



Breeder: Cecilia Straub-Rubens

Owners: Cee's Stable LLC

Trainer: Doug O'Neill

Jockey: Victor Espinoza

Lifetime Record: 29-5-7-8 and \$585,039

2nd: Jetinto Houston

3rd: Real Paranoide

by DEBRA GINSBURG

Cee's Elegance had just barely graduated from the maiden ranks when she won the restricted Lakeview Thoroughbred Farm Stakes on the second California Gold Rush card in 2001. Even her jockey and her connections were better known than she was. Fast forward to 2003 and she captured the B. Thoughtful Stakes to become the only repeat winner at Gold Rush IV

Bred by the late Cecilia Straub-Rubens and raced by her family, Cee's Elegance hails from the same Cee's Tizzy foal crop as two-time Breeders' Cup champ Tiznow. Mrs. Rubens acquired her dam, the Norcliffe mare Elegant Beauty, during the early 1980s from New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner. Elegant Beauty made a few starts for her new owner, then settled down to become a mom. Among her offspring was \$264,620-earner Davus, a gelded son of Naevus who placed in a couple of stakes at the defunct Orange County Fair meet at Los Alamitos. Elegant Beauty is now a pensioner at Harris Farms.

Cee's Elegance, her 1997 filly, finished third once from three outings at two, then



Cee's Elegance

gr./ro. m. 6., Cee's Tizzy—Elegant Beauty, by Norcliffe

\$150,000 B. Thoughtful Stakes (R) 7 Furlongs

broke her maiden via a disqualification in January of her sophomore campaign. Therefore, she was technically scoring her first win in the 2001 Lakeview, but her connections couldn't have been any happier. It was their first victory since Tiznow went to the sidelines with a back injury. It was also win number 7,001 and the second of the afternoon for Chris McCarron. The Hall of Fame rider had reached the 7,000 plateau aboard Spinelessjellyfish one race earlier in the Khaled Stakes.

Tiznow retired after teaming with McCarron to win his second Breeders' Cup Classic that October and the jockey hung up his tack nine months later. But Cee's Elegance is still carrying her breeder's pink and blue polka-dot silks with pride. She moved into the barn of Doug O'Neill, who did such a masterful job bringing Sky Jack back to win last year's Hollywood Gold Cup. Cee's Elegance snapped an 11-race losing streak in the Cat's Cradle Handicap against Cal-breds last November and also ran a game second in the grade II Bayakoa Handicap on Dec. 15, both run at Hollywood Park.

"This mare absolutely loves Hollywood," said co-owner Michael Cooper. "Doug has her on a good mindset right now. She just loves what she's doing out there."

Cee's Elegance has made only one other start this year prior to the B. Thoughtful, that

coming in the \$750,000 Sunshine Millions Distaff at Santa Anita Park on Jan. 25. She looked like a sure winner at midstretch, only to be overtaken by Smok 'N Frolic in the final strides. The runner-up effort earned the mare a nice payday of \$149,000.

Back at her favorite track, she was training well for the B. Thoughtful. Sent off the 7-5 favorite over Irish O'Brien Stakes winner Jetinto Houston, she stalked the early pace in third under Victor Espinoza and moved into the lead at the top of the stretch. There, she was engaged by Jetinto Houston and the pair of them dueled to the wire, with Cee's Elegance prevailing by three parts of a length. Finishing 7 1/2 lengths back in third was Real Paranoide. The seven furlongs was run in a quick 1:20 3/5.

It was the fifth win from 29 starts for Cee's Elegance and the \$90,000 winner's share increased her earnings to \$585,039. The B. Thoughtful was also the first of two Gold Rush victories for O'Neill in 2003.

"We'll campaign her sparingly through the remainder of the year with the California Cup Matron as our major objective in the fall," Cooper explained. "We're also considering another stab at the Sunshine Millions Distaff, which will be run in Florida next January. After that, she'll go to Kentucky and fall in love!"

