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**LANE'S END**



## ROYAL DELTA (2008-2017)



Royal Delta winning the Beldame | David Alcosser

by Alan Carasso, with additional reporting by Christie DeBernardis

**Royal Delta** (Empire Maker--Delta Princess, by A.P. Indy), a three-time Eclipse Award winner and twice victorious in the GI Breeders' Cup Ladies' Classic, has died in Ireland from foaling complications, as first reported by *The Paulick Report*. Her Galileo (Ire) foal survived.

Bred in Kentucky by Saud bin Khaled's Palides Investments NV, Royal Delta became a **'TDN Rising Star'** in a single appearance at two for trainer Bill Mott and won the Alabama S. and her first Breeders' Cup ([video](#)) in 2011 en route to the Eclipse Award as champion 3-year-old filly. Four days after her victory at Churchill Downs, Royal Delta became the focus of an epic bidding duel between Frank Stronach and Besilu Stables' Benjamin Leon at the Keeneland November sale. Leon ultimately emerged victorious on a final bid of a sales-topping \$8.5 million ([sales ring footage](#)).

She trained on at age four while still under Mott's tutelage and won the GI Beldame S. ([video](#)) and her second Ladies' Classic ([video](#)) and was named that year's champion older mare. The lanky dark bay romped by better than 10 lengths in the GI Delaware H. ([video](#)) and added the GI Personal Ensign S. ([video](#)) in 2013 before falling short in her three-peat attempt in the Ladies' Classic. With a third straight Eclipse in hand, she was retired with 12 wins from 22 starts and earnings of \$4,811,126.

Mott paid homage to Royal Delta Friday.

Cont. p3

## MCCRAKEN BEGINS DERBY TRAIL AT TAMPA

by Ben Massam

Whitham Thoroughbreds' **'TDN Rising Star'** McCracken (Ghostzapper) capped a perfect three-for-three juvenile campaign with a score in the Nov. 26 GII Kentucky Jockey Club S. at Churchill Downs, and the bay returned to the worktab less than three weeks later at trainer Ian Wilkes' winter base at Palm Meadows Training Center. McCracken has trained steadily over the past two months and kicks off his road to the GI Kentucky Derby in Saturday's GIII Sam F. Davis S. at Tampa Bay Downs. The Davis is a newly minted Derby qualifying points race, with the winner receiving 10 points towards a spot in the starting gate. With that in mind, Wilkes said he hopes to use the race as a stepping stone towards his ultimate goal.

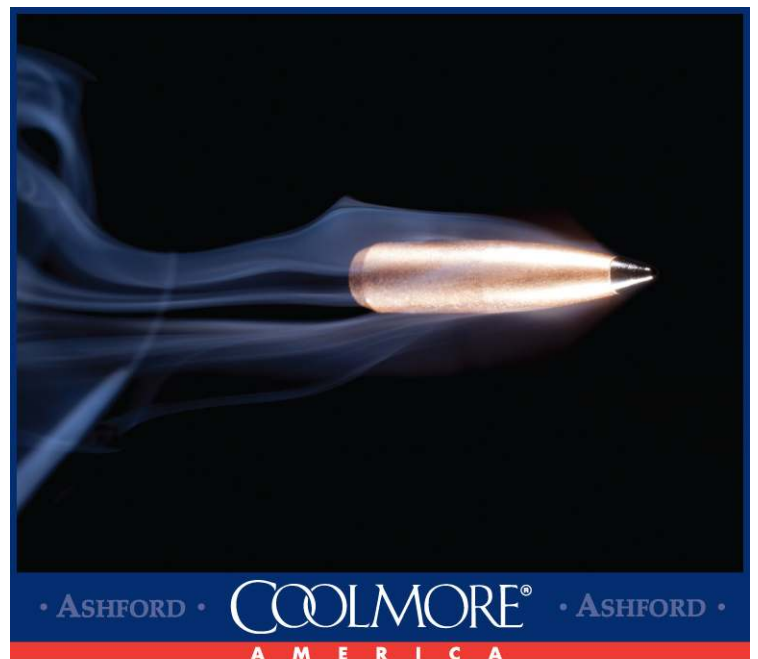
"As long as we get a good race and are moving forward, that's the important thing," Wilkes said in an interview with the Tampa Bay Downs media team. **Cont. p4**

## IN TDN EUROPE TODAY

### CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS: MARK JOHNSTON

Trainer Mark Johnston weighs in on Britain's prize-money situation and attracting newcomers to the industry in the latest installment of Challenges and Solutions.

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**Royal Delta Dies cont.**

“It’s a bit premature, it’s unfortunate,” he lamented. “It’s very special whenever you have a horse like that to basically head the



**Ben Leon leads in Royal Delta following the 2013 Beldame | Adam Coglianese**

stable. She was a three-time champion at three, four and five, and was always that special horse that everyone had to look forward when they go into work in the morning. She gave us a lot of thrills in the afternoon. It is a lot of responsibility to look after one like her, but of course she left us quite gratified

when it was all over.

“Tough. She was very tough,” Mott added when asked what Royal Delta was like to be around. “She was very forward in her training and she had a very special presence about her around the barn. You could just sense that she was the queen. There are just horses that have that look and she had that look and that presence. It really didn’t take a trained eye to see that there was something a bit different about her. I’m sure she isn’t the only one that has ever given off that vibe, but she sure had it.”

Besilu Stables also owns and raced Royal Delta’s ‘**TDN Rising Star**’ half-sister Crown Queen (Smart Strike), a \$1.6-million purchase as a weanling from the 2011 Keeneland November sale and winner of the GI Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup. Crown Queen is due to Empire Maker in 2017.

According to *The Paulick Report*, Royal Delta was sent to Ireland to be bred to Galileo in 2014, but did not get in foal. She was able to conceive the next season, but ultimately aborted. Royal Delta was mated to Galileo again in 2016.

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*Adam Coglianese photo*

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