

Mambacita (Tactical Landing-Bill's Lady-Donato Hanover)

Mambacita rode the rail in the three-hole and held on to finish fifth in the first Hambletonian Oaks elimination on July 29 at the Meadowlands. She finished three lengths behind winner Walner Payton, was timed in 1:52.2 and trotted her last quarter in 27.3.

As a 2-year-old Mambacita won a Bluegrass Series division and an International Stallion Stakes split at The Red Mile. She was also second in the Goldsmith Maid, Jim Doherty Memorial and New Jersey Sire Stakes finals. So far in 2023 she has victories in two legs and the final of the Early Kentucky Sires Stakes at Oak Grove. In total she has a record of 7-6-2 from 22 appearances, has earnings of \$612,518 and a mark of 1:53.

Quotes

"I thought she was flat in her elim. She scoped clean and we grabbed a blood on her Monday morning. Mambacita occasionally shows a low red count, so hopefully we find something that's an easy fix for the final." - **trainer Tony Alagna**

Breeding Notes

Mambacita, which was the nickname of NBA superstar Kobe Bryant's daughter Gianna (both Kobe and Gianna perished in a helicopter accident on January 26, 2020), would be the first Hambletonian Oaks champion for sire Tactical Landing, who won his elimination and was third in the final of the 2018 Hambletonian. The dam, the Donato Hanover mare Bill's Lady, raced in the eliminations for the 2018 Hambletonian Oaks but made a break, finished ninth and didn't advance to the final.

Mambacita sold as HIP 28 at the 2021 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale and brought \$80,000. She would be the first Hambletonian Oaks champion for breeder Crawford Farms.

Driver Bio

SCOTT ZERON

Born: 5/23/1989 – Birthplace: Montreal, Quebec – Resides: Campbell Hall, NY
Hambletonian wins (2): Atlanta, 2018; Marion Marauder, 2016.

Scott Zeron won the Hambletonian in 2018 with Atlanta, trained by his father Rick, and in 2016 with Marion Marauder, trained by Paula Wellwood.

Atlanta became the first female trotter since Continental victory in 1996 to win the Hambletonian. At the end of the season, she was named Trotter of the Year by the U.S. Harness Writers Association.

Marion Marauder went on to capture the Yonkers Trot and Kentucky Futurity to sweep the Trotting Triple Crown. Marion Marauder was the ninth Trotting Triple Crown winner and was named Trotter of the Year.

With Marion Marauder, the then 27-year-old Zeron was the second-youngest driver to win the Hambletonian and youngest driver to win a harness racing Triple Crown, either trotting or pacing.

Zeron missed the opportunity to drive in the 2022 Hambletonian because of injuries suffered in an accident several days prior to the event's eliminations but participated on Hambletonian Day as a guest announcer on the Meadowlands simulcast show.

He returned to action in October and won a Breeders Crown with Treacherous Dragon, who at the end of the season received the Dan Patch Award for best 3-year-old female pacer.

In June of this year, Zeron won the million-dollar North America Cup with It's My Show. It was Zeron's second victory in the race, which is for 3-year-old pacers.

For his career, Zeron has won nearly 4,400 races and \$95 million in purses.

A native of Montreal, Zeron made a name for himself in Ontario before relocating to the U.S. near the end of 2013. He twice led all Canadian drivers in wins, in 2011 and 2010.

Zeron received the 2012 Rising Star Award from the U.S. Harness Writers Association.

Trainer Bio

TONY ALAGNA

Born: 6/8/1972 – Birthplace: Champaign, IL – Resides: Howell, NJ
Hambletonian wins (1): Ramona Hill, 2020.

Tony Alagna won the 2020 Hambletonian with filly Ramona Hill, driven by Andy McCarthy. She became the fourth filly trotter to win the Hambletonian since it moved to the Meadowlands in 1981 and the 15th overall to capture the sport's premier event for 3-year-old trotters. She received the Dan Patch Award for best 3-year-old filly trotter.

In 2012, the Alagna-trained My MVP finished third in the Hambletonian, only a neck behind winner Market Share. Later that season, My MVP won the Kentucky Futurity, which is the third jewel in the Trotting Triple Crown (with the Hambletonian and Yonkers Trot).

Alagna trained 2022 Hambletonian Oaks runner-up Pink Coco Chanel as well as 2016 Hambletonian Oaks runner-up Caprice Hill, who was an O'Brien Award winner in Canada at ages 2 and 3.

Last year, Alagna had a career-best season in purses with \$9.28 million, good for No. 2 among trainers in North America. He equaled his career high for wins with 212, which he first set in 2021.

Alagna's stable has earned more than \$5 million in purses each of the past four years, finishing second in North America three times and third once.

For his career, Alagna has won more than 2,000 races and \$68 million in purses. He got his 2,000th victory on June 18 at Pocono Downs at Mohegan Pennsylvania. He ranks eighth in purses since the inception of official trainer stats in 1991.

Among Alagna's past stars was Captaintreacherous, who was Pacer of the Year in 2012 and 2013. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2019.

A native of Illinois, Alagna followed his mom, Donna Lee, into the sport. He had a pony at the age of 3, was reading up on pedigrees at 9, and solely responsible for his first horse at 10. Soon after graduating from high school, Alagna was assisting his mom with her stable. After working for several different stables, he went out on his own in 2009.

Owner Bio

Alagna Racing LLC., Jackson, New Jersey- Crawford Farms Racing, Syracuse, New York-Pryde Stables Inc., North York, Ontario

Mambacita would be the first Hambletonian Oaks champion for any of her owners. Crawford Farms has won the Hambletonian twice with a pair of fillies in Atlanta and Ramona Hill, the latter of whom was trained by Tony Alagna of Alagna Racing LLC. Robbie Pryde of Pryde Stables Inc. is a newcomer to ownership, having purchased his first horses in 2021.