 10, 2006, running third in \$US50,000 mile event at Pimlico, beaten 1.75 lengths.

However, the horse was then injured in training and after a long spell was back in action on January 11, 2008, placing third in a mile Allowance. He was retired after one further run, when 6th over 8.5f in March – his only unplaced run in 11 starts.

His sire Hussonet (Mr. Prospector-Sacahuista by Raja Baba), a winner twice and stakes placed from just seven starts in the US, retired to stud in Chile in 1995 and Australia in 2003 and was Chile's Champion First Crop sire in 1998. He would become Champion Sire there seven times and lead the juvenile sires' list five times.

To the end of March he had 336 winners from 480 runners (70%) and 62 stakes winners (12.9%), including the current Australian sensation Weekend Hussler, already a \$2.1m earner and with eight wins (five Gr.1) in just 10 starts among 26 Gr.1 winners.

He has also sired Host and Wild Spirit (both Gr.1 winners in Chile and the US), along with Printemps, Trotamondo and Penamcor all named Horse of the Year in Chile (as was Host).

Hussonet has had five Australian-bred stakes winners this season with just two crops racing including the juveniles Reaan and Huiskes and the three-year-olds Dirty, Rios and Weekend Hussler and stakes placed Husson Lightning (winner of the Maribyrnong Plate-Gr.3 at two) and Hussonic.

Hussonet's dam Sacahuista (by the Bold Ruler horse Raja Baba) was Champion Three-Year-Old Filly in the US and her six wins, three at Gr.1, included the Breeders' Cup Distaff. She is also the dam of Gr.1 winner and sire Ekraar (Red Ransom (USA)).

El Cumbres' dam Mascara Roja is a daughter of Cresta Rider (Northern Dancer-Thoroly Blue by Blue Prince), a winner of two of his three juvenile starts in France including the Criterium de Maisons-Laffite-Gr.2 on debut and fourth in the Grand Criterium-Gr.1 and described as "very good looking and enormously talented". He won the Prix Jean Prat-Gr.2 and was third in the French 2000 Guineas-Gr.1 and Prix d'Ispehan-Gr.1 the following season before a successful career as a sire in France and South America.

El Cumbres, whose name translates as the summit in English, comes from a family that has long been a source of Gr.1 winners in South America and his second dam Masada (by Naspur) is a sister to the US Gr.3 winner Manatial and Chilean stakes winners Master and Mascaron and to the stakes placed Mencion, dam of Loco Afan, Champion Older Horse in Chile. This is also the family of Gr.1 winner Mendeliana, also winner of the Nacional Ricardo Lyon.

El Cumbres' fifth dam Shell (by Umballa (GB)) is a half-sister to 1955 Washington DC International-Gr.1 winner El Chama (ARG) (Claro-Sheelah by Serio), also successful in the 1956 Clasico Presidente de la Republica-Gr.1.

The family (9g), whose notable earlier members include the first US Three-Year-Old Triple Crown winner Sir Barton and the Kentucky Oaks winner Princess Doreen, arrived in Argentina early last century with the importation of Eastwell (GB) (by Canterbury Pilgrim's half-brother Loved One and from East Witton by Chippendale).

El Cumbres will stand at \$11,000 (including GST) alongside Happy Giggle and Fomalhaut (USA) at Mornmoot at Whittlesea in Victoria.

- David Bay

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