

Monday, January 30, 2023

Jean-Michel Bazire is the King of Vincennes

The top French horseman recorded his fifth Prix d'Amérique triumph after driving his student Hooker Berry to victory on Sunday in Paris.

by Thomas Hedlund

EUROPEAN REPORT



with **THOMAS HEDLUND**

A number of top horsepeople have, historically, made Vincennes their personal harness racing playground, but Jean-Michel Bazire may be the biggest of them all after driving his 6-year-old pupil **Hooker Berry** (Booster Winner) to victory in Sunday's (Jan. 29) \$1,075,000 Prix d'Amérique at Vincennes in Paris.

Bazire gave Hooker Berry a perfect trip and the trotter was outstanding in front of the big crowd at Vincennes. It was Bazire's fifth Prix d'Amérique win going back to his first in 1999

Gerard Forni
Jean-Michel Bazire
was the toast of
Vincennes after
driving **Hooker Berry**
to victory in the Prix
d'Amérique.





Gerard Forni
At the wire,
Bazire's emotions
burst to the
surface.



Gerard Forni
A huge crowd took
in Sunday's Prix
d'Amérique card.

driving U.S. superstar mare Moni Maker to victory. While that is not a record, his dominance in the past 20 years has been extraordinary.

Replay [here](#).

In Sunday's race, Yoann Lebourgeois was entrusted behind trainer Daniel Redén's Don Fanucci Zet and the duo opened

quickly from the far outside, hitting the lead after the first quarter of a mile. Second choice Horsy Dream, driven by Eric Raffin, tried to reach the front position as the downhill part of Vincennes' track started. The pace was set at a very high level at that point and Lebourgeois had no serious plans on letting Horsy Dream take over the lead.

HARNESS RACING UPDATE

ABOUT HARNESS RACING UPDATE

Harness Racing Update is owned by HRU Publications of Millwood, NY and will publish Fridays and Sundays from fall through late spring. HRU will add Wednesday editions early summer through fall, publishing 3 days per week, and will add editions throughout the year as major news breaks.

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Gerard Forni

Hooker Berry made the front with 150 meters to go, and cruised to victory.



Hooker Berry also left quickly early in the race and Bazire knew that he had to give his horse a nice cover trip, which helped determine the outcome. Bazire followed Hussard du Landret three wide on the uphill part of the track and in the last turn he pushed Hooker Berry four wide in the hunt for leader Don Fanucci Zet.

Hooker Berry made the front with 150 meters to go, and Bazire immediately understood that the victory was his. As he approached the wire, Bazire waved his hands and legs and pointed towards the spectators in his home country where he is a fan favorite.

Kudos to Bazire, who really knows how to prepare horses for the biggest races. Hooker Berry was **mentioned as the favorite in the Prix d'Amérique in this column** before the race, but still, there were lots of talented trotters that could have claimed the victory. Yet, it's when the race is on that Bazire often excels over his peers, as evidenced Sunday in one of the world's biggest trotting races.

Behind Hooker Berry, Fabrice Souloy-trained Ampia Mede Sm finished in, what it looked like, supersonic speed after a trip far back in the field. Ampia Mede Sm was second while Philippe Allaire-trained Italiano Ver was third. Hip Hop Haufor and Hohneck must be mentioned as well, since they both were very close to the runner up at wire in fourth and fifth, respectively. Leader Don Fanucci Zet held to sixth place.



Gerard Forni

Hooker Berry proved to be a popular winner.

Hooker Berry claimed the big trophy in Paris in a mile rate of 1:55.2 over 1.6 miles.

Afterward, the champagne flowed all over Vincennes as Bazire celebrated his great triumph with racing fans. On Sunday, he stood astride Paris, yet again.

Apart from his first Prix d'Amérique victory with Moni Maker, Bazire has also won the race with Kesaco Phedo In 2004 (his first win as a trainer), Up And Quick in 2015 and Belina Josselyn in 2019.

As for Hooker Berry, he has fought in the tough H-crop in France for some time. During 2022, he captured five group 2-wins (\$125,000). A victory in the Prix du Bourbonnais secured his spot in Sunday's race at Vincennes.

Harness Racing Update

Gerard Forni

It was the fifth Prix d'Amérique victory for Jean-Michel Bazire, who won his first driving Moni Maker to victory in 1999.



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JUST LOVE YOU ARRIVED IN TIME

Laurent-Claude Abrivard trained **Just Love You** (Love You) posted a small upset in Sunday's (Jan. 29) \$325,000 Prix Ourasi for 4-year-old trotters. After a perfect trip third over, Alexandre Abrivard convinced his horse to reach the wire first.

The Prix Ourasi contained several top 4-year-old trotters and the race became worth seeing for all the fans that gathered in the grandstands in front of the black Paris track. When leader Jean Balthazar ran out of gas at the top of the stretch, many horses began to contest the lead. Just Love You attacked four wide in the stretch and Alexandre Abrivard's horse won quite safely in a mile rate of 1:58 over 1.6 miles.

Replay [here](#).

In the \$325,000 Prix Bold Eagle for 5-year-olds, Italian bred **Cocco Bfc** (Varenne) did the heavy job on the outside and paired with Franck Ouvrie, the Vitale Ciotola trained trotter showed great moral on the stretch as he won in mile rate 1:55.4 over 1.6 miles.

Replay [here](#).

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