



ANNIE M. EBERHARDT

By Claire Novak

Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott sent Juddmonte Farms' homebred Emollient to Keeneland last spring for a daring attempt. Six days after finishing fifth on dirt in the Gulfstream Oaks, the 3-year-old daughter of Empire Maker bid for the \$500,000 Central Bank Ashland Stakes. She blew away the competition by nine sparkling lengths while making her first run at the Lexington oval, winning at odds of 6-1 in her Polytrack debut.

In case there were any doubts about how much Emollient loves Keeneland, the filly returned Oct. 6 to capture the \$400,000 Juddmonte Spinster Stakes, a race her connections have sponsored since 2005 but never had won. Facing elders for the first time, she ran a different race from her wire-to-wire Ashland score, breaking slowly and settling behind the field before closing with a huge late run. The 1¼-length Spinster victory was her third grade I — be-

tween Keeneland victories, she had captured the July 13 American Oaks on the Hollywood Park turf under Hall of Fame jockey Mike Smith.

Assistant trainer Rodolphe Brisset has been the main man in the saddle aboard Emollient since she joined Mott's string as a 2-year-old in 2012. "She's one of my girls," he said, noting that Emollient is a tough filly who likes to think things are going her way, but her talent and will to win have been apparent since Day One.

"When she won the Ashland, people said she got away with an easy pace and she just stole the race. When she won the American Oaks, people said that was more Mike Smith having the jump on everybody," he said. "I think she made a good point in the Spinster of showing everybody her wins were not a fluke. She's good and she has quality, too."

Emollient winning the Juddmonte Spinster Stakes in October

WHAT YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW

ABOUT EMOLLIENT

BY THE NUMBERS: Emollient's record from 11 starts stands at five wins and two seconds, including a runner-up finish in the grade II Demoiselle Stakes as a juvenile, for earnings of \$1,078,900.

FAMILY TREE: The bay filly is the first foal out of the Touch Gold mare Soothing Touch; Emollient has a 2-year-old full sister, Calm Water, in training with Mott at Churchill Downs. Soothing Touch is also the dam of a

2012 colt by Pioneer of the Nile and a 2013 filly by First Defence.

MOM WAS KEENELAND GRAD: Juddmonte purchased Soothing Touch for \$550,000 at the 2005 Keeneland September yearling sale from Lane's End, consignor for breeder Flaxman Holdings. She never won in six starts for the late Hall of Fame trainer Bobby Frankel, but her dam Glia, a daughter of A.P. Indy, won the 2002 Prix Imprudence and was group III-placed in France before coming to the United States where she took the 2002 Pebbles Handicap at Belmont and finished second in the grade II Mrs. Revere Stakes at Churchill Downs.

ON THE MUSCLE: Emollient can be touchy around the barn — those who care for her move quietly — but she is also kind-natured and professional.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Emollient gallops in a figure-eight bridle and draw reins. The noseband on the bridle evenly distributes pressure and prevents the bit from damaging the filly's mouth, while the draw reins help engage her hind end by changing her headset. "Our main problem was the way she was carrying herself; she was a high-headed filly and it was difficult to make her settle into galloping when she was putting her head so high," Brisset said.

OUT OF THE GATE: Emollient has never been a fan of the starting gate, where the close confines make her nervous. She doesn't want to be touched on the sides and will kick at assistant starters if she's backing up during gate schooling. "Since the beginning, we knew our main problem is the gate," Brisset said. "So going into the Spinster we told Mike, 'We have no idea what you're going to get from the gate. If she breaks good and wants to run just let her go. If she only breaks okay and you have an honest pace, she doesn't need to be in front.' And it worked out okay."

TRAVELING BUDDIES: When Emollient runs out of town (anywhere other than Mott's New York base), Brisset is the one who goes with her — or with any of the Hall of Fame trainer's big-name runners. He usually rides along on the horse plane, making sure everything runs smoothly. Their latest adventure? A trip to the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf, in which Emollient finished a good fourth.