

Manchego (Muscle Hill-Secret Magic-Cantab Hall)



The defending Dan Patch Award winner for the division, Manchego won Saturday night's first Hambletonian Oaks elimination by 3 3/4 lengths in a final time of 1:51.1, which is her lifetime mark. She moved into the lead past the opening quarter and didn't look back, kicking away in the lane to win in impressive fashion.

That was Manchego's fourth win from six starts this year and her record overall is 16-1-0 from 18 starts. After two wins against Pennsylvania-sired stakes foes to start her season, she raced against males in the Earl Beal Memorial at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono. She won her elimination but went off-stride from first-over in the final. She then was beaten just a nose by Plunge Blue Chip in a Del Miller Memorial division at the Meadowlands, just missing out on a 1:49.4 world record clocking.

She was a perfect 12-for-12 last year, winning stakes events across North America, capped off with the Breeders Crown 2-Year-Old Filly Trot at Hoosier Park. She has career earnings of \$986,170.

"I don't think (she's ever been better)," winning trainer Jimmy Takter said after Manchego's elimination win. "It was a little upsetting to lose the last start and get such a nice record, but she did the dirty work. She went :54.3 (to the half) with a :27.1 second quarter and that kind of hurt her a little bit in the stretch, and maybe Yannick underestimated (Plunge Blue Chip) a little bit too. But I'm happy where we are right now."

Breeding Notes

Manchego is by Muscle Hill, the 2009 Hambletonian champion, and her dam Secret Magic is a half-sister to millionaire Possess The Magic, who won her Hambletonian Oaks elimination in 2007 and then finished fifth as the favorite in the final. Manchego, a \$120,000 buy at the 2016 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale, was bred by Brittany Farms (George Segal), who was the winning breeder in the Hambletonian Oaks in 2014 (Lifetime Pursuit), 2006 (Passionate Glide), 2000 (Marita's Victory), and 1995 (Lookout Victory).

Driver – Yannick Gingras

Born: 8/4/1979 – Birthplace: Greenfield Park, Quebec – Resides: Allentown, NJ

Yannick Gingras, who turns 39 on Aug. 4, has teamed with trainer Jimmy Takter to win the past four editions of the Hambletonian Oaks. Gingras is tied with Berndt Lindstedt for the most Oaks victories in history, with four each.

Gingras won the 2017 Hambletonian Oaks with Manchego. In 2016, he won with All The Time. In 2015, Gingras captured the Oaks with Wild Honey. Gingras' first Oaks victory came with Lifetime Pursuit in 2014.

A third-generation horseman from Quebec, Gingras arrived in the U.S. in 2001 and established himself as a top driver at Yonkers Raceway. In 2003, he received the Rising Star Award from the U.S. Harness Writers Association and in 2004 he moved his base to the Meadowlands. He has led the Big M in wins four times in his career, most recently in 2015.

Gingras has led the sport in purses each of the past four years, with a career high \$17.3 million in 2014. He is in the midst of his 13th consecutive year in the Top 10 for earnings and has been in the top five each of the past eight seasons. His \$161 million in career purses rank No. 8 in history.

He was voted Driver of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association in 2014 and 2017.

Trainer – Jimmy Takter

Born: 9/29/1960 – Birthplace: Sweden – Resides: East Windsor, NJ

Jimmy Takter, 57, has trained the winner of the Hambletonian Oaks a record seven times, including the four most recent editions.

Hambletonian Oaks winners for Takter were Gleam in 1994, Southwind Allaire in 2003, Passionate Glide in 2006, Lifetime Pursuit in 2014, Wild Honey in 2015, All The Time in 2016, and Ariana G in 2017.

Takter is the only trainer to ever twice sweep the Hambletonian and Hambletonian Oaks on the same day. Jan Johnson accomplished the feat once, in 1988.

A native of Sweden, Takter could have enjoyed a comfortable career there, where his father, Bo, was already established as one of the sport's top trainers. But after getting a taste of racing in the U.S. as a

teenager during a 10-month stint with the powerful Continental Farms Stable, Takter decided at the age of 22 to make his home in the States for good. He became a U.S. citizen in 2000.

Takter has been named Trainer of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association a record six times: 2016, 2015, 2014, 2010, 2000 and 1996.

His horses have earned more than \$123 million in purses, the second-highest total for a trainer in history, trailing only Ron Burke. He has won more than 2,000 races as a trainer and more than 800 as a driver.

In 2012, Takter was inducted into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame in Goshen, N.Y.

Owners – Black Horse Racing, John D. Fielding, Herb A. Liverman

This would be the first Hambletonian Oaks winner for Black Horse Racing, the nom de course of Barry J. Guariglia. Fielding and Liverman were among the partners on 2015 Oaks winner Wild Honey, and Liverman also co-owned 2013 champion Bee A Magician.