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GRADE III WINNER SPARKLE BLUE LEADS WIDE-OPEN KEERTANA STAKES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, May 24, 2023) – **Augustin Stable** and **Catherine Peake's** Grade III winner **Sparkle Blue** headlines a field of 12 filly and mare turf marathoners that entered Saturday's 10th running of the \$225,000 Keertana Stakes (Listed) at Churchill Downs.

The 1 ½-mile Keertana will go as Race 10 of 11 with a post time of 5:26 p.m. (all times Eastern). First post is 12:45 p.m.

Trained by **Graham Motion**, Sparkle Blue recorded the most prominent victory of her nine-race stand three starts ago when she defeated **California Angel** by 2 ½ lengths in the Valley View (GIII) at Keeneland. The daughter of Hard Spun capped her 3-year-old season with a narrow third-place finish behind **Rhea Moon** and **School Dance** in the American Oaks (GI) at Santa Anita.

In her first start of her 4-year-old season, Sparkle Blue finished sixth in the Modesty (GIII) on Kentucky Oaks Day at Churchill Downs.

Sparkle Blue will be ridden Saturday by **Vince Cheminaud** from post No. 10.

Chief among Sparkle Blue's competition is **Wertheimer** and **Frere's Sinfilitre**. Trained by **Todd Pletcher**, Sinfilitre won her last two starts, a 1 3/16-mile maiden special weight at Gulfstream Park over the Tapeta surface and a 1 ½-mile first-level allowance contest on turf at Keeneland. Jockey **Luis Saez** has the riding assignment from post 4.

Other talented fillies and mares in the Keertana include three last-out Keeneland allowance winners: **Gentry Farms' Lovely Princess**; **Roger Keith Long's Miss Yearwood**; and **Bronwood Farm's Quality Star**.

Here is the complete Keertana field from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): **Lady Arsinoe** (Julien Leparoux, Bill Mott); **Quality Star** (Joe Talamo, Paulo Lobo); **Under One Sky** (Gerardo Corrales, Juan Cano); **Sinfilitre** (Saez, Pletcher); **Miss Yearwood** (Chris Landeros, Ian Wilkes); **Exit Soul** (Florent Geroux, Michael McCarthy); **Lovely Princess** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Kenny McPeck); **I'm So Sorry** (Jareth Loveberry, Brian Lynch); **Talbeyah (IRE)** (Cristian Torres, Mark Casse); **Sparkle Blue** (Cheminaud, Motion); **Implosion** (Ray Gutierrez, Steve Margolis); and **Viburnum** (Adam Beschizza, Kelsey Danner).

Following dark days Monday-Wednesday, live racing from Churchill Downs will return Thursday for a five-day race week. First post Thursday is 5 p.m. for the Twilight Thursday program that features eight-races, \$2 domestic beer, live music from the **Shane Dawson Band** and local food trucks.

First posts Friday-Monday will be 12:45 p.m.

Monday is Military Appreciation Day and all active and retired military members will receive free general admission. More information is available on www.churchilldowns.com.

Before guests venture to Churchill Downs, they are encouraged to visit <https://www.churchilldowns.com/visit/info/maps-and-directions> because of facility changes due to construction on the new \$200 million Paddock.

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