



## BREEDERS' CUP FOCUS: TURF

BY CLAIRE NOVAK

### Grand Couturier

Owner	Marck Keller
Breeder	Tom Wilson (GB)
Trainer	Robert Ribaud

In his last victory, the Aug. 11 Sword Dancer (gr. IT) at Saratoga, Grand Couturier

hardly got the respect he deserved. Lodging a dynamic late bid up the inside, he ran down English Channel and Trippi's Storm to reward a few wise backers with a \$33.20 payoff – and following a third-place finish Sept. 8 in Belmont's Man O' War Stakes (gr. IT), it stands to reason his odds may offer a similar return in the John Deere Breeders' Cup Turf (gr. IT).

The 4-year-old Grand Lodge colt has always worked to prove his doubters wrong, from his initial sales price as a \$6,285 graduate of

Tattersalls October 2004 yearling sale. Bred in Great Britain by Tom Wilson, he was consigned to the sale by Watership Down Stud and purchased by Kilronan Stud. French bloodstock agent Christophe Nouvellet selected the colt for current owner Marc Keller in 2006 after he raced to three straight wins and a third under the care of trainer Jean-Claude Rouget.

"He's certainly a nice-looking horse, but he doesn't carry a lot of flesh," said trainer Robert Ribaud, who has saddled Grand Couturier to his last five starts. "He's like a marathon man, not an ounce of body fat on him. He can run all day, which is why the mile-and-a-half is much more his distance."

Breeders' Cup success (and success in general) runs in Grand Couturier's family. His dam, the Sadler's Wells mare Lady Elgar, is from the same family as world record-setting miler Elusive Quality and 1999 Breeders' Cup Juvenile (gr. I) winner Anees. His sire is also well represented by international group I winners Sinndar, Free Mason, and Indian Lodge.

With grade I and group I victories in major stakes on two continents, Grand Couturier has more than earned his way to the

Breeders' Cup. His career earnings of \$547,205 and a record of five wins and four thirds from 12 starts have far surpassed his mediocre auction history. And his athletic inside performance over the inner turf course at Saratoga in the Sword Dancer leaves Ribaud with no concern regarding the way he'll handle Monmouth Park's tight strip.

"We actually have an edge, because he ran over the seven-inch turf course at Aqueduct in May, and he negotiated it very well," the trainer said. "They ran the Sword Dancer on the inner turf with very tight turns, and he negotiated that very well. The Monmouth course is not going to hinder us at all; it might

work to our advantage. Naturally, the race is tough, but he's doing very well, and this has been the goal all along."



Grand Couturier

ADAM DOUGLASE

GRAND LODGE, ch, 1991	Chief's Crown, 1982	Danzig, 1977	Northern Dancer Pas de Nom
	La Papagena (GB), 1983	Six Crowns, 1976	Secretariat Chris Evert
GRAND COUTURIER (GB), b c, April 25, 2003		Habitat, 1966	Sir Gaylord Little Hut
		Magic Flute (GB), 1968	Tudor Melody Filigrana (GB)
LADY ELGAR (IRE), b, 1997	Sadler's Wells, 1981	Northern Dancer, 1961	Nearctic Nataima
		Fairy Bridge, 1975	Bold Reason Special
	Radiant, 1982	Foolish Pleasure, 1972	What a Pleasure Fool-Me-Not
		Ivory Wand, 1973	Sir Ivor Natashka



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