

Stronach's Holy Helena dances to Queen's Plate tier two win



By Jake Courtepatte

Two years removed from her famous 2017 Queen's Plate victory, Holy Helena was back on the track and in the winner's circle at the famous race at Woodbine Racetrack ? though in a slightly different capacity.

The prized filly took home top prize at the tier two Dance Smartly race at Saturday's running of the Queen's Plate, coming in as the heavy favourite out of Stronach Stables.

A prize of \$175,000 awaited the Stronach team and jockey Javier Castellano at the finish line, just the latest in a long line of strong finishes for Holy Helena.

The Dance Smartly was the seventh overall win, sixth stakes win, and fourth graded turf stakes win for the Ontario-bred.

?I'm saying the Canadian air does a lot of good for her,? said owner Frank Stronach.

?Mike (Doyle, the Stronach Stable manager based at Woodbine) had her here for a week and a half and I think things are great: they work well together.

?Javier is such a great rider. He didn't panic.?

The five-year old Holy Helena first captured the Queen's Plate in just her three-year old season, and didn't race on turf before the age of four, making Saturday's victory all

the more impressive. Stronach credited her athleticism to her strong bloodline.

The Stronach family

name has become synonymous with equestrian sports over the years, with Holy Helena handing the family its second Queen's Plate in three years. In 2015, Shaman Ghost gave Stronach Stables its third Queen's Plate victory, and the first since 1997, when Awesome Again won the one-and-a-quarter mile race.

"I've put a lot of effort in, a lot of money in, and a lot of love in it."

Stronach's first win

came in 1994 with the three-year old Basqueian, who passed away shortly before last weekend's race.

"He lived a good life

down in Florida, and he got a stately funeral"he deserved a stately funeral."

The Stronach family

and Adena Springs have bred and/or campaigned more than 200 stakes winners, including winners of both the Preakness and Belmont Stakes in the United States, as well as all three classics in Canada. Among these runners are 12 champions in two countries, including Horse of the Year and Hall of Famer Ghostzapper the sire to Shaman Ghost, Real Dude, and Holy Helena.

All are from the Awesome Again line of breeding.