

FRIESAN FIRE

It took a while for Friesan Fire to make believers out of most people. But there's nothing like a 7/4-length victory in the Louisiana Derby (gr. II), completing a sweep of the three Fair Grounds Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (gr. I) preps, and a 104 Beyer Speed Figure to get people to notice.

With that one victory, Friesan Fire catapulted up everyone's Derby list, many moving him up to No. 1. For the first time since last fall, Friesan Fire had come out from the shadow of his more illustrious stablemate Old Fashioned, who helped matters by getting beat in the Rebel Stakes (gr. III) at Oaklawn the same day.

Co-owned by Vinery Stables and Rick Porter (the latter owns all of Old Fashioned), Friesan Fire finally is living up to the high praise of trainer Larry Jones, who said last September that the son of A.P. Indy was the best 2-year-old he'd trained. That all changed once Old Fashioned came along. Friesan Fire, unlike his stablemate, had some maturity issues to work out, and it wasn't until Jones added blinkers early in the Fair Grounds meet that the colt began to fulfill the promise that Jones had for him last fall.

By running such a powerful race in the Louisiana Derby, albeit on a sloppy track that many of his opponents failed to handle, Friesan Fire has presented Jones with a dilemma: run one more time and risk peaking too early, or train up to the Derby, despite a seven-week layoff and never having run farther than 1 1/16 miles.

Jones seems to be leaning toward the latter at this point, which will test his skills as a trainer. A great many historical trends have fallen over the past few years when it comes to training up to the Derby. If Jones sticks to his gut instinct, he'll have to hope two more trends fall this year. 🐾

FRIESAN FIRE

Bay colt foaled April 30, 2006
Bred in Kentucky by Grapestock

A.P. Indy	Seattle Slew
	Weekend Surprise
Bollinger	Dehere
	Bint Marscay

Thoroughbred breeding and racing in the 21st century are clearly global enterprises, and the pedigree of Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (gr. I) contender Friesan Fire is proof positive. While his sire line is pure Americana, the Louisiana Derby (gr. II) winner is out of an Australian group I winner, who is out of an Australian champion 2-year-old filly, who is out of a group III winner in New Zealand.

Friesan Fire, a son of A.P. Indy owned by Tom Simon's Vinery Stables and Richard Porter's Fox Hill Farm, was bred by Grapestock, the breeding division of Vinery. Vinery, located near Lexington, also has a sizable operation Down Under.

Bollinger, the dam of Friesan Fire, won the 7/2-furlong Coolmore Classic (Aust-I) and four other races. She is a daughter to champion and Tooheys Golden Slipper (Aust-I) winner Bint Marscay. Bint Marscay's broodmare sire, the legendary Sir Tristram, sired three winners of the two-mile Melbourne Cup (Aust-I) and is the broodmare sire of two more. That seems to offer plenty of stamina on the female side.

Bollinger's sire, Dehere, was the champion 2-year-old male in North America and winner of the Fountain of Youth (gr. II) in the spring of 1994. The son of two-time leading sire Deputy Minister was among the first to shuttle successfully from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern. Dehere's broodmare sire is Triple Crown winner Secretariat, who is also the broodmare sire of A.P. Indy's dam Weekend Surprise.

The passing March 23 of Derby winner Lil E. Tee brought back memories of trainer Neil Drysdale's heartbreaking announcement the morning of the 1992 classic that A.P. Indy would be scratched. The son of Triple Crown winner Seattle Slew went on to win the 1 1/2-mile Belmont (gr. I), Breeders' Cup Classic (gr. I), and the Horse of the Year title. Of the last eight winners of Triple Crown races in North America, A.P. Indy has been the sire of two of them: 2006 Preakness (gr. I) victor Bernardini and 2007 Belmont winner Rags to Riches, who is out of the Deputy Minister mare Better Than Honour. 🐾