



PRIX DE L'OPÉRA LONGINES

Group 1 – fillies 3yo and over – 1 ¼ miles – 500.000 €

Villa Marina, a victory with French-hispanic tones

Travelling patiently in the middle of the pack, the French filly **Villa Marina** (Le Havre) hit the line strongly as she straightened for home and snatched the victory in a thrilling finish. The Irish runner **Fleeting** (Zoffany), held up in last position, quickened remarkably in the straight, although too late to challenge Villa Marina. The third place went to the French filly, **Watch Me** (Olympic Glory), also patient with her acceleration and who had to weave through traffic in the final furlong.

Olivier Peslier, the Villa Marina's jockey, had already won the Prix de l'Opera Longines...but in 1993, with Verveine!

However, it was a first-time win for trainer Carlos Laffon-Paris and the S.A.R.L. Darpat France (Dario Hinojosa), the owners and breeders of the filly.

The reactions

Carlos Laffon-Parias (trainer of Villa Marina, 1st)

"Last time, this distance was too much for her at the Prix Vermeille. Had the race had been over 1¼ miles, she would have won no doubt! She faced many of the same competitors today and proved that she's now at the Group 1 level. We gave her some time, respected the programme, and the fact of starting this season a bit fresh was a real advantage. Villa Marina will either run in the Breeders' Cup and retire to the stud or become a mare right away. What is for certain, is that she won't be staying on in training next year. We will make the decision in the next 10 days. Her owner is a breeder and hopes to produce to some good foals."

Aidan O'Brien (trainer of Fleeting, 2nd)

"The filly was on great form and finished quickly once again. She's very consistent. In terms of her future, there are several options. We will see a bit later."

Francis-Henri Graffard (Trainer of Watch Me, 3rd)

"Obviously I am a little disappointed. She has a really good form, but was held up at the rear before she burst through in the straight. The draw didn't help. I think her owner is considering

the stud, but I don't know the decision yet. She liked the ground. The race was very difficult because one of the runners blocked her in."

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1st VILLA MARINA (Le Havre & Briviesca)

J. : Olivier Peslier

O. : S.A.R.L. Darpat France

T. : Carlos Laffon-Parias

B. : S.A.R.L. Darpat France

2nd FLEETING (Zoffany & Azafata)

J. : Wayne Lordan

O. : Mme John Magnier / Michael Tabor / Derrick Smith

T. : Aidan O'Brien

B. : F. Bermudez

3rd WATCH ME (Olympic Glory & Watchful)

J. : Pierre-Charles Boudot

O. : Alexander Tamagni & Regula Vannod

T. : Francis-Henri Graffard

B. : Cocheese Bloodstock Anstalt

Gaps : CTE ENC. - 3/4 - ENC.

Time : 2'09''09