

## **Secret Volo (Walner-Secret Serenity-Muscle Hill)**

Secret Volo angled out in the stretch after a three-hole trip in the second Hambletonian Oaks elimination on July 29 at the Meadowlands and wound up finishing second, three-quarters of a length behind winner Heart On Fire. She was timed in 1:51.3 with a 28.2 final quarter.

Secret Volo won this year's New York New York Mile final at MGM Yonkers Raceway and a leg of the New Jersey Sire Stakes at the Meadowlands. She was second in the New Jersey Sire Stakes final. Her results as a 2-year-old included runner-up finishes in the New Jersey Classic - A level final at the Meadowlands and in an International Stallion Stakes split at The Red Mile. In total she has a record of 3-6-4 from 18 starts, has banked \$327,065 and has a mark of 1:53.2.

### **Quotes**

"She raced good in the elimination, I think. It was a fast first quarter and he had to leave a little bit with her. But she finished strongly. She's always right there with them. She's not winning every week, but she's always right there with them. Hopefully, she draws good, and she can save some of her speed because she's very quick. I think it's an open race. I think she's got as good a chance to win as anyone else." - **trainer Marcus Melander**

### **Breeding Notes**

Sire Walner won last year's Hambletonian Oaks with Fashion Schooner, his first victory in the event.

Bred by Jorgen Jahre Jr. and Kentuckiana Farms, Secret Volo sold for \$40,000 as HIP 317 at the 2021 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale. The Kentuckiana Farms General Partnership bred 2012 Hambletonian Oaks champion Personal Style, and while Jahre Jr. co-bred and owned 2004 Oaks winner Silver Springs.

### **Driver Bio**

#### **BRIAN SEARS**

**Born: 1/21/1968 – Birthplace: Fort Lauderdale, FL – Resides: Secaucus, NJ**

**Hall of Fame: Class of 2017.**

**Dan Patch Award Driver of the Year: 2009.**

**Hambletonian wins (3): Pinkman, 2015; Royalty For Life, 2013; Muscle Hill, 2009.**

**Hambletonian Oaks wins (2): Bee A Magician, 2013; Broadway Schooner, 2009.**

Brian Sears leads all active drivers in Hambletonian wins with three. John Campbell

holds the record with six. No other driver has won the race more than four times.

In 2009, Sears became the first driver to win the Hambletonian and Hambletonian Oaks in the same year. He won the Hambletonian with Muscle Hill for trainer Greg Peck and the Oaks with Broadway Schooner for trainer Jim Campbell.

Sears doubled again in 2013, capturing the Hambletonian with Royalty For Life for trainer George Ducharme and the Oaks with Bee A Magician for trainer Richard “Nifty” Norman.

His third Hambletonian triumph came with Pinkman for trainer Jimmy Takter in 2015. Last year, Sears finished second in the Hambletonian final with filly Joviality S. She was named the Dan Patch Award winner for best 3-year-old female trotter.

In 2019, Sears finished second in the Hambletonian final with Greenshoe, who was an elimination winner. Forbidden Trade won the final by a neck.

Sears ranks No. 6 in career driving purses with \$212 million. He led the sport in earnings in 2005 with a then-record \$15 million.

He ranks No. 18 in lifetime driving wins in North America with more than 10,400.

Sears has driven four Horse of the Year award winners: McWicked in 2018, Bee A Magician in 2013, Muscle Hill in 2009, and Rocknroll Hanover in 2005.

A native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Sears is a third-generation horseman, following in the footsteps of his grandfather Gene and dad Jay. Both are in the Florida Harness Racing Hall of Fame.

Brian Sears received the 1991 Rising Star Award from the U.S. Harness Writers Association.

## **Trainer Bio**

### **MARCUS MELANDER**

**Born: 7/1/1992 – Birthplace: Sweden – Resides: New Egypt, NJ  
Dan Patch Award Trainer of the Year: 2019.**

Marcus Melander is seeking his first Hambletonian trophy. In 2022, he finished second with filly Joviality S, third with Temporal Hanover and fifth with Periculum.

Melander also finished second, third and fifth in the 2019 final, with Greenshoe, Gimpanzee and Green Manalishi S. Greenshoe and Green Manalishi S were elimination

winners. Greenshoe was the 2019 Trotter of the Year.

His first Hambletonian was in 2017. He saw Enterprise win his elimination and finish fourth-placed-third in the final. In 2018, Melander-trained Evaluate finished fifth in the final. In 2021, Melander finished sixth with Sonofamistery.

Melander has finished second twice in the Hambletonian Oaks, with Hypnotic AM in 2020 and Iteration in 2021.

In 2019 at the age of 27, Melander became the youngest trainer ever voted Trainer of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association. The recognition came one year after he was named the Rising Star Award winner by the same organization.

A native of Sweden, Melander came to the U.S. and worked for four-time Hambletonian-winning trainer Takter before starting his own stable in late 2014. He is based in New Egypt, N.J., at a farm that was home previously to each the legendary Stanley Dancer, a five-time Hambletonian winner, and Continental Farms stables.

Melander has won more than 470 races and \$24 million in purses in his career. Last year, he ranked fifth among trainers in North America with \$4.96 million in earnings. His top victory in 2022 came with Oh Well in the Mohawk Million at Woodbine Mohawk Park. He also won the MGM Yonkers Trot with Joviality S.

His uncle, Stefan, won the 2001 Hambletonian as trainer and driver of Scarlet Knight.

### **Owner Bio**

#### **Kenneth Kjellgren, Osterskar, Sweden- Heights Stable-Rick T. Wahlstedt, New York, New York**

She'd be the first Hambletonian Oaks winner for any of her owners. Heights Stable is the nom de course of Michael Sabatine.