

Alpha named 2012 Aiken Trained Horse-of-the-Year

BY BEN BAUGH
bbaugh@aikenstandard.com

Godolphin Racing LLC's multiple graded stakes winner Alpha has been selected as the 2012 Aiken Trained Horse-of-the-Year.

The son of the 2006 Eclipse Award winning, 3-year-old, male Bernardini placed first in four stakes races during his sophomore season. Alpha was broken and trained in Aiken by Tim Jones. The bay colt is conditioned by trainer Kiaran McLaughlin.

A ceremony for Alpha will be held March 17, 2013 at 12:30 p.m. at the Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum.

Alpha's four stakes scores all came at different distances during his three-year-old campaign, with his victories this winter being in the 1-mile and 70 yards Count Fleet Stakes and

the 1 1/16-mile Grade 3 Withers Stakes, with both races being held at Aqueduct. Alpha's success continued during the summer months with wins in the 1 1/8-mile Grade 2 Jim Dandy Stakes over on an off-track and the 3-year-old dead heated with Golden Ticket in the 1 1/4-mile Travers Stakes at Saratoga. Alpha also just missed by a neck in the 1 1/8-mile Grade 1 Resorts World Casino New York City Wood Memorial Stakes this spring at Aqueduct.

"He's a great horse, has a great personality, trains well and does everything right," said McLaughlin. "Jones and his crew did everything right with him as a yearling and young 2-year-old."

However, his 12th place finish in the 1 1/4-mile Grade 1 Kentucky Derby was an anomaly in an otherwise strong first half of 2012.

"He's had his ups and downs

this year, but mostly ups," said McLaughlin. "He didn't run well in the Derby. He doesn't seem to like Churchill Downs."

The stakes winning colt spiked a fever the week of the Belmont Stakes, keeping him out of the third jewel of Thoroughbred Racing's Triple Crown. "The fever was a blessing in disguise," said McLaughlin. "We sent him to Saratoga to train on June 2, and he was ready for the Jim Dandy, which he won easy (two-length victory), and then the dead heat in the Travers."

All four of his stakes wins came in New York, and Alpha finished sixth in the Grade 2 Pennsylvania Derby at Parx Racing.

Alpha shipped to Santa Anita Park for the \$5 million 1 1/4-mile Grade 1 Breeders' Cup Classic, where he finished 12th.

"It was a poor performance, a tough race," said McLaughlin.

Want to go?

WHAT: Alpha's Award Ceremony
WHEN: March 17, 2013
WHERE: Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum
FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call 642-7631

"It was the first time he ran against older horses."

The new year will find Alpha in a different environment and on a new continent, said McLaughlin.

"Alpha was left out in California, in quarantine, and will go to Dubai for the winter," said McLaughlin.

"Maybe, he'll come back to us next summer."

Alpha has five wins, second seconds from 11 lifetime starts and has bankrolled \$1,270,000.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Chipper purchase will be discussed

There will be a special called meeting of the Town Council of Jackson at 3 p.m. today at the Council Chamber in the Jackson Municipal Complex on 106 Main St. The purchase of a chipper for the sanitation department will be topic of discussion.

Sale on pottery will be in Edgefield

The Edgefield Area Clay Guild will have its Christmas Pottery Sale from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday and Saturday at the Trinity Episcopal Church on Simpkins Street.

Mark Harris and Friends will perform

WAFJ 88.3 will host two Christmas concerts featuring Mark Harris and Friends, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday and noon on Friday at the Kroc Center on 1833 Broad St. in Augusta.

Admission will be either paying \$2 or giving a new unwrapped toy, at the door.

Men golf for Toys for Tots on Friday

The Baker Holiday Toy Drive's third annual Toys For Tots Golf Event will be held on Friday at Houndslake Country Club. The four-man scramble tournament will open with late registration at 8:30 a.m. and a shotgun start at 9 a.m. Fees are \$60 per person plus a toy donation for Toys For Tots. For more information, call Sarah Mayson at (706) 829-2197.

School to perform Agatha Christie play

A production of Agatha Christie's classic "The Mousetrap" will be at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and at 2 p.m. on Sunday at South Aiken High School. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors and available at the door.



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