



## Zardana steps out of stablemate's shadow to defeat Rachel Alexandra

by Rommy Faversham

Rather than starting Zardana (Brz) against her undefeated stablemate, Zenyatta, in the Santa Margarita Invitational Handicap (G1) on March 13 at Santa Anita Park, trainer John Shirreffs shipped his lesser accomplished six-year old mare to Fair Grounds for the \$200,000 New Orleans Ladies Stakes at 1 1/16 miles the same day.

It was thought the Grade 2-winning Zardana might serve as a useful foil, if not measuring rod, in what was the season debut of reigning Horse of the Year Rachel Alexandra.

So much for plans of mice and men as Zardana stunned the crowd by outfinishing the champion filly and prohibitive 1-to-20 favorite by three-quarters of a length. Third-place finisher Unforgotten finished another 11 1/2 lengths back in third in the five-horse field.



Lou Hodges Jr/Hodges Photography

### ZARDANA

a two-year-old at Hipodromo La Gavea in her native Brazil.

Subsequently purchased and imported to the U.S. by Arnold Zetcher, Zardana's victories in Southern California include last year's Bayakoa Handicap (G2) at Hollywood Park and the 2008 Osunitas Handicap on the turf at Del Mar. Her career record stands at eight wins from 19 starts and earnings of \$428,421.

Bred by Haras Campestre, Zardana is one of four winners from as many starters out of the winning Southern Halo mare Dear Filly, a half sister to Brazilian Group 2 winner Minion, by Mutakddim.

Dear Filly also is closely related to two Argentine Group 1 winners, Matthis and My Lad, both by Southern Halo out of Mystique.

In turn, Zardana's third dam, Mystique, is a half sister to Malaga (Arg) and Mustard (Arg), Argentine classic winners and champion three-year-old fillies of 1981 and '83, respectively, by Salt Marsh.

This tail-female line has been producing important runners in South

The following morning came the announcement of Rachel Alexandra's defection from her highly anticipated ultrarich showdown with Zenyatta in the Apple Blossom Invitational Stakes (G1) on April 9 at Oaklawn Park.

The New Orleans Ladies Stakes was Zardana's first race on dirt since capturing her first three starts by a combined margin of 39 lengths as

### Zardana, b. m., 2004

=Crimson Tide(Ire) 94 130 fls, 9 SWs SI 1.52 DI=0.78	Sadler's Wells 81 6 wins, \$713,690 Champion 2168 fls, 313 SWs SI 4.01 DI=2.82	<b>Northern Dancer 61</b> 635 fls, 147 SWs SI 5.82 DI=3.00	Nearctic 54	=Nearco (Ity) 35 *Lady Angela 44
	=Sharata (Ire) 88 Unraced 11 fls, 5 SWs DI=0.67	Fairy Bridge 75 9 fls, 4 SWs DI=2.29	Natalma 57	Native Dancer 47 <b>Almahmoud 50</b>
=Dear Filly (Arg) 97 4 fls, 1 SW DI=1.22	Southern Halo 83 5 wins, \$344,875, Spl 1758 fls, 169 SWs SI 1.80 DI=2.23	=Darshaan (GB) 81 835 fls, 97 SWs SI 2.74 DI=0.79	Bold Reason 68	<b>Hail to Reason 58</b> Lalun 52
	=My Dear Girl (Arg) 92 Spl, \$5,045 5 fls, 1 SW DI=0.70	Shademah (Ire) 78 8 fls, 1 SW DI=1.35	Special 69	*Forti 63 Thong 64
		Halo 69 724 fls, 63 SWs SI 3.40 DI=2.14	=Shirley Heights (GB) 75	Mill Reef 68 =Hardiemma (GB) 69
		Northern Sea 74 8 fls, 0 SWs DI=1.97	=Delsy (Fr) 72	=Abdos (Fr) 59 =Kelty (Fr) 65
		Merce Cunningham 84 76 fls, 3 SWs SI 1.56 DI=0.79	Thatch 70	*Forti 63 Thong 64
		=Mystique (Arg) 79 13 fls, 2 SWs DI=1.22	=Shamim (GB) 68	=Le Haar (Fr) 54 =Diamond Drop (GB) 63
			<b>Hail to Reason 58</b>	*Turn-to 51 Nothridchance 48
			Cosmah 53	Cosmic Bomb 44 <b>Almahmoud 47</b>
			<b>Northern Dancer 61</b>	Nearctic 54 Natalma 57
			Sea Saga 68	*Sea-Bird 62 Shama 61
			Nijinsky II 67	<b>Northern Dancer 61</b> Flaming Page 59
			Foreseer 69	Round Table 54 Regal Gleam 64
			Logical 72	Buckpasser 63 Smart Deb 60
			=Mirmex (Arg) 71	=Mount Athos (GB) 65 =Mireille (Arg) 56

America since Zardana's 13th dam, Tears, by Blair Athol, was sent from England to Argentina in 1881.

Zardana hails from the second crop of the Sadler's Wells stallion Crimson Tide, who stands in Brazil at Haras Bage do Sul. He is the sire of seven group or graded stakes winners.

Once synonymous with the issue of turf runners, the Sadler's Wells male line continues to make inroads amongst the many dirt tracks of the Western Hemisphere.

A group stakes winner in England and Germany, Crimson Tide's pedigree features the successful affinity of Sadler's Wells and Darshaan along with a close 3x3 cross of the full siblings Special and Thatch.

Alternatively, Zardana's pedigree is built on three strains of Northern Dancer and supported by another from his close relative Halo, creating inbreeding to their common grandam, Almahmoud.

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