



The Grade California-Breds

Caracortado: Movin' On Up

by **MARCIE HEACOX**

The level of competition changed but everything else remained the same as California-bred Caracortado won the grade II Robert B. Lewis Stakes at Santa Anita Park on Feb. 13, to stay unbeaten in five starts.

Like his previous four starts, the chestnut gelding stalked the leaders and charged to the front down the homestretch to win by 1 3/4 lengths. His previous winning margins were 1 3/4, 1 3/4, 1 1/2 and 1 3/4 lengths.

Stuka Stakes winner Tiz Chrome, the even-money favorite, took the lead from the start with Hollywood Prevue Stakes (grade III) winner American Lion off his flank in second. As the 9-2 fourth wagering choice, Caracortado stalked the leading pair until the final turn when he began to close.

"Going down the backside, I was sitting behind the front-runners and I really wanted to wait a little longer with him today, but those two horses that were on the lead are good horses and I didn't want to let them get away from me," jockey Paul Atkinson said. "Leaving the quarter pole, I asked my horse to go and he went. He finished up like a really nice horse."

Caracortado won the 1 1/16-mile Pro-Ride race in 1:41.75 while carrying 117 pounds. Dave In Dixie rushed up to snatch second from American Lion. Tiz Chrome and Tango Tango followed. The \$90,000 winner's share of the \$150,000 purse bumped Caracortado's career earnings up to \$199,200.

Caracortado is the first Cal-bred to win the Lewis since Brother Derek won it in 2006, the last year that it was known as the Santa Catalina Stakes. In 2007, it was renamed in honor of Bob Lewis, one of California's most influential owners, who died in 2006. Including Caracortado, 15 Cal-breds have won the race since it was first restricted to three year olds in 1964.

The winning trainer, breeder and co-owner is Mike Machowsky, who owns horses under the stable name Lo Hi Racing. Blahut Racing LLC also co-owns Caracortado.

Machowsky was not surprised by the way Caracortado ran. "Every time I ask him, he does what I want. I read what everybody writes about him, that he's kind of off-bred, not a blueblood, but he's honest," said Machowsky. "You can't knock that."

Caracortado was foaled at Pepper Oaks Farm in Santa Ynez on May 7, 2007. He's the first stakes winner sired by Cat Dreams, who stood stud in California through 2009. Caracortado's dam, Mons Venus, is an unraced half-sister to the dual stakes winner Jaded Pleasure.

Caracortado, which literally translates to "cut face" in Spanish, got his name from a large cut he had on his face when he first arrived at the track. Machowsky first tried to name him Scarface, but the Jockey Club didn't approve it.

He was twice entered and scratched at the 2009 Fairplex Park meet before he was able to make a winning debut in a maiden claiming race on Sept. 24. From there, he won a pair of sprint allowances at Hollywood Park. He then took the \$100,000 California Breeders' Champion Stakes going 1 1/16 miles at Santa Anita en route to the title of 2009 California Champion Two-Year-Old Male.

The Lewis was Caracortado's three-year-old debut. The race was rescheduled from its original Feb. 6 date due to drainage problems on Santa Anita's all-weather surface.

Machowsky said Caracortado's next race will be the grade II San Felipe Stakes on March 13, where he could meet 2009 Eclipse Champion Two-Year-Old Male Lookin At Lucky. Beyond that, the Santa Anita Derby (grade I) and Kentucky Derby (grade I) are the goal. 🐾

Grade II Robert B. Lewis Stakes Santa Anita Park—Saturday, February 13, 2010



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