

PENDER HARBOUR wins Breeders and Luis Contreras wins personal ‘Crown’

The absence of Queen’s Plate winner Inglorious from the remainder of the Canadian Triple Crown certainly did not lessen the excitement for fans and horsemen as the series from Woodbine, through Fort Erie (see Prince of Wales coverage in the August/Sept. 2011 issue of *Canadian Thoroughbred*) and back.

The story line for the media for the third jewel, the Breeders’ Stakes, the most gruelling leg at 1 ½ miles on the grass, was an easy one.

Jockey Luis Contreras, 25, was leading all Woodbine riders after the first four months of the season in only his second full year at the Toronto track. Not just leading mind you: he was more than two dozen wins ahead of perennial leader Patrick Husbands and on course to threaten the all-time record for wins in a Woodbine season, 221, set by Mickey Walls in 1991.

On Aug. 6, Contreras was also poised to become the first jockey to win the Canadian Triple Crown on different horses since its inauguration in 1959. Seven horses have won the Triple Crown.

His mount, Pender Harbour, was a good story in himself. The attractive three-year-old son of young Ontario sire Philanthropist had had a rushed campaign in the spring to get to the Plate, finished third to the filly (ridden by Contreras) and then won the Prince of Wales by inches.

And while the Breeders’, which not only lured confirmed grass runners (Pender Harbour had never raced on the grass) but was about to be contested over a rain-soaked course, seemed to be a very tough task for the busy gelding.

Confidently ridden by Contreras, Pender Harbour stayed close to the inside rail for much of the 1 ½ mile marathon before angling out for his stretch bid.

“When I put him on the outside he really went for me,” said Contreras. “He was getting tired, and so was I.”

The Strut the Stage gelding Celtic Conviction, owned by Dura Racing and trainer Mike Doyle, made it close at the finish to push Pender Harbour to the wire. Minutes later, Celtic Conviction was judged guilty of interfering with rival Crown’s Path in the late stages of the race and was demoted from second and placed third behind Crown’s Path.

The victory not only completed the Triple Crown for the rider but was one of a staggering six wins on the 10-race card for the jockey.

“It’s amazing,” said Contreras, who hails from Mexico City. “This is the best thing to happen in my life.”



(from left to right) Bob Giffin, Roberta Giffin, Sandra Lazaruk and Denny Andrews and Gail Wood celebrate Pender Harbour’s Breeders’ win with jockey Luis Contreras and trainer Mike DePaulo (far right)



Contreras is only the second person to win the Canadian or American Triple Crown on different horses, following up legendary trainer D. Wayne Lukas who accomplished the task in the U.S. Triple Crown in 1995.

Owned by Albertans Denny Andrews, Sandra Lazaruk and Bob and Roberta Giffin, Pender Harbour has made a miraculous rise to the top of the Canadian thoroughbred ranks despite having surgery on a chip in his knee over the winter.

“The Queen’s Plate was never on our itinerary,” said trainer Mike DePaulo. “But he ran well in the race before and (Andrews) owns the stallion so we took a shot.”

Following his super Triple Crown series, Pender Harbour was returned to his vacation spot, Gail Wood’s Woodlands Farm in Hillsburgh, Ontario, for just over a week of rest.

The gelding, who was bred by the now-defunct Gardiner Farms in Caledon East, Ontario, was purchased by Wood on behalf of Andrews for \$17,000 at the 2009 CTHS auction. His dam, Uproar, won the Algoma yearling sales stakes in her career and has produced six other foals including Silent Course, winner of the Muskoka Stakes, another yearling sales event. Pender Harbour’s earnings had reached \$851,797 after the Breeders’ victory. **CT**

Kris S
Philanthropist
Hidden Reserve

Pender Harbour
ch.g. 2008

Hail the Ruckus
Uproar
Hippic