DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 11/4/2017
Race 1: $200K Goldikova (G2) for fillies & mares going 8-furlongs on turf.
Post: 10:10 am PDT

OVERVIEW
What a renewal of the $200K Goldikova (G2), a challenging one-mile turf affair for fillies and mares named in honor of one of the best milers we've ever seen and winner of a remarkable three Breeders' Cup Mile (G1) races (back in 2008, 2009, and 2010). A full field of 14 runners are entered to greet the starter, so things will be pretty busy and crowded headed into that first turn, especially since there seems to be a fair enough amount of early pace in here.

#1 ON LEAVE (9/2) is a Grade Two winner who has never finished out of the exacta at today's distance. She'll save all the ground while tracking the pace into the first turn—and her come-home times are certainly good enough for her to finish strongly while getting a tactical trip. She seems very logical in here. GRADE: A.

#2 LAUR NET (20/1) has lost to several of these already, so unless a switch to the Hess barn wakes up this 6-year-old mare, then she's up against it today. GRADE: X.

#3 MALIBU STACY (30/1) has tactical speed, so she should be tracking the pace—just like she did last time in the Noble Damsel (G3). Unfortunately, she was no match for Sassy Little Lila that day, so she's going to need to find several lengths on that foe, who herself seems up against it in here. GRADE: X.

#4 THUNDERING SKY (8/1) just beat On Leave by a neck yet is almost twice the price if you think she can repeat that last performance. That said, she got a great ground-saving trip that day (while On Leave was wide), so everything went right for her. She's going to need a little more luck than that today against the best in here. GRADE: X.

#5 LASEEN (IRE) (30/1) hasn't been able to beat N2X types here in California, so I'm hard-pressed to make a case for her against some classier horses. I also think today's mile is too short for her. GRADE: X.

#6 HILLHOUSE HIGH (12/1), the first Baltas runner, is a Grade Two winner who is a tactical sort, so I'm sure Kent will have her in a great spot. Will she then be able to produce when the real running starts, outkicking some decent stretch-runners? She's done good work at a mile, but do note that her Del Mar turf races aren't really her best. GRADE: C.

#7 KITTEN'S ROAR (5/1) has quite the closing kick, so she should be picking them up and setting them down in the lane. She looks very good in here, considering the anticipated race shape, but there are two concerns: first, her best races have come on off-going; second, she's been plying her trade going much

longer of late, so there is a world in which she's just way too far back and gets rolling too late in the short Del Mar stretch. Still, she's the best North American finisher in this race. GRADE: A.

#8 GOLDY ESPONY (FR) (8/1) already has a ton of early speed, and now she's adding blinkers after getting overtaken twice in the lane in her two SoCal starts for Baffert. She'll face some outside heat from Sassy Little Lila, so the chances of her wiring this field are slim—but she did just run second in a Grade One at 12/1, so speed players have that performance to latch onto, making her an exotics candidate if you're so inclined. GRADE: X.

#9 MAJESTIC HEAT (12/1) is a little interesting in here because she's done good work over this course and at this distance, showing versatility and a strong finish. She should also be super-fit cutting back after finding 10-furlongs in the Rodeo Drive (G1) a bridge too far. She's in good hands with Mandella, and she seems eminently usable in your exotics. GRADE: B.

#10 MADAME STRIPES (ARG) (8/1) is also interesting because I've always liked the way she's finished races, showing off a very nice stretch run. She'll have to work out a trip from this post, but if Talamo can angle over, save ground, and produce her late, it wouldn't shock me if she contended for the victory. GRADE: B.

#11 ALJAZZI (GB) (6/1) is the lone European in the field, so she must be considered, dropping in from a Group One and adding Lasix. She's also versatile, having won left-handed, right-handed, and on straightaways. I also like her running style for this race, since she knows how to settle off the pace and produce a strong late run (her two-back **OptixNOTES** comment says: "held up…strong finish to run by the entire field and draw clear." That was in a Group Three overseas, and we all know the European competition is tougher than here. GRADE: A.

#12 MRS MCDOUGAL (8/1), the second Mandella runner, has been disappointing since joining his barn, losing twice as the favorite, on her way to getting beaten by Madame Stripes (Arg) three times now. Prat sticks with the stablemate—and while you certainly don't lose anything at all with Castellano, this gal will have to work out the right trip from a very tough post. GRADE: X.

#13 CORPS DE BALLET (12/1), the second Baltas trainee, has done good work at a mile, partly because she works out good trips for herself—but today's post is very tough, and what you see is what you get, so I'm not seeing the requisite improvement needed here to beat these. That said, I like Madame Stripes (Arg), and this gal hasn't been too far off that foe, and, in fact, nosed her out three starts ago. GRADE: X.

#14 SASSY LITTLE LILA (12/1) is one-way speed, so Saez has no choice but to hustle her hard out of the gate to clear the field and dictate the pace. Even when she's gotten easy leads, though, someone is usually good enough to run her down. It's tough to knock a gal who has lost two close Grade One races, but I just don't think today's race shape sets up for her—especially with Goldy Espony (Fr) adding blinkers, thus ensuring what should be a quick pace. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

This is a very tough race, and there are plenty of places to land. I do think #7 KITTEN'S ROAR is the best U.S-based finisher in the race, but I am concerned about the firm turf and the shorter distance. I do think #9 MAJESTIC HEAT and #10 MADAME STRIPES (ARG) should offer value and have chances to

win, but I'll probably end up on the European invader, #11 ALJAZZI (GB), based on her strong runs at a mile in Group Two and Group Three events overseas.