



*Breeder: Morry Cohen
 Owners: 5C Racing Stables
 Trainer: Jorge Gutierrez
 Jockey: Victor Espinoza
 Lifetime Record: 7-2-3-0 and \$185,616
 2nd: Princess V.
 3rd: Fatal Capar*

by STEVE SCHUELEIN

Five C's plus two B's equaled victory in the \$200,000 Melair Stakes for 3-year-old fillies.

For Morry Cohen, owner of 5C Racing Stable, victory in the 1 1/16-mile race by homebred Bartok's Blithe served as vindication for his belief in her sire, Bartok (Ire).

"Remember how to spell that: B-A-R-T-O-K," said Cohen with a smile as he left the winner's circle following the filly's first stakes victory.

Cohen's racing success in recent years has hinged largely upon the performance of Bartok at stud. Call it "Betting on Bartok."

"I claimed him for \$62,500 from Bill Shoemaker as a 5-year-old," explained Cohen of his acquisition of the Irish-bred horse. "He had won a couple of stakes in France.

"He was a real tough horse, and I only raced him once," continued Cohen. "After that race, he got loose on the backstretch at Santa Anita (Park), ran into a dumpster, and injured a hock. That ended his racing career."

Cohen, a small-time owner, made the most of



Bartok's Blithe

b. f. 3., Bartok (Ire)—Merry Krisoke, by Roanoke

\$200,000 Melair Stakes (R) 1 1/16 Miles

the situation and bred Bartok to three mares he owned. "I got three stakes fillies," said Cohen of his amazing first crop, headed by Euro Empire, winner of the 2000 CTBA Stakes at Del Mar and California Cup Juvenile Fillies at Santa Anita.

Buoyed by that auspicious start, and with seven of his first eight foals winners, Bartok was sent to Hanson Stock Farm in Hemet, where he sired his first big crop of 75 yearlings last year and was bred to 95 mares this year.

"His fee was \$6,000, maybe now a little more," grinned Cohen after the Melair.

"He's bred to go long, but his foals have been very precocious," said Cohen. "Speed is what it's all about in California, but he's very versatile. His foals should like grass too."

That option may be in the offing for Bartok's Blithe, who could make her first start on turf in the \$200,000 Honeymoon Breeders' Cup Handicap at Hollywood Park on June 7, with the goal of earning an invitation to the \$750,000 American Oaks on the same surface July 5.

In the Melair, jockey Victor Espinoza bided his time with Bartok's Blithe, content to save ground in eighth place in a field of 11 in the early going. Bartok's Blithe rallied into contention around the far turn, moved into second at the top of the stretch and overtook pacesetter Princess V. in deep stretch for a 3/4-length victory in 1:42 4/5. Fatal Capar, a

95-to-1 longshot, finished third, another eight lengths back.

"She's just a brilliant filly and easy to train," said conditioner Jorge Gutierrez, savoring his first added-money victory. Gutierrez, 37, previously worked under both Henry Moreno and Paco Gonzalez and currently trains 10 horses at Santa Anita. He has been on his own for three years, and with Cohen for one and a half.

Cohen, a Los Angeles native and graduate of Hollywood High School, has been a racing fan since his youth. A Las Vegas resident the past 20 years, he was in the automobile body and paint business before devoting recent years to breeding and racing.

Cohen owned Desert Digger, winner of the 1996 Sorrento Stakes at Del Mar, and Oly Ogy, winner of the 1998 California Breeders' Champion Stakes at Santa Anita, and has made other such lucrative claims as The Barking Shark and Finite E.F.

Cohen initially named his stable 5C after his family of five. But since being divorced and with son David, 18, the only of three children remaining active in the stable, it could be renamed 2C.

Cohen said he named all his runners with repeat first initials such as Bar Breeze, Bar Bon, Bartok's Beau, and Outrageous Oyster, a recent 2-year-old filly winner first time out. "I'm superstitious," he explained. With his record, nobody is suggesting any changes.

