





# An Historic Plate

Edenwold becomes the first two-year-old male champion to come back for a Plate victory in 29 years; trainer Josie Carroll first woman to saddle Plate winner

*By Jennifer Morrison*

**J**osie Carroll made it known during Queen's Plate week 2006, that she did not want to be known simply as a woman trainer with a horse in the famed Canadian classic. Indeed, just as champion apprentice jockey Emma-Jayne Wilson has put aside gender when talking about her skills as a horseperson, Carroll declared she's a *Canadian* trainer with a chance to win the big race. But, when the 48-year-old Torontonian watched her pupil Edenvold, owned by her longtime clients Jim and Alice Sapara, stretch out for a three-quarter length victory in the June 25 Plate, she admitted the feat was not only historical, but something special.

"Hey, it's great," said Carroll, who became the first woman to ever saddle a Plate winner. "I'll take it. This is a business where I have been fortunate that (gender) has never come into play. My owners have always respected hard work and merit."

Edenvold, a long-bodied, Ontario-bred became the first two-year-old male champion to come back and win the Plate since Sound Reason did it in 1977. And, the livery chestnut has several other women in his life. Co-breeder Gail Wood, owner of Woodlands Farm in Hillsburgh, owns the colt's dam, Best of Friends with good friends Bill Diamant and his wife, Vicki Pappas. Pappas, a former trainer, sales manager and stakes coordinator, claimed Best of Friends (Mining) for \$10,000 and sold Edenvold for \$100,000 as a yearling to the Saparas at auction.

The 147th Plate was unlike any of the others raced at 50-year-old Woodbine racetrack. It was the first time since 1956 that a representative of the Royal family did not attend the Plate — thanks to a mutuel clerk's strike that slowed traffic coming into Woodbine, but not enough to impact attendance. And, the race had a lot of spice added to it with the visit by Wanna Runner back to his home country. Bred by Ontario breeder Yvonne Schwabe, Wanna Runner was in the second tier of sophomores in the United States but landed in Canada as a heavy Plate favourite for high profile owner Mike Pegram and trainer Bob Baffert.



Under Ramsammy's guidance Edenvold clung to the inside lane and fought off a late challenge by Sterwins.



Emile Ramsammy celebrates with trainer Josie Carroll.

But it was an overlooked Edenvold who rode a slick rail path over the 1-1/4 miles to Plate glory. The son of Southern Halo survived a gritty stretch battle with Eugene Melnyk's lightly raced Sterwins (Runaway Groom) to take home the \$600,000 first prize at generous odds of 16 to 1.

Sterwins, who was making only his third career start, put up a brave fight throughout the stretch run but finally relinquished under leading American jockey John Velazquez.

Four lengths back in third was Stronach Stables' Malakoff and jockey Todd Kabel, the second favourites in the race. Wanna Runner stopped badly on the last turn and finished 10th, beaten by about 30 lengths.

Top American trainer Todd Pletcher was very pleased with his pupil Sterwins. "He ran huge for only his third start of his life," said Pletcher. "With those solid fractions early, he ran a big race."

As for Carroll, who, at age nine, was

PHOTOS BY DAVE LANDRY



Owners Jim and Alice Sapara accept the Plate trophy, flanked by Emile Ramsammy and David Willmot (right) and Josie Carroll (left).

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“It’s the Canadian dream to win the Queen’s Plate,” said Carroll. “After the race, it felt incredible. I’ve won races before but when that crowd was cheering that horse, I thought, ‘wow, we’ve been with him from the beginning, we bought him, we brought him along, and he was marching and they were showing their appreciation’. It really caught my throat.”

It was the second Plate victory for Jockey Emile Ramsammy, who dyed his hair red and yellow just minutes before post time to match the Sapara’s jockey silks.

For the Wood and the Diamant families, breeding a Plate winner was the culmination of a combined 40 years in the local breeding business. The former, a longtime leading yearling sales consignor, has known her partners for decades and boards their horses on her Woodlands property.

Diamant and Pappas scored their biggest win as owners last spring when their Sauvage won the Sheepshead Bay Handicap at Belmont Park. A few months later, Edenwold began his juvenile championship campaign with his first of three stakes wins.

Best of Friends is currently at Wood’s farm in foal to Lion Heart. **CT**



Dan Steeves, co-breeder Gail Wood, Vicki Pappas and co-breeder Bill Diamant.