Date: August 13th, 2026 **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Gabriel's Gift (8th race)

First Race

1. Mr. A. P.	2. Vitruvian Man	3. Iriseach

Based on his solid comeback in the Oceanside Stakes, G1-placed **MR. A. P.** is the obvious choice in this N1X turf route for 3yos. Runner-up in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile, MR. A. P. had been off eight months when he returned in the Oceanside. He chased the strong pace, finished third, and missed second by only a neck. He drops in class, adds Lasix, has a comeback under his belt, and is likely to improve second start back. **VITRUVIAN MAN** gets class relief after a series of tough races: third in Santa Anita Derby, unplaced in Belmont Stakes, and unplaced last out vs. older. Now he drops into an age-restricted allowance, with speed figures that put him in the hunt. As for moving to turf, although progeny of Vino Rosso generally prefer dirt, the dam of VITRUVIAN MAN has produced three turf winners including two multiple turf winners. **IRISEACH** did not have a particularly smooth trip finishing fifth in the Oceanside; he previously placed in three turf stakes and gets Lasix for the first time. He is a definite contender with clear sailing. Likely pacesetter ZEUS'S ECHO will take them as far as he can.

Second Race

1. Ghostwritten	2. Yautown	3. Gallatin

GHOSTWRITTEN drops in for a claim tag after running fairly well against tougher maidens in both dirt routes in spring at Santa Anita. Off nearly three months, entered for a $50k tag with the highest speed figures in the field, GHOSTWRITTEN looks logical. **YAUTOWN** stretches out from a pair of sixth-place sprints, drops from maiden special-weight to maiden-50, and was gelded since his last start two months ago. Expect a better performance third time out against a relatively shallow field. **GALLATIN** is speed, returning to the mile distance of his two best starts. However, those runner-up finishes were on turf. This race is dirt. Based on pedigree, the surface switch should be fine for the likely pacesetter. Progeny of Authentic generally prefer dirt over turf.

Third Race

1. Less Please	2. Sauced Up	3. Tiger Luck

The all-turf pick three (races 3, 5, 7) and pick six (races 3-8) begin with a turf sprint for Cal-bred 2yo maiden fillies; debut runner-up **LESS PLEASE** is the tepid choice swtiching surfaces. She set the pace first out, battled to the wire, and missed by a nose. Good debut by the Pavel filly, whose dam won twice on turf and later produced two turf winners. **SAUCED UP**, in the money all three starts on dirt, switches surfaces after a closing third in the same race the top choice exits. The challenge is surface. Southern Image progeny have won just 9 percent on turf, 15 percent on dirt. But based on raw ability, SAUCED UP fits and will rally late if she handles the footing. First-time starter **TIGER**

LUCK is a Smiling Tiger filly whose dam produced two debut winners from four runners. VONNTASTIC debuts with an extended workout pattern that suggests she is fit. KATHY'S HOUSE debuts with a sporadic work pattern.

Fourth Race

1. Mega Moon	2. Pioneer Prince	3. Lure Him In

The 44-and-change sprint speed that **MEGA MOON** typically produces should land him on the lead on this $32k claiming dirt mile. 'MOON ran well both previous dirt routes, second and third last year in races won by Navajo Warrior, a potential contender in the upcoming G1 Pacific Classic (Aug. 22). 'MOON can take the lead and wire this field. If he falters, **PIONEER PRINCE** would be in the right spot. He crushed a $10k claiming route last out with a huge figure (91 Beyer); the five-level class hike off the claim signals optimism. 'PRINCE has a forwardly placed running style, and would be among the first to attack if the top choice does not stay the trip. **LURE HIM IN** is an 11-win veteran returning to California after being reclaimed for $50k by his former trainer Sam Wilensky. LURE HIM IN ran well over the Del Mar track last summer. TESSUTO also was re-claimed by his former trainer last out, a third-place sprint finish. TESSUTO has won running long.

Fifth Race

1. Magical Miss	2. Butterfly Beach	3. Angelica Bay

First start since September, **MAGICAL MISS** gets the call in this $25k claiming N2L turf sprint. She won her career debut here last year in a turf sprint, so she runs well fresh. Although she misfired both subsequent starts, a repeat of her only DMR start probably would be fast enough. **BUTTERFLY BEACH**, maiden winner two back, lost position early last time, and finished last. She may have been in tough anyway in that starter allowance; she was 14-1. She drops to N2L claiming, and her maiden-50 win two back puts her in the hunt. Also-eligible **ANGELICA BAY** and ELITE HEAT (who drew in) are breaking from disadvantageous outside posts, but both late-runners have run races that make them competitive vs. this lot.

Sixth Race

1. Dazzle Comm	2. Stage Run	3. Dane the Great

Gate to wire for **DAZZLE COMM**? He stretches to a mile following a pair of sprints, drops from Cal-bred maiden-50 to Cal-bred maiden-12.5k, and looks like the speed of the field. Come and catch him. **STAGE RUN** looms an upset candidate dropping in class from open maiden-16 and drawing a better post (4). Last out from post 9, he lost ground, and never got into the race. Same thing happened his previous start, fifth at this level while losing ground with a wide trip. But three starts back, he missed by only a head at this level. 'RUN is in better form than his two recent races indicate, and could spring the upset if he can save ground. **DANE THE GREAT** ran the best race of his career last out, third while finishing three lengths in front of STAGE RUN. Also-eligible DUKE OF ORLEANS and MY MAN JOE ROLDAN stretch out with speed to influence the pace if they scratch in.

Seventh Race

1. Lee's Baby Girl	2. Kuwaitya	3. Bit's Tiger Magic

LEE'S BABY GIRL and **KUWAITYA** top this turf sprint for N2X fillies and mares. It's a close call between the pair. LEE'S BABY GIRL gets the nod, based on a last-out starter allowance turf sprint win at SA, and one-two finishes in three turf sprints at DMR. The most-recent win by 'GIRL was flattered when the third-place finisher returned to win; 'GIRL missed by only a neck at this N2X level two starts ago, and she finished one-two all six turf sprints. KUWAITYA improved second start back from a layoff, fifth by only a length and one-half in the Daisycutter Handicap. She meets slightly softer this time, and is likely to improve second start over the course while facing easier. **BIT'S TIGER MAGIC** returns from a seven-month layoff with a history of running well fresh. Two starts over the DMR turf-sprint course last summer produced a win and a third. 'MAGIC will contest the pace along with first-time turf A. Z. WILDCAT, who was dueled into submission last out by Sweet Azteca in a G2 on dirt. 'WILDCAT has turf influence in her pedigree. Munnings progeny can do grass; the dam of 'WILDCAT won six times on turf. 'WILDCAT looks like the speed of the field.

Eighth Race

1. Gabriel's Gift	2. Mickey	3. Van Gogh Style

A better-than-looked runner-up debut by **GABRIEL'S GIFT** stamps him the one to beat in this Cal-bred maiden sprint. He broke slowly first out, veered inward, was uncomfortable taking kickback, unleashed a middle move, then went evenly behind the runaway winner. Good try by 'GIFT, who had never so much as worked over the DMR surface prior to his debut. With that race under his belt, and a beneficial change from post 2 to 9, 'GIFT should move forward. **MICKEY** also ran better than the line looks last out, when fourth racing one mile. He broke last, was rated, made a middle move to reach contention into the far turn, then lost his punch late. Not bad, actually. He cuts back to six furlongs, the distance at which he finished second in his debut in May, and will be rolling late. **VAN GOGH STYLE** returns to one turn after he set pace and tired in both recent routes (third, second). He might prefer this shorter trip; he has enough speed to establish position from the rail, although second-time starter ONE MORE ZINGER will apply pressure from the outside.