



Inbreeding patterns bear fruit in speedy Spanish Chestnut

by Rommy Faversham

The fleet Spanish Chestnut kicked off his three-year-old season in resolute fashion, gaining his first stakes victory in Saturday's \$150,000 San Rafael Stakes (G2) at one mile at Santa Anita Park.



Benoit & Associates photo

SPANISH CHESTNUT

Trained by Patrick Biancone and owned by Derrick Smith and Michael Tabor, Spanish

Chestnut hails from the same quarters that sent out 2004 Kentucky Derby (G1) runner-up and multiple Grade 1 winner Lion Heart, another runner with a penchant for going to the lead.

The well-muscled Spanish Chestnut was purchased in February at the Ocala Breeders' Sales Co. selected two-year-olds in training sale for \$500,000, the co-second-highest price at that sale. This price would speak to the colt's flashy appearance since his immediate family could be described as one of relative durability and consistency, but not commensurate with his apparent value. The sires of his first two dams were quite obscure, both on the track and at stud.

Bred in Florida, Spanish Chestnut is one of three winners out of the No Sale George mare Baby Rabbit, a sprinter-miler type who won 13 of 52 starts and \$273,405, as well as a small stakes in Texas. Spanish Chestnut's second dam, the Wild Wind mare Snuggle Bunny, won five of 31 starts. A half sister to Group 2 winner Apalachee Prince, Snuggle Bunny produced ten winners.

Probably the most recognizable name in Spanish Chestnut's tail-female line is his sixth dam, Shimmer, who also produced the influential stallion Nantallah. Interestingly, Nantallah's daughter Thong appears as the third dam of Sadler's Wells, who is Spanish Chestnut's paternal great-grand sire, creating an aus-

Spanish Chestnut, ch. c., 2002

Horse Chestnut (SAf) 95 120 fls, 2 SWs SI 1.88 DI=1.44	Fort Wood 90 3 wins, \$359,995, SW 337 fls, 33 SWs SI 0.33 DI=1.13	Sadler's Wells 81 1657 fls, 248 SWs SI 4.67 DI=2.82	Northern Dancer 61
		Fall Aspen 76 14 fls, 9 SWs DI=1.62	Fairy Bridge 75
	=London Wall (SAf) 78 1 win, \$ 10 fls, 2 SWs DI=1.89	=Col Pickering (SAf) 71 13 fls, 0 SWs DI=0.60	Pretense 63
		=Nalatala (SAf) 66 7 fls, 1 SW DI=3.17	Change Water 69
Baby Rabbit 92 3 fls, 1 SW DI=11.00	No Sale George 80 1 win, \$7,220 144 fls, 9 SWs SI 1.10 DI=3.18	Raise a Native 61 838 fls, 78 SWs SI 3.14 DI=1.57	*Wilwyn 48
		Matula 72 6 fls, 0 SWs DI=1.48	=Julie Andrews (SAf) 61
	Snuggle Bunny 77 5 wins, \$52,435 14 fls, 2 SWs DI=31.00	Wild Wind 69 39 fls, 0 SWs SI 0.57 DI=6.64	=Grey Sovereign (GB) 48
		Winter Princess 71 13 fls, 2 SWs DI=5.00	=Antalya (GB) 60
			Native Dancer 50
			Raise You 46
			Jacinto 62
			Fleet Flight 53
			Never Bend 60
			Feisty 59
			Abe's Hope 63
			Wave O'Brien 67

icious pattern of inbreeding to our subject's own extended family.

Another important pattern in Spanish Chestnut's pedigree is the 3x4 cross of Sadler's Wells to 1955 Kentucky Oaks winner and influential matriarch Lalun. Never Bend blood is, in fact, disproportionately common in the pedigrees of mares who have produced superior individuals sired by Sadler's Wells-line stallions.

Spanish Chestnut is from the second crop of South African sensation Horse Chestnut (SAf). Undeclared at three when winning that country's Triple Crown, he also easily conquered his elders that season. In 2000, an international career beckoned and Horse Chestnut was exported to the United States where he won his U.S. debut in that year's Broward Handicap (G3) in effortless fashion. Unfortunately, he was injured while prepar-

ing for the Donn Handicap (G1) and was subsequently retired to stud at Claiborne Farm. His first crop included Lucifer's Stone, a Grade 1-winning filly on the grass last year.

Horse Chestnut's sire, Fort Wood, has had three different sons earn South African Horse of the Year honors, with Horse Chestnut being the first of those three in 1999.

The horse chestnut is a tree that has had its fruit extract used for centuries as an herbal remedy in the treatment of sluggish circulation. It is also known as the Spanish chestnut.

There is nothing at all sluggish about 2005 Kentucky Derby (G1) contender Spanish Chestnut, as he has, so far, gotten around just fine.

Rommy Faversham is a pedigree specialist and author living in Los Angeles. More of his work is available at <http://www.equicross.com>.