The now 14 year-old Valley Victory son San Pellegrino hasn’t been exactly an overnight siring sensation but thanks to the exploits of the top Canadian trotter San Pail and the Swedish star You Bet Hornline, he’s finally garnering some respect and mares.

San Pellegrino was a foal of 1996, bred by Marerita Wallenius-Kleberg of Sweden who had an affiliation with Stoner Creek Stud in Kentucky through her relationship with the late Norman Woolworth.

Jimmy Takter took a liking to the Valley Victory - Self Supporting colt and with partners ponied up $145,000 for the ownership papers. Over the next two seasons the colt was one of those who was more often a bridesmaid than a bride. He did win the Matron and was second in the Breeders Crown at Colonial Downs that year before coming back at three to finish second in both the Yonkers Trot and Dexter Cup. He raced against a group that included Angus Hall, CR Renegade, Self Possessed, CR Commando and Enjoy Lavec.

I had the opportunity to watch San Pellegrino in the flesh at the Red Mile in Lexington during the fall meet in 1999. He was three-years-old then and racing for Takter. At that time his future was a bit hazy as it hadn’t been decided whether to let him become a full time sire or continue to race him as an older horse and perhaps go to Europe with him.

It wasn’t much later that the decision was made to retire the horse and he then found himself at Armstrong Bros. farm in Inglewood, Ontario to stand stud. He had 42 foals from his initial crop with the best being Loose Change Louie ($468,000). The next year he had just 29 foals led by Mapleleaf Buddy ($485,000) and Elena ($414,000) and there were just 28 live foals from his third crop.

The year 2004 would be pivotal for the horse. His final crop of Canadian foals (a total of 18) arrived that Spring and among them would prove to be his best performer ever. However, the decision was made to put him back into training.

“We stood him for four seasons and he just could not attract any significant books. Finally, we told Jimmy that it did not make any economic sense to carry on with him so he put him back into training in 2004,” recalls Dr. Glen Brown who served as President and General Manager at Armstrongs.

“He was a little on the small side which some people did not like. He was fertile enough but just was not able to attract the mares.”

Takter raced the then eight-year-old a total of 14 times before making a deal to sell him to Swedish Hornline Stud in late 2004. Three of San Pelligrino’s Canadian foals had raced in Sweden, Averynattiegirl ($217,000), Mary ($155,000) and Wind-song Cappucino ($130,000) and proved good representatives of their sire.

In 2005 Hornline Stud bred all of their mares, more than 20, to San Pellegrino, which makes his oldest foals over here four years old this year. Then the stud farm gave away all the mares (not all were taken though) against a live foal fee of $6,000, which is quite high by our means. They continued with the same procedure for the next three crops.
San Pellegrino actually had a Swedish bred foal already in 2003. Vasterbo Traveller raced 17 times with six wins, five seconds, $60,000 in earnings and a mile rate of 1:55.3f before he died at young age.

His first big crop from 2006 are still in the beginning of their careers, however one of them, You Bet Hornline, is already a champion. Most recently he won the race which is called ‘the Swedish Hambletonian,’ Sprintermastaren at the Halmstad Racetrack in southern Sweden.

The Sprintermastaren consists of three eliminations and a final all raced during the same card, exactly as the Hambletonian previously was. You Bet Hornline won his elimination and the final for trainer-driver Robert Bergh (well known in North America for the horses Adrian Chip and Amour Ami) and owner Paula Astaire.

Paula is quite far from the average Standardbred owner. She is a blond singer, who inherited a small fortune from her father, who died from cancer two years ago. From the $140,000 purse money Paula donated 20 per cent to the cancer foundation.

Unfortunately the Hornline stud has had the policy not to stake their breeding (they changed their view this year), which means that only horses which were sold very early (like You Bet Hornline) have been eligible to the top classic trots in Sweden.

That of course sets a certain limit for the possibilities for the horses to earn big money, and the statistics of San Pellegrino shall be read bearing that in mind.

This current breeding season San Pellegrino stood at a new farm, where he had some 30 odd bookings. Trainers speak well about his foals, and there is no doubt that the classic victory of You Bet Hornline will encourage breeders to use his services in the years to come.

Their choices will also be helped by the exploits of San Pail, a winner of $1.6 million to date in his career for breeder Glenn Van Camp and trainer Rod Hughes who share ownership of the now six-year-old gelding.

Last year the horse gained much attention when he defeated Lucky Jim and Arch Madness in Canada’s most notable trot for older horses, the Maple Leaf Trot at Mohawk. He duplicated the effort this year, winning the $772,000 contest in convincing fashion in a life best 1:51.3.

You Bet Hornline recently won what is referred to as the ‘Swedish Hambletonian,’ the Sprintermastaren at Halmstad Racetrack.
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188. **WARK WOMAN** b.f.
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By the exciting young sire **KEN WARKENTIN**, the first foal from a half-sister to **WOMANLY IMAGE** 3,1:59.3f ($73,904). Immediate family of **EARL** 1:54.2 ($984,318).

223. **HNT ANGEL** b.f.
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