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ABEL TASMAN RALLIES TO WIN 143RD LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, May 5, 2017) – China Horse Club and Clearsky Farms' Abel Tasman rallied from far back and then held off a late bid from **Daddys Lil Darling** by 1 ¼ lengths to win the 143rd running of the \$1,000,000 Longines Kentucky Oaks (Grade I) for 3-year-old fillies before a crowd of 105,100 on a cold and rainy Friday afternoon at Churchill Downs.

Trained by **Bob Baffert** and ridden by **Mike Smith**, Abel Tasman covered the 1 1/8 miles on a sloppy track in 1:51.62.

It was the third victory in the Oaks for Baffert, who previously won with **Silverbulletday** in 1999 and **Plum Pretty** in 2011. For Smith, it was second victory in the Oaks to go with Princess of Sylmar in 2013.

Favored **Paradise Woods** and **Miss Sky Warrior** blazed through fast early fractions of :22.79 and :46.24 with Abel Tasman racing at the rear of the field. The two leaders continued their duel into the far turn with Paradise Woods the first one to crack but by then the rest of the field was closing in.

Smith had Abel Tasman in the clear outside of horses and swept to the lead at the eighth pole and had more than enough to hold off Daddys Lil Darling.

The victory was worth \$564,200 and increased Abel Tasman's earnings to \$912,060 with a record of 7-4-2-0. It was her second Grade I victory to go with a triumph in the Starlet last December at Los Alamitos.

Abel Tasman is a Kentucky-bred daughter of Quality Road out of the Deputy Minister mare Vargas Girl.

Abel Tasman returned \$20.40, \$9.20 and \$6.40. Daddys Lil Darling, ridden by **Julien Leparoux**, returned \$11 and \$6.60 with **Lockdown**, who finished another length back, returning \$18.40 to show under **Jose Ortiz**.

It was another half-length back to Vexatious, who was followed in order by **Salty**, **Sailor's Valentine**, **Tequilita**, **Miss Sky Warrior**, **Ever So Clever**, **Mopotism**, **Paradise Woods**, **Jordan's Henny**, **Wicked Lick** and **Farrell**.

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