



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 9, 2016

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***The Real Housewives of NY* Star Bethenny Frankel Brings Horse Racing Background to Empire City Casino as Special Host of Kentucky Derby Day Festivities**

Frankel picks her “best in-show” at the casino’s annual Fancy Derby Hat Contest while mingling with fans and introducing her take on the Derby’s signature drink ‘Cooler than the Julep’



The Real Housewives of NY star and Skinnygirl mogul Bethenny Frankel spent Kentucky Derby Day at Empire City Casino where she presented her spin on the classic derby drink – ‘Cooler than the Julep’ and picked her favorite Kentucky Derby Hat at the casino’s annual fancy hat contest. PHOTO CREDIT: Stefan Radtke

YONKERS, NY - The Kentucky Derby may have turned out as predicted with heavily favored Nyquist winning the kick-off to the Triple Crown season, but Bethenny Frankel's choice for top hat at [Empire City Casino’s](#) annual **“Fancy Derby Hat Contest”** was not an easy one. *The Real Housewives of NY* star and Skinnygirl founder hosted the Kentucky Derby Day festivities at the casino and historic raceway in Yonkers, New York. For additional photos of Bethenny Frankel and Kentucky Derby Day at Empire City Casino, please [Click Here](#) (Photos by Stefan Radtke).

Frankel is no stranger to horse racing as her late father, Robert Frankel, was one of the most successful and respected American thoroughbred horse race trainers in the history of racing.

About 100 contestants vied for Bethenny’s attention by showcasing their wild and wacky Kentucky Derby hats. In the end, Bethenny’s criteria for a winning hat came down to a blend of two things.

“Creativity, but still sort of holding true to the tradition of the Derby,” said Frankel.

Frankel herself stayed true to Southern tradition and high fashion, donning an elegant black creation by custom hat designer Barbara Feinman.

Bethenny kept the crowd on their toes for a few heart-wrenching moments while choosing which contestant would win the \$750 cash prize. She ultimately picked a unique and cleverly designed oversized magnolia-inspired hat created by its wearer. But a close runner up who wore a martini glass-themed hat that Bethenny enjoyed enough to pretend to take a sip out of was promised a Skinnygirl basket of goodies for her efforts.

The Skinnygirl mogul also mingled with fans and casino patrons, posed for photos, presented her spin on the classic derby drink – ‘Cooler than the Julep’, and tried her luck by playing some electronic blackjack (the newest addition to the casino floor and offers better odds than traditional blackjack). This was Bethenny’s first time gambling without a dealer, though she had a strong contingent of loyal fans cheering her on.

“I had a lot of fun because you don’t feel the pressure of the dealer and you can do your own thing. There’s something relaxing about sliding your virtual coin into the little circle. You get to take a minute to decide whether to hit or stand,” Frankel explained. “The way that the machines were designed was so interactive, it made it really fun. I was very surprised by that. I guess I’m just an old dog and that’s the new tricks now.”

“Bethenny’s sense of style, fashion and knowledge of horse racing made her the perfect Kentucky Derby Host for us,” said Clare Galterio, the casino’s host and celebrity gossip guru. “I’m not sure what was more entertaining to watch, the Kentucky Derby itself or the crazy hats that graced our festivities all day long. Bethenny also has a knack for blackjack and knew exactly when to hit or stand. She’s a pro.”

Bethenny enjoyed her time at Empire City Casino so much that she mentioned the possibility of coming back in the near future to host an event or simply to hit the slots.

For more information on those festivities and other events the casino hosts throughout the year, please visit <http://www.empirecitycasino.com>.

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About Empire City Casino at Yonkers Raceway

Empire City Casino is one of the largest entertainment and gaming destinations in the northeast. Featuring 5,300 of the hottest slots, electronic craps, roulette, baccarat and sic bo, Empire City Casino also offers guests year-round harness racing and International simulcasting, live entertainment including the best party, tribute and Latin bands, comedy, New York’s hottest DJ’s, and more. A plethora of dining options will satisfy even the most discerning palate with Italian cuisine at Nonno’s Trattoria; Dan Rooney’s, a high-energy sports bar; Alley 810, a craft cocktail lounge with retro bowling lanes; and convenient delicious options at the International Food Court or Lil’ Cocina. Visit Empire City Casino at Yonkers Raceway located at 810 Yonkers Avenue (off I-87 at Central Avenue) Yonkers, NY, Westchester County, open seven days a week from 10:00am to 6:00am. Visit www.empirecitycasino.com or call 914.968.4200 for information.