

MELADY'S MONET AND 'LIFE BEGINS AT 50'
BY FRANK DRUCKER, Publicity Director, Empire City @ Yonkers Raceway

YONKERS, NY, Tuesday, April 10, 2018—Sandwiched in between this past Saturday night's (Apr. 7th) fourth round of Yonkers Raceway's George Morton Levy Memorial Pacing Series was the weekly Open Handicap Trot.

That Melady's Monet won the race wasn't exactly a man-bites-dog occurrence. He paid \$3.

That it was Melady's Monet's 50th career win made it newsworthy. Hence, the saga.

"I've probably put in more time with him than with any horse I've ever trained," Kevin McDermott said, adding, "He's been as rewarding as any just about any horse I've been around."

Melady's Monet, a 9-year-old homebred Revenue S gelding, first met McDermott when the former was a 5-year-old, in September of 2014.

"Taylor Gower was his first trainer, and he did a very good job," McDermott said. "(Melady's Monet) was racing in high-end overnight races before he came to me. All I knew about him was that he had four legs, a head and a tail.

"I was recommended to the owners (Melady Enterprises' Ester and Luca Balenzano), and they give me the horse's history. He was a project at first, but the ability finally showed up, and Taylor deserves much of the credit for that. What I learned right away was he (Melady's Monet, not Taylor Gower) is the family pet, so they never overrace him."

Melady's Monet has made 161 career starts, including 29 starts as a 4-year-old in 2013, a single-season high. He had a by-design 17 starts in 2017.

"Here's the thing about him," McDermott said. "He ties up more, and worse, than any horse I've ever had. In fact, he tied up so bad in the days before last Saturday's race, I wasn't sure we'd go.

"There's not really a cure. We just try to keep him on the right program. He's out in the field a couple of hours each day, then we train him by lead-shanking him next to another horse in a jog cart.

"(Caretaker) Nelson (Munoz) has been terrific," McDermott said. "He's been with him since Melady's Monet has been with me."

While McDermott offered that "no driver has said a bad word about Melady's Monet," the trainer did have a good word about one Jason Bartlett.

"He gets a lot of the credit," McDermott said. "He communicates with me, and with the horse."

“He’s just a pleasure to drive,” Bartlett said of Melady’s Monet. “I actually think he’s better chasing other horses, but if you can get him to the lead without too much cost, that’s not bad, either.

“As far as any tricks, he seems to want the bit the whole time and he hates the whip. I’ve learned than even when you and he think he’s done, he’s not done.”

‘Melady,’ McDermott and Bartlett combined to win the 2016 Vincennes Invitational Hambletonian Day at the Meadowlands, a life-best 1:51.4 in a \$1.286,158 career.

“That was obviously one of the highlights with him,” McDermott said. “Some disappointments, too. We had an Elitlopp invitation, I think it was 2016, but the owners turned it down. We were also hoping for an invite to the International Trot, too.”

Suffice it to say, for standout trotter Melady’s Monet, the resume ‘outpaces’ the regrets.

(Author’s aside...Melady’s Monet is back at it Saturday night [Apr. 14th], remanded behind the eight-ball in this week’s adult-table trot.)

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(photo-Mike Lizzi-accompanies)

(FFI...Frank Drucker, Yonkers Raceway Publicity Director, 914-968-4200)