

Sire Profiles: Garcon Rouge

By Sid Fernando

These are heady days for John and Holly Mathis of Ridgewood Stables in Villa Ridge, Illinois, which operates a breeding/boarding farm under the auspices of Holly Mathis and a racing partnership directed by John Mathis.

At present the Ridgewood Stables partnership owns a two-year-old colt by Yes It's True out of Look for Good, by Unbridled's Song, named Jagati, who was purchased by Paul Sharp at the 2010 Keeneland September sale for \$25,000 from the Dixiana consignment and was pinhooked to the OBS March 2011 two-year-olds in training sale by Sharp, to no avail. Jagati was bought back for \$55,000 when he failed to make his reserve. Since then, he's been racing for the Ridgewood partnership with trainer Eddie Kenneally, who knew he had something special when he was working the colt at Keeneland this spring.

Jagati made his debut in a maiden special on turf in July at Churchill Downs and finished fifth, beaten only two lengths, at five furlongs. Switched to dirt at 5 1/2 furlongs at Saratoga in August, Jagati romped by 12 1/2 lengths over a muddy track. In his next start, Jagati ran second in the Grade 3 Sapling at Monmouth over six furlongs in September, and he came back in October to run fourth in the Grade 2 Nashua over six furlongs. The colt has earned \$54,291 from four starts and looks to be a potential three-year-old stakes-winning sprinter, as his pedigree indicates he should do.

The Mathises also stand the Mt. Livermore horse Garcon Rouge at Ridgewood Stables. Like Jagati, Garcon Rouge broke his maiden in his second lifetime start at two at Churchill Downs in a seven-furlong maiden special. It, too, was over a muddy track, and Garcon Rouge won by four and a half lengths.

By year's end in 1995, Garcon Rouge had won two races from four starts and was considered good enough to go on the classics trail. He'd won his last start at two at the Fair Grounds, and he made his debut at three in the Lecomte Handicap over a mile, finishing fourth.

Garcon Rouge came back in the Grade 3 Southwest Stakes at a mile and finished sixth to the good colt Ide, who was on a winning streak. Garcon Rouge was wheeled back next in the Grade 3 Louisiana Derby over a mile and a sixteenth and finished seventh to Grindstone, the eventual winner of the Kentucky Derby that year.

Garcon Rouge was obviously talented enough to be tried against the best of his generation in Graded Stakes company, but after falling short against the likes of a future Kentucky Derby winner, he began what is a remarkable achievement these days: A career that spanned eight years and 91 starts, which ended when he was nine years old. Altogether, he won 19 races, ran second nine times, and was third another 25 times, for earnings of \$334,628.



A non-stakes winner who's 10 when he enters the breeding shed is not exactly a hot property anywhere, so Garcon Rouge was used primarily as a private stallion, serving very small books of mares, even by state breeding standards.

In 2004, Garcon Rouge's first crop consisted of only seven foals, but amazingly all seven made it to the races and four were winners. This first crop also included the stallion's first and only stakes horse, the filly Meho Rouge, who earned \$49,219 from only 12 starts.

Meho Rouge, like her sire, broke her maiden in her second start at two and was beaten only a neck in the Bungalow Handicap at three at Fairmount Park.

Garcon Rouge's next crop, foals of 2005, contained six foals, and all of them made it to the races, too. This crop includes his leading earner, the filly She's Got It All, who has 12 wins and \$95,460 in earnings.

All told, the stallion is represented by 32 foals (including two year-olds of 2011 that have not started), 23 starters, and 10 winners that have amassed progeny earnings of \$317,725.

On pedigree, Garcon Rouge has a lot going for him, too. His sire, as mentioned, was the Blushing Groom-line horse Mt. Livermore, a top-class sprinter and sire whose stallions' sons include the current horse Orientate, as well as previous stallions Housebuster (a champion sprinter), Lucky Lionel (sire of top sprinter Benny the Bull and a leading sire in Oklahoma), Peaks and Valleys (a champion in Canada), and Subordination. Additionally, Mt. Livermore's 70 stakes winners include the champion filly Eliza, too.

On his female side, Garcon Rouge is from the strong family of L'Amour Tournaments, and his dam, Mighty Milk, is by the Northern Dancer horse Hero's Honor.

Because Garcon Rouge is enrolled with the eNicks (www.eNicks.com) stallion program, breeders can get free nicks with him and utilize this facility to find the best crosses for him and the Mt. Livermore line.

By breeding intelligently to him, Garcon Rouge, a tremendously sound and courageous horse, has the ability to get stakes-quality runners—as he's already demonstrated. And with the people that he has behind him—folks who are obviously knowledgeable about the game at the highest levels—it wouldn't be altogether surprising to see this horse come up with a horse as talented at Ridgewood's Jagati.

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