

A VALORIFIC VICTORY AT FASIG

For the second time in four years, Team Valor International President Barry Irwin walked away from Fasig-Tipton Saratoga with the boutique sale's top-priced horse. In front of an appreciative packed house at the Humphrey S. Finney Pavilion in Saratoga Springs last night, Irwin dug in gamely to outlast agent Buzz Chace and land an eye-catching son of Mr. Greeley for \$2.2 million. "My original plan was to do one big, bold bid at about \$1.5 million, but I don't think I communicated that very well to the bid spotter," he admitted. In 2004, Irwin went to \$1.85 million for



Hip 142

Horsephotos

Fairbanks, a son of Giant's Causeway who has since become a graded-stakes winner. The bidding on Irwin's most recent sales topper, consigned by Gainesway Farm, was concentrated inside the pavilion. **Cont. p3**

The “It Horse...”

In pursuit of the night's sales topper, Barry Irwin, just in front of the sales ring, exchanged salvos with a number of interested parties, including Buzz Chace, who sat alongside West Point Thoroughbred's Terry Finley, as well as Lewis Lakin and Marianne Hesse. Chace, bidding for West Point, looked to be out of the running at \$1.8 million, but after a quick word with Finley he upped the ante by another \$100,000. Irwin and Chace battled back and forth to bring the action to \$2.1 million before Irwin landed the winning blow. Bred in Kentucky by Liberation Farm and Oratis Thoroughbreds, Hip 142, out of a half-sister to GSW Secret Liaison (Housebuster), is from the family of MGISW Raging Fever and GSW and solid sire Stormin Fever. “I expected him to go for \$2.3 million--that was my last bid,” said a slightly flustered Irwin as he let out a deep sigh after stepping outside the pavilion. Explaining the appeal of the colt, he added, “I come out here with no preconceived notions. I don't look at the catalog, I just look at all the horses, and this horse just stood out. He's an incredible physical specimen and has everything you look for. He's got a great shoulder, incredible balance; you just don't see a horse that's that big and has that kind of balance. He's got what I call ‘The Look,’ for lack of a better expression. He's just got *it*.” With the advent of synthetic tracks, buyers are having to take into consideration how a horse will handle an assortment of surfaces, and Irwin said that he expects his new acquisition to be a versatile sort. “One of the reasons I bought this horse is because I thought he could run on anything--dirt, Polytrack, turf, whatever,” he said. “There's going to be Polytrack everywhere. I'm trying to shy away from certain bloodlines that don't have an affinity for it.” Irwin said that he expected to sell about 50 shares of the colt at two percent each. “That's how we did Fairbanks,” he said.