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Pedigree analysis **Casual Conquest**

ON NEW Year's Day in 2005 it was not necessary to be a clairvoyant to predict that Motivator was going to be a strong contender for the Derby. It was much the same in 2006, when Sir Percy's credentials were already obvious, and in 2007, when Teofilo was the presumed star but Authorized could not be dismissed from calculations.

At new year in 2008 there seemed to be another outstanding candidate in New Approach, but since the curious decision by his connections to bypass Epsom was announced, the identification of plausible alternatives has proved inordinately difficult.

The frustrations in that regard were exacerbated when New Approach himself ran what most would have regarded as an exceptional Derby trial in the Guineas. It was a run which in normal circumstances would have confirmed him as a short-priced ante-post favourite for the premier Classic.

While we waited for a comparably impressive prep performance, Chester and Lingfield went by, offering few clues. But on Sunday we did see a display that compelled admiration – the breathtaking six-length rout of his Derrinstown Stud Derby Trial rivals by Casual Conquest, a colt guaranteed to stay 1m4f and one with the striking turn of foot that regularly separates the class act from his supporting cast on Epsom Downs.

Of course, we may see something out of the ordinary from one of today's Dante contenders, but if that proves not to be the case we are likely to have a Derby without either of the colts who have done most to advertise their claims to winning it. New Approach has opted out; Casual Conquest will not line up unless his owner stumps up the £75,000 required to supplement him.

What most of us would do in this situation, if we were Walter Haefner, does not require much thought. It would be an easy decision for most 97-year-old billionaires, running out of chances to win a Derby with a colt of their own breeding.

As Dermot Weld, with a fabulous cv as a trainer but never yet even a placed horse in the Derby, we would perhaps not have to ponder too long over the advice to give our patron.

But Casual Conquest is an inexperienced athlete, and Epsom provides as tough a test as might be devised for a 16.3hh colt with only two runs under his belt. It might be in his best long-term interests to stick with the status quo, and wait for a showdown with New Approach at the Curragh.

We must wait and see what develops in that particular scenario, but meanwhile let's just recognise that Sunday's race revealed an exciting colt with the potential to go to the very top.

On his only outing at two, on fast ground in a Leopardstown 7f maiden, Casual Conquest was entitled to be green, but he soon cottoned on to what racing was all about, battling resolutely for a short-head victory over Hanoverian Baron, who had the advantage of a previous run.

As a scopey sort, he was always one who might be expected to improve as a three-year-old, but in a cold, wet spring he looked backward and gave no inkling of what he might become. It was not until a couple of weeks before his return to action in public that he showed what progress he had made over the winter.

The style of Casual Conquest's



Casual Conquest: a true son of his sire, whose progeny have an average winning distance of 12.3f

A tailor-made Derby candidate

Don't doubt staying power of Hernando colt

SIRE HERNANDO

Bred by Stavros Niarchos in France. Won 7 (10-12f) of 20 races, viz. unraced at 2 years, 5 (inc. Prix Lupin-Gr1, Prix du Jockey Club-Gr1, Prix Niel-Gr2) out of 9 at 3 years, 1 (Prix Gontaut-Biron-Gr3) out of 5 at 4 years, 1 (Prix Gontaut-Biron-Gr3) out of 5 at 5 years. Also 2nd in Irish Derby, Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, Turf Classic, 3rd and 4th in Japan Cup. Earned £1,263,901. Timeform 126 at 3, 127 at 4, 125 at 5.

Strong, attractive, 16.1hh, fluent mover, with an excellent turn of foot. Acted on any ground, equally effective at 10f and 12f. Tough, very genuine performer, competitive at the top level on 3 continents.

Very well bred. Among the best sons of his sire (also got Petoski, Minster Son and Lomitas). Half-brother to Gr1 winner Johann Quatz and Listed winners Walter Willy, Res Judicata and Adnaan, and to the dam of Curtain Call. Dam Gr3 winner, Gr1-placed, half-sister to Gr3 winner Bricassar. Each of dam's parents out of a Buckpasser mare.

Stands at Lanwades Stud, Newmarket, at a fee of £12,000 (Oct 1). Sire of 10 crops of racing age, inc. notable winners: Holding Court (Prix du Jockey-Club-Gr1), Asian Heights (Gr3), Mr Combustible (Gr2), Sulamani (Prix du Jockey-Club-Gr1, Arlington Million-Gr1, Turf Classic Invitation S.-Gr1, Juddmonte International S.-Gr1), Tau Ceti (Gr3), Arvada (Gr2), Hanami (Gr2), Just Wonder (Gr3), Samando (Gr2), Atlando (Gr2), Songerie (Gr3), Casual Conquest (Gr2).

DAM LADY LUCK

Bred by Moyglare Stud Farm in Ireland. Won 1 (1m) of 2 starts, viz 0 out of 1 at 2 years, 1 (minor race at Cork) out of 1 at 3 years. Turf 69p at 2 years, 75 at 3 years. Earned £3,683.

Very lightly raced, presumably not very sound. Stayed 1m, effective on good-to-firm ground. Promised to improve.

Well bred. By an outstanding miler, champion sire and successful broodmare sire. Half-sister to 5 other winners, inc. Social Harmony (by Polish Precedent; Gr3). Dam unraced half-sister to Go And Go (Belmont S.-Gr1), to In Time's Eye and Off'n'away (both Gr2-placed) and to stakes-placed Latest Release.

Granddam winning half-sister to multiple Graded Stakes-winner Twilight Agenda, and to Gr3-placed Market Slide, dam of Media Puzzle (Melbourne Cup) and Refuse To Bend (4 Gr1 wins, inc. 2,000 Guineas, Eclipse S.). Third dam multiple Graded winner.

To stud at 4. Dam of Media Asset (2001 c by Polish Precedent; winner), Elusive Double (2002 c by Grand Lodge; Listed winner, Gr2-placed), Casual Conquest (2005 c by Hernando; Gr2 winner), Moving Heart (2006 f by Anabaa; unraced to date). She has a yearling colt by Danehill Dancer, and was covered by Desert Style in 2007. She slipped foal to Spinning World in 2003, and to Singspiel in 2004.

CONCLUSION

Well-bred colt who has run an outstanding trial for the Derby, and would take all the beating if allowed to run.

CASUAL CONQUEST (B C 26-1-2005)

	Northern Dancer	Nearctic Natalma
Nijinsky	Flaming Page	Bull Page Flaring Top
Niniski	Tom Rolfe	Ribot Pocahontas
Virginia Hills	Ridin' Easy	Ridan Easy Eight
Hernando (b 1990)	Mr Prospector	Raise A Native Gold Digger
Miswaki	Hopespringseternal	Buckpasser Rose Bower
Whakilyric	Lyphard	Northern Dancer Goofed
Lyrism	Pass A Glance	Buckpasser Come Hither Look
	Atan	Native Dancer Mixed Marriage
Sharpen Up	Rocchetta	Rockefella Chambiges
Kris	Reliance	Tantieme Relance
Doubly Sure	Soft Angels	Crepello Sweet Angel
Lady Luck (ch 1996)	Lorenzaccio	Klairon Phoenixa
Ahonoora	Helen Nichols	Martial Quaker Girl
Latest Chapter	Alleged	Hoist The Flag Princess Pout
Irish Edition	Grenzen	Grenfall My Poly

Bred by Moyglare Stud Farm Ltd in Ireland

victory at the weekend was profoundly impressive. Opposed by a supposed Ballydoyle banker in Washington Irving, he responded to pressure to take command a furlong and a half from home, then drew away to put the issue quickly beyond doubt. All six of the other races on the Leopardstown card were run in slower than standard time; his was quicker than the norm.

There is no reason to doubt Casual Conquest's capacity for a 1m4f test. He was staying on stoutly at the end of the tenth furlong and gives every indication of being a true son of his sire, Hernando, who did all his winning between 1m2f and 1m4f, and could exhibit a telling change of pace on demand.

Moreover, Hernando was himself a winner of the Prix du Jockey-Club, and sired two winners of that Classic in Holding Court and Sulamani among his first three crops of runners. To the end of 2007, Hernando's progeny had an average winning distance of 12.3 furlongs, a sure indication that he is one of the most reliable suppliers of stamina to the breed, and while that is not what every yearling buyer wants, when the stamina comes in a package with class attached, the potential rewards are significant.

IN THE current climate it is unsurprising that a horse such as Hernando makes most appeal to owner-breeders, but the neglect he suffered from commercial operators in 2006 and 2007, when his books were in the 40s, was not justified by results in the marketplace. Last season's yearlings averaged nearly four times his fee, and one colt at Tattersalls realised 380,000gns.

Casual Conquest is a home-bred, and the latest of several high-class performers bred by Moyglare from a family introduced to the stud by one-time \$11,000 yearling purchase Grenzen, the product of a poor sire in Grenfall and a dam, My Poly, who earned only \$3,060 in a ten-race career.

Grenzen re-wrote her pedigree in her three seasons at the track, winning five Graded races and taking second place in a Kentucky Oaks. At stud she delivered an outstanding runner in Twilight Agenda, who netted more than \$2 million while collecting seven Graded victories and a fine second place in the Breeders' Cup Classic.

Grenzen's first daughter Irish Edition (by Alleged) became the dam of Go And Go, still the only European-trained winner of the Belmont Stakes, and much later she provided a notable producer in Market Slide (by Gulch), whose sons Media Puzzle and Refuse To Bend earned renown at the top level, the former in the Melbourne Cup, the latter with four Group 1 scores including the 2,000 Guineas and Eclipse Stakes.

Irish Edition's 1989 daughter by Ahonoora, the unraced Latest Chapter, is the granddam of Casual Conquest, the link being Lady Luck, who suffered soundness problems but won the second of her only two starts.

Lady Luck has been serving Moyglare well at stud, having delivered three winners from as many runners. The second was Elusive Double, a Grand Lodge colt who was twice placed in Pattern company, but his achievements have been easily eclipsed by Casual Conquest, who just might turn out to be the best yet from Grenzen's family.