

THE MINKSTER

The Minkster

Owner: Sea Glass Stables LLC
Trainer: Daniel J. Vella

B.c.3 English Channel-Cabriole by Flatter
Bred in Ontario by Dr. Tan Hyka (Feb 26, 2019)

24Jul22	7 WO	ft	◇	1%	:48 ⁵ / ₄	1:12 ⁶ / ₂	1:50 ⁶ / ₂	3	Stk - PlateTriB - 150k	87-81	8	3 ² / ₂	3 ³ / ₂	3 ¹ / ₂	2 ³ / ₂	6 ⁶ / ₂	Moran D	126	bL	*1.80	Sir for Sure126 ² Hill of Droms126 ² Cusin' Mayhem126 ² hd ▶pulled,3-4w.bid,evened 9
12Jun22	9 WO	ft	◇	7f	:22 ⁵ / ₄	:45 ¹ / ₆	1:21 ⁰ / ₁	3	Stk - QueenstonB - 125k	109-97	5	2	2 ¹ / ₂	2 ² / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	Moran D	122	bL	8.55	The Minkster122 ² hd Rondurel118 ² hd Ironstone124 ¹ / ₂ opened up 1/8, held 7	
30Oct21	8 WO	ft	◇	1%	:50 ⁶ / ₁	1:16 ⁸ / ₀	1:52 ⁵ / ₁	2	Stk - CorntnFutB - 250k	56-77	9	3 ¹ / ₂	2 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂	12 ¹ / ₂	Moran D	122	b	13.60	Th Minkstr122 ² Dncin in D nil122 ³ J M R Best of Turf122 ² ▶stlk, lug instr, led 8th 14	
02Oct21	1 WO	gd	◇	15 6 ¹ / ₂	:23 ⁷ / ₇	:46 ⁹ / ₈	1:17 ¹ / ₉	2	Msw 95000	73-79	4	5	1 ¹ / ₂	2 ² / ₂	12	16 ¹ / ₂	Moran D	121	b	5.65	Th Minkstr121 ⁶ Under Surveillnce121 ² hd This My Out121 ² ▶brk in, bmp, widen drvg 7

Workout(s): 14 Aug 22 WO ◇ 5F ft 1:01.2b 22/46 17 Jul 22 WO ◇ 5F ft 1:00.4b 14/59 9 Jul 22 WO ◇ 6F ft 1:10.3h 1/1 2 Jul 22 WO ◇ 5F ft 1:00.2b 4/32

- Trainer Danny Vella obviously knows his way around a Queen's Plate, having sent out Basqueian to win in 1994 and Strait of Dover to follow suit 18 years later. Another decade has passed and now Vella is back with a legitimate threat in the form of the The Minkster, who like Strait of Dover, is a son of English Channel. "He's doing super. I'm getting excited about the Queen's Plate. It's been a while since I had Basqueian, and even a while since Strait of Dover, but I think he's as talented as those horses."
- The Minkster is heading into the Plate off a sixth-place finish in the 1 1/8-mile Plate Trial, for which he was favoured at 9-5. But, explains Vella, the colt had a legitimate excuse for that defeat, which was his first in four career outings. "He had a little bit of a setback. He had a bit of heat exhaustion and the 'thumps' (caused by an electrolyte imbalance) after the race. That's probably what bothered him in the stretch there, and he's recovered very well and is training better than ever."
- Purchased for \$52,000 at the local CTHS select yearling sale, The Minkster spent the winter at Classic Mile Farm in Ocala, Florida under the watchful eye of Mike Cooke. "You could tell right away when he came up from Florida in May that he was a pretty special horse," said Vella. "He had a couple of minor setbacks. He had some 'shins', and then he got a cough for a while. Baby stuff like that, normal for a young horse."
- When The Minkster made it to the races in early October, he proved to have been well worth the wait, romping in a 6 1/2-furlong turf race under his only rider to date, David Moran.
- Four weeks later, The Minkster resurfaced in the Coronation Futurity, the 1 1/8-mile race which is the nation's premier test for Canadian-bred 2-year-olds, and again was a convincing winner. Following another winter with Cooke, The Minkster checked back into Vella's barn in late March.
- Returning to action in the Queenston Stakes, The Minkster kept his streak intact with a hard-fought head victory.
- Vella believes the Queen's Plate distance will be no problem for The Minkster, but acknowledges training the colt for the challenge has not been easy. "The English Channels are aggressive, by nature, and that's one thing we've had to do a lot in the last month, trying to get him to go in behind horses and relax."
- Finally, the fact that no horse has pulled off a Coronation Futurity-Queen's Plate double since Norcliffe in 1975-1976 has been a source of much discussion through the years. Does Vella have any thoughts? "I've got an easy answer for that one... I don't think the horses know anything about it."

Owner – Sea Glass Stables LLC

Ray and Debbie Burke get their first crack at the Queen's Plate with The Minkster. The Burkes are based in Buffalo, N.Y., close to their three children and five grandchildren, but also own a home in nearby Crystal Beach, Ontario. Ray Burke, a recently retired food executive, had been a long-time follower of horse racing before deciding to throw his hat into the ownership ring some five years ago. The Minkster was one of three horses they purchased at the local yearling sale. Where's Neal, knocked down for \$35,000, won the restricted Bull Page Stakes last year at Woodbine and \$40,000 buy Uncle Spider was a maiden winner this spring.

Trainer – Danny Vella

Born in Toronto in 1955, Danny Vella came to the backstretch in 1972 and had paid his dues by the time he saddled his first winner as a trainer on April 28, 1985. It was when he teamed up with owner Frank Stronach that his career took off, with his early returns including the Grade 1 Hollywood Derby with Explosive Red in 1993. The following year saw Vella capture his first Queen's Plate with Basqueian while en route to his first of two straight Sovereign Awards as outstanding trainer. The conditioner spent five years primarily for Stronach in the U.S., where the camps parted ways. He returned to Woodbine in 2003.

Jockey – David Moran

David Moran suffered a tough beat in last year's Queen's Plate, missing by just a head aboard rallying runner-up Riptide Rock. Born in Templemore, Ireland, Moran began his riding career in 1999 with trainer Frank Ennis and became an apprentice rider for Jim Bolger in 2001. He became a full-time jockey in the spring of 2009 and over the next two years made six trips to Woodbine, winning the 2009 Princess Elizabeth Stakes and the 2010 Woodbine Oaks with Roan Inish. Since moving to Canada with his family in 2011, Moran has been a productive member of the Woodbine jockey colony while recording a dozen graded stakes wins and 35 stakes here overall.

