

Chasing

NATIONAL STEEPLECHASE ASSOCIATION | 400 FAIR HILL DRIVE, ELKTON, MD 21921

Scorpiancer wins Eclipse Award

Bruton Street-US's Scorpiancer, the National Steeplechase Association's only two-time graded stakes winner in 2017, was crowned the year's Eclipse Award winner as champion steeplechase horse at the annual awards dinner at Gulfstream Park in Florida on Jan. 25.

Irish-bred Scorpiancer won his only two starts of the season, the \$200,000 Calvin Houghland Iroquois (Gr. 1) by 16 lengths after his victory in the Temple Gwathmey (Gr. 3). Trained by Jack Fisher, he prevailed in the Eclipse Award balloting in a highly competitive season in which five horses won the year's five Grade 1 races.

Accepting the Eclipse trophy were the three friends who make up Bruton Street-US: Mike Hankin, Charlie Fenwick, and Charlie Noell. Accompanying them were Fisher and the two jockeys who have ridden Scorpiancer in his American career, Connor Hankin and Sean McDermott, who was aboard for the two 2017 wins.

"He's a really good horse. And we've been really really lucky to be part of a fun team watching this horse come over from England and run so well here," Mike Hankin said in accepting the Eclipse for Bruton Street-US.

"It's a privilege to be here with all of you. Steeplechase racing has long been thought of as a great afterlife for flat horses. It's gotten pretty exciting. The last year, the biggest purse of the year was \$400,000 and is going up to \$500,000 in two years. We're big on our sport, and we appreciate being recognized as part of Thoroughbred flat racing tonight."

The Irish-bred, who did not race after his Iroquois victory in Nashville on May 13, topped the NSA's Theoretical Handicap at 158 pounds.

Other finalists for the Eclipse were Gillian Johnston's Mr. Hot Stuff, winner of the \$400,000 Grand National (Gr. 1) at Far Hills, N.J., on Oct. 21, and Buttonwood Farm's All the Way Jose, who won Belmont Park's \$150,000 Lonesome



NSA Treasurer Dwight Hall presented the champion owner trophy to Bruton Street-US's Mike Hankin, left, and Charlie Fenwick at the annual awards dinner at the Maryland Club in Baltimore on Jan. 18.

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Glory Handicap (Gr. 1) on Sept. 21. They were rated at 148 pounds in the Theoretical Handicap.

Scorpiancer led the Eclipse balloting with 92 votes, followed by All the Way Jose at 70 and Mr. Hot Stuff at 35. Also receiving votes were Robert Kinsley's Modem (7), Flying Elvis Stable's Diplomat (4), and Rosbrian Farm's Swansea Mile (3).

Fisher also trained Mr. Hot Stuff, and All the Way Jose was trained by Racing Hall of Fame

member Jonathan Sheppard.

The Eclipse Awards are decided by voting of National Thoroughbred Racing Association racing secretaries, editors and writers of *Daily Racing Form*, and members of the National Turf Writers and Broadcasters Association.

One week earlier, Mr. Hot Stuff was honored with the NSA's Lonesome Glory Award as 2017's leading earner at the annual awards dinner at the Maryland Club in Baltimore.



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Scenes from the NSA Awards Dinner



At left, SOTA President and former champion jockey Sean Clancy presented the jockey title award to Darren Nagle. Above, NSA director Gigi Lazenby gave the Life's Illusion Filly and Mare trophy to Amy Taylor Rowe, owner of Lady Blanco. Below, NSA President Guy J. Torsilieri presented the Lonesome Glory Award to the staff of champion trainer Jack Fisher's barn for their work with Gillian Johnston's Mr. Hot Stuff.

DON CLIPPINGER PHOTOS



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