



CAL-BRED EXACTA

SPICED PERFECTION LEADS GOLDEN GIRLS HOME IN LA BREA

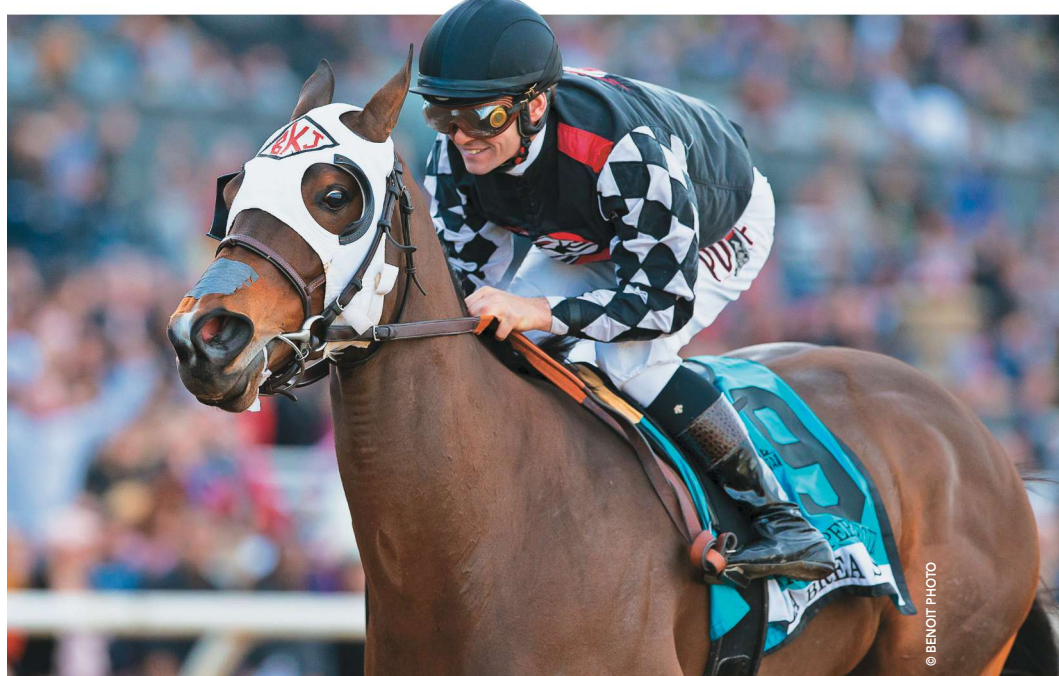
BY TRACY GANTZ

Only two California-breds lined up in the starting gate with six others for the \$301,035 La Brea Stakes (G1) at Santa Anita Dec. 26. They took the top two spots at the wire, however, for a Cal-bred Exacta that paid \$118.10 for a \$1 wager.

Spiced Perfection went off as the third choice behind odds-on favorite Dream Tree and Happy Like a Fool, so it was longshot Hot Autumn who helped bolster that Exacta payoff.

When the gate opened, Dream Tree moved up to quickly take the lead, with Hot Autumn right behind her and Spiced Perfection tracking the leaders in fourth. Eventually, Dream Tree, who was coming off surgery for an entrapped epiglottis, faltered, finishing last. As she went backward, Spiced Perfection surged forward.

“Around the turn I was going pretty well, so I thought I had a shot,” said



Cal-bred Spiced Perfection scores her first grade 1 win in the La Brea Stakes at Santa Anita

Flavien Prat, who rode Spiced Perfection. “As soon as I asked her, she responded well and ran big.”

In the stretch, Spiced Perfection passed rivals to win by 1¼ lengths in 1:23.54 for seven furlongs. Hot Autumn, ridden by Tyler Baze, looked like she would run third behind Emboldened, but she bravely came back on to nab second by a head.

“She tried hard; she gave it her all,” said Baze.

Hot Autumn was attempting the first stakes of her career while Spiced Perfection was jumping from Cal-bred company into grade 1 competition. Spiced Perfection had already collected stakes trophies in the 2017 Generous Portion Stakes, 2018 Evening Jewel Stakes, and, most recently, in the Nov. 11 Betty Grable Stakes.

“She’s a small, little filly, but she just seems to thrive wherever we put her,” said Mike Faber of Dare To Dream Stable, which owns Spiced Perfection. “We just figured against 3-year-olds this was the time to take that shot for the graded stakes. It just made sense as opposed to waiting to

go against older horses.”

Dare To Dream purchased Spiced Perfection for \$50,000 at the 2017 Barretts March 2-year-old sale from consignor Checkmate Thoroughbreds.

Phil Lebherz, Alan Klein, and Rusty Brown bred Spiced Perfection in the name of Premier Thoroughbreds. She is from the first crop of California stallion Smiling Tiger, whom Lebherz and Klein raced, and out of the Pleasantly Perfect mare Perfect Feat. The mare has also produced a year-younger stakes-winning full brother named Cruel Intention.

Brian Koriner trains Spiced Perfection for Dare To Dream, which puts together partnerships of people from around the country.

“She really did it on her own,” said Koriner. “This was her last shot against 3-year-old fillies. We almost ran at Golden Gate for \$75,000 a month ago.”

Koriner and Faber mentioned that an offer of a half-million dollars had come in for Spiced Perfection not long before the La Brea. It was withdrawn because of her small stature.

“That makes it sweeter,” said Faber. “Yeah, she’s small, but she’s already beaten all these other horses. What difference does it make? At this point, she’s already proven she can run. I’ve got a lot of 17-hand horses that can’t move.” **CTB**



Michael Faber, center right, leads the Dare To Dream winner’s circle celebration that includes trainer Brian Koriner, right, and jockey Flavien Prat