

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**By John Scheinman**

## **Magical Feeling Sweetens Sugar Maple April 11, 2012**

**(Charles Town, WV)** – When longtime owner-breeder Peter Blum stood in the winner's circle February 18 at Laurel Park and called **Magical Feeling** his best horse ever after she won the Grade 2 Barbara Fritchie Handicap, it meant a lot considering he had raced handicap star Devil His Due, Irish champion Tomahawk, and the outstanding juvenile filly La Spia.

Since earning her first victory in a lowly \$12,500 maiden claiming race in 2010, Magical Feeling has grown into a racehorse far beyond the initial low expectations of her handlers, and Saturday night she will be in action as the likely favorite in the \$200,000 Sugar Maple for fillies and mares, 4-years-old and up running seven furlongs at Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races.

The Sugar Maple, which drew a field of 9, is one of the feature supporting races for the 4<sup>th</sup> running of the Grade 2, \$1 million Charles Town Classic, the richest horse race in West Virginia.

Magical Feeling, bred by Blum in Kentucky and by the sire Empire Maker, comes into the Sugar Maple off a close-up fifth-place finish in the Grade 2 Inside Information on March 17 at Gulfstream Park. In the Barbara Fritchie she won by a neck at odds of 27-1 with a four-wide surge through the lane. In the race in Florida, however, her late attack was muted by traffic trouble.

“She was last going down the backside and moved up going to the turn and started picking up horses,” said trainer Allen Iwinski. A horse outside her trapped her down in between, from about the three-eighths pole to just before the sixteenth pole. She was blocked and didn't have clear running. She kind of pushed the horse outside her right around the sixteenth pole and kicked in, but it was too little, too late.”

Even with the defeat, Magical Feeling has won 11 of her past 15 starts, and Iwinski has just as much affection for her as Blum does.

“After the things she's accomplished, we both feel the same way about her,” he said. “It's been some deal, as far as where we thought she would be and where she ended up. They tried to interview me when we won the Regret [last June at Monmouth Park], and I was so choked up. She had won allowance races, but that was ...”

Iwinski's voice trailed off, but he might as well have said “a magical feeling.”

While Magical Feeling may go off as the favorite in the Sugar Maple, **Strike the Moon** figures to receive a lot of support. The 4-year-old daughter of Malibu Moon, trained by Mike Trombetta, won the \$400,000 Charles Town Oaks last year at the distance and has placed in several top sprints since then.

In her most recent start, Strike the Moon finished third after dueling in an overnight stakes race March 21 at Aqueduct.

“She’s training well,” Trombetta said. “I think she kind of slipped off her form a little bit, but hopefully she’s getting back on track. She’s run good and in some real competitive races, and I just need her to break through again.”

Another sharp entrant is **Island Bound** for trainer Ian Wilkes, who will have top rider Julien Leparoux in the irons.

The 5-year-old daughter of Speightstown has climbed out of the upper claiming ranks lately to finish second in a strong allowance in February at Tampa Bay Downs and second by a diminishing half-length in the Langhorne Stakes on March 27 at PARX Racing.

Several Charles Town runners are set to try the Sugar Maple: Trainer Jeff Runco will send out **Bahia Beach**, a 4-year-old daughter of Awesome Again who finished second two races back in the Affectionately Stakes at Aqueduct; Larry Myers has the hard luck but hard-hitting **Shefoggedmyglasses**, who has placed in 14 of her past 16 starts without winning; Ollie Figgins has **Victoryat Last**, who is undefeated in three starts at Charles Town.

**Lady of Greatness**, a recent allowance winner at Gulfstream Park; **Lightshaft**, fourth in the Langhorne Stakes; and **My Sunshine Gal**, a graded stakes-placed runner shipping up from Tampa Bay, complete the field.

The Sugar Maple will immediately precede at the Charles Town Classic as Race 11 and is slated to go off at 9:45pm EST.

### **\$200,000 Sugar Maple**

April 14, 2012

Race 11 – Post time 9:45pm EST

Fillies & Mares 4&up, 7 furlongs

*PP. Horse, Jockey, Weight, Trainer*

1. Strike the Moon, Julian Pimental, 116, Michael J. Trombetta
2. Lady of Greatness, Abel Castellano, Jr., 120, Jamie Ness
3. Bahia Beach, Travis L. Dunkelberger, 116, Jeff C. Runco
4. My Sunshine Gal, Clifford D. Dooley, 116, Derek S. Ryan
5. Shefoggedmyglasses, Katie Reynolds, 116, Larry M. Myers
6. Victoryat Last, Elias Peltroche, 118, Ollie L. Figgins, III
7. Magical Feeling, Roberto Alvarado, Jr., 123, Allen Iwinski
8. Island Bound, Julien R. Leparoux, 118, Ian R. Wilkes
9. Lightshaft, Kendrick Carmouche, 120, John C. Servis