



2003 Eclipse Award Winners

**3-Year-Old Female**

Cape Town—Dear Birdie, by Storm Bird

**ECLIPSE VOTING**

Horse	First-place Votes
Bird Town	96
Six Perfections	94
Composure	20
Others	37
Abstention	1

# Bird Town

BY EVAN I. HAMMONDS

**Bird Town's bad luck, a slow break, turned into good luck in the Kentucky Oaks**

The crowning achievement of Bird Town's 3-year-old campaign began with a dose of bad luck. When the gates sprang open for the Kentucky Oaks (gr. I) on May 2, the Marylou Whitney homebred stumbled, and the confirmed front-running filly was 11th in the field of 12. The slower-than-usual start, however, helped turn her into a lioness in front of a national audience in deep stretch as the daughter of Cape Town ran to victory in an unforgettably powerful performance.

That early-season victory instantly propelled Bird Town from hard-luck contender to hard-boiled competi-

tor. From that point on, Bird Town would face the upper echelon of not only her division, but the older filly and mare ranks as well. Her competitive nature, spirit, and results catapulted her from early-season allowance horse to a two-time grade I winner and eventually the Eclipse Award winner as champion 3-year-old filly.

Trainer Nick Zito had had enough bad luck by May of 2003. In a slump in big races over the last few seasons, all that changed during the course of the 1 1/4-mile Oaks. As jockey Edgar Prado and Bird Town eased their way from the back of the pack to the middle, the early fractions clicked off in rapid succession: :23.09, :46.08, and 1:10.15. It was just the kind of racing luck Bird Town and Zito needed. With a clear run at the head of the lane, Bird Town took aim at the leaders who had been softened up by the pace. At the eighth pole she was in full flight and drew off to a 3/4-length tally.

The victory was an emotional one for both Whitney and Zito. Whitney's late husband, C.V. Whitney, had won the Oaks four times, beginning in 1936. Three of Bird Town's first four dams had been bred by the legendary horseman and Marylou Whitney has carried on that legacy since his death in 1992. Zito's return to center stage following the win would be an early-season spark for what would be a red-hot stable by the end of the season.

Five weeks later, Bird Town would be at it again, this time without the stumble at the start. Setting all the fractions in the one-turn, one-mile Acorn Stakes (gr. I), Bird Town fought off a determined Lady Tak in the heart-pounding final sixteenth to win by a head.

"She has what we call the 'Whitney blood' going back for several generations," Whitney said in the winner's circle. "It means a lot when you see how they grow up and come to this level."

And this was a whole new level for Bird Town, who had started the 2003 campaign with a loss in an entry-level allowance race at Gulfstream. There would be no



MIKE CORRAO

**Bird Town**

Own: Marylou Whitney Stables

B. f. 3 (Apr)  
 Sire: Cape Town (Seeking the Gold) \$7,500  
 Dam: Dear Birdie (Storm Bird)  
 Br: Marylou Whitney Stables (Ky)  
 Tr: Zito Nicholas P (0 0 0 0 .00) 2003:(507 77 .15)

40Oct03-9Bel fst 1 1/8	:474 1:122 1:363 1:491	34	@Bel dame-G1	100	5 1 1/2 1 1/2	1 <sup>hd</sup> 22 3/4 24 1/2	Gryder A T	L120
16Aug03-9Sar fst 1 1/4	:482 1:124 1:374 2:05		@Alabama-G1	85	5 3 3/4 3 2	22 57 3/4 51 1	Prado E S	L121
26Jly03-9Sar fst 7f	:223 :451 1:08 1:204		@Test-G1	100	7 1 3 1 3/4	25 3/4 24 1/2	Prado E S	L122
6Jun03-40Bel fst 1	:232 :461 1:102 1:351		@Acorn-G1	96	7 2 <sup>hd</sup> 1 <sup>hd</sup> 1 1/2	11 1 <sup>hd</sup>	Prado E S	L121
2May03-40CD fst 1 1/8	:46 1:10 1:353 1:483		@Ky Oaks-G1	101	5 8 7 8 6	74 4 <sup>nk</sup> 13 1/4	Prado E S	L121
10Apr03-8Kee my *7f	:214 :442 1:094 1:264		@Beaumont-G2	98	7 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1 1/2	2 <sup>nd</sup> 21 1/2	Coa E M	L118
23Feb03-5GP fst 7f	:214 :444 1:101 1:224		@Charon52k	100	5 3 25 22	17 11 2 1/2	Coa E M	L120
16Jan03-9GP fst 170	:233 :482 1:132 1:421		@Alw 34000n1x	84	6 11 1 1 1/2	2 <sup>nd</sup> 2 <sup>nk</sup>	Day P	L119

**2003: 8 3 4 0 \$815,976**

L	Life	12	4	6	1	\$871,251	101	D.Fst	10	3	5	1	\$795,656	101
2003	8	3	4	0	\$815,976	101	101	Wet(372)	2	1	1	0	\$75,595	98
2002	4	1	2	1	\$55,275	80	80	Turf(302)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
	0	0	0	0	\$0	-	-	Dst(0)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-

L120	11.20	79-26	Sightseek1234 1/2	Bird Town1204 3/4	Buy the Sport1203 3/4	Pace, second best	7
L121	1.60	71-14	IsIndFshion1216	AwesomeHumor1211	SpoknFur1211 1/4	Bumped after start	6
L122	*1.75	98-08	Lady Tak1224 1/2	Bird Town122 1/2	House Party122 1/4	3 wide, game finish	7
L121	2.65	90-16	Bird Town121 <sup>hd</sup>	Lady Tak1211	Final Round1213 1/4	Game while drifting	7
L121	18.20	95-07	Bird Town1213 1/4	Santa Catarina121 <sup>hd</sup>	Yell1213 1/4	Stumble start,6w,drv	12
L118	3.30	91-15	My Boston Gal120 1/4	Bird Town1184 1/2	Midnight Cry1184	Dueled, good try	9
L120	3.40	94-13	Bird Town1201 2/4	Crafty Brat118 1/4	WesterlyBreeze1223 3/4	Kept to pressure	6
L119	2.80	90-18	Yell121 <sup>nk</sup>	Bird Town1195 1/2	Marnesia Light1172 1/4	Inside, gamely	7

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Bird Town won the Eclipse by just two first-place votes

1971 Turkish Trousers	1982 Christmas Past	1993 Hollywood Wildcat
1972 Susan's Girl	1983 Heartlight No. One	1994 Heavenly Prize
1973 Desert Vixen	1984 Life's Magic	1995 Serena's Song
1974 Chris Evert	1985 Mom's Command	1996 Yanks Music
1975 Ruffian	1986 Tiffany Lass	1997 Ajina
1976 Revidere	1987 Sacahuista	1998 Banshee Breeze
1977 Our Mims	1988 Winning Colors	1999 Silverbulletday
1978 Tempest Queen	1989 Open Mind	2000 Surfside
1979 Davona Dale	1990 Go for Wand	2001 Xtra Heat
1980 Genuine Risk	1991 Dance Smartly	2002 Farda Amiga
1981 Wayward Lass	1992 Saratoga Dew	2003 Bird Town

*Her competitive nature, spirit, and results catapulted her from early-season allowance horse to a two-time grade I winner*

looking back. A run at the Alabama (gr. I) at Saratoga, Whitney's hometown, was the next objective.

Bird Town had a seven-week break from the Acorn to

the seven-furlong Test Stakes (gr. I), her prep for the Alabama. A runner-up performance behind sprint specialist Lady Tak hopefully set the table. It was not to be, as she ran fifth in the Alabama in what would be the lone off-the-board effort of her career. However, her season would gain back some of the luster at Belmont in the grade I Beldame in October. Facing a crack lineup of 3-year-olds and older fillies and mares, Bird Town was a game second behind older filly Eclipse finalist Sightseek. The effort was a vindication for her connections that she was still a power to be reckoned with.

From a humble start to the year, to the "stumble," to a 2-3-0 slate from six starts in grade I or II company, Bird Town's season soared to championship-caliber heights. **B**

**FAMILY NOTES**

CAPE TOWN, b, 1995	Seeking the Gold, 1985 15s, SW, \$2,307,000 574 f, 54 SW, 2.87 AEI	Mr. Prospector, 1970 14s, SW, \$112,171 1,176 f, 179 SW, 4.05 AEI	Raise a Native Gold Digger
	Seaside Attraction, 1987 12s, SW, \$272,541 5 f, 5 r, 5 w, 4 SW	Con Game, 1974 12s, wnr, \$24,080 10 f, 10 r, 6 w, 3 SW	Buckpasser Broadway
BIRD TOWN, b f, April 11, 2000	Storm Bird, 1978 6s, SW, \$169,181 681 f, 63 SW, 2.30 AEI	Seattle Slew, 1974 17s, SW, \$1,208,726 1,017 f, 108 SW, 3.85 AEI	Bold Reasoning My Charmer
	Hush Dear, 1978 23s, SW, \$428,458 7 f, 6 r, 6 w, 1 SW	Kamar, 1976 11s, SW, \$140,747 9 f, 8 r, 7 w, 4 SW	Key to the Mint Square Angel
DEAR BIRDIE, ch, 1987		Northern Dancer, 1961 18s, SW, \$580,647 635 f, 146 SW, 5.10 AEI	Nearctic Natalma
		South Ocean, 1967 22s, SW, \$70,147 12 f, 9 r, 9 w, 4 SW	New Providence Shining Sun
		Silent Screen, 1967 18s, SW, \$514,388 686 f, 45 SW, 1.75 AEI	Prince John Prayer Bell
		You All, 1968 26s, SW, \$47,222 7 f, 6 r, 4 w, 2 SW	Nashua Honey Dear

**BIRD TOWN'S RACE AND (STAKES) RECORD**

Year	Age	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earned
2002	at 2	4	1	2	1(1)	\$55,275
2003	at 3	8	3(3)	4(3)	0	\$815,976
	Lifetime	12	4(3)	6(3)	1(1)	\$871,251

**Sire:** CAPE TOWN, b, 1995. Raced 2 yrs, 12 sts, 5 wins, \$795,817. Won Florida Derby (gr. I), Brown & Williamson Kentucky Jockey Club S (gr. III), Holy Bull S (gr. III); 3rd Toyota Blue Grass S (gr. II).

**Lifetime:** 2 crops, 121 foals, 69 mrs (57%), 39 wnrs (32%), 17 2yo wnrs (14%), 5

sw (4%), 1.64 AEI, 1.76 CI, 108 sale yr/igs, avg \$53,648, 1.1 TNA.

**1st dam:** DEAR BIRDIE, ch, 1987. Bred by Echo Valley Horse Farm (Ky.). Raced 2 yrs, 20 sts, 2 wins, \$30,430. 2nd Seniorita S (T). Dam of 10 named foals, 9 mrs, 9 wnrs, 2 sw.

**1992:** Dear Proper, ch g, by Proper Reality. Raced 5 yrs, 65 sts, 9 wins, \$31,655.  
**1993:** Honey Bird, ch f, by Proper Reality. Raced 2 yrs, 17 sts, 5 wins, \$96,842. Died 2001.

**1994:** Bird Cage, ch f, by Kris S. Raced 4 yrs, 23 sts, 1 win, \$23,581. Dam of 2 foals, 1 mr, 1 wnr.

**1995:** Brave All the Way, dkb/br g, by Cryptoclearance. Raced 6 yrs, 67 sts, 9 wins, \$107,373. (\$25,000 keesep yr/ig).

**1996:** Dearest Gulch, b f, by Gulch. Raced 1 yr, 3 sts, 2 wins, \$39,600.

**1997:** Cviano, b g, by Rubiano. Raced 6 yrs, 44 sts, 4 wins, \$72,519.

**1998:** MOUNTAIN BIRD, ch f, by Mt. Livermore. Raced 2 yrs, 18 sts, 2 wins, \$147,838. 2nd Stonerside Beaumont S (gr. II).

**1999:** Dead foal.

**2000:** BIRD TOWN, b f, by Cape Town.

**At 2:** 3rd Three Ring S.

**At 3:** Won Kentucky Oaks (gr. I), Acorn S (gr. I), Charon S; 2nd Beldame S (gr. I), Test S (gr. I), Stonerside Beaumont S (gr. II).

**2001:** BIRDSTONE, b c, by Grindstone. Raced 1 yr, 3 sts, 2 wins, \$339,000. Won Champagne S (gr. I).

**2002:** So Long Birdie, ch c, by Pioneering. (\$20,000 keesep yr/ig).

**2003:** Gr/ro c, by Silver Charm.

**Broadmare sire:** STORM BIRD, b, 1978. Sire of 315 dams of 1,401 foals, 1,000 mrs (71%), 678 wnrs (48%), 206 2yo wnrs (15%), 1.74 AEI, 1.65 CI; 96 sw.

**2nd dam:** HUSH DEAR, ch, 1978-1994. Bred by C.V. Whitney (Ky.). Raced 3 yrs, 23 sts, 11 wins, \$428,458. Won Long Island H (gr. IIT, twice), Tidal H (gr. IIT), Diana H (gr. IIT, twice), Columbiana H (T); 3rd Flower Bowl H (gr. IT), High Voltage S. Dam of **NOACTOR** (c, Theatrical; \$51,350, Won Bowl Game S; sire), **PRIME RATE POWERS** (c, Deputy Minister; \$121,392, 2nd Dolphin S; sire), **TOUCH JUDGE** (g, Nijinsky II; \$20,021, 2nd Derrinstown Stud Derby Trial S, Ire-III).