

**ROCKET SONG EXHIBITS PURE GRIT IN FRONT-RUNNING FRENCH TRIUMPH
SETS MEASURED PACE ON HOLDING GROUND, SEES OFF RIVALS IN STRETCH
PLAN IS TO RETURN TO SAME COURSE AND DISTANCE IN THE CRITERIUM S.**



Rocket Song “on paper” looked to be in a very contentious spot last Sunday at Toulouse, where of the 7 runners in a Classe 2 conditions race, 4 of them had won their last race and all them impressively.

Odds on pari-mutuels, an invention of the French, offered little help in solving the puzzle of which horse was the one to beat, as all the money came in as the field was being dispatched. The chestnut, making his TVI debut, was the 7-to-2 co-second choice to a debut winner wearing The Wertheimer Brothers’ silks.

True to his name, the TVI colorbearer broke from the 1 hole like, well, a Rocket! He fell into the lead and, with Alexandre Gavilan taking a long hold and virtually standing up in the saddle as though he were riding in a jumps race, Rocket Song set a measured pace and maintained about a half-length advantage up the backstretch and around the curve over the filly favorite Snow.

Down the lane Rocket Song was dour and focused, never failing to respond positively to his rider’s requests, as he kept finding more energy to maintain just about a clear lead from his rivals. He was always going well enough to win and always found something extra when challenged.

Winning margin was just under 1 length over his stable mate Jasmin Dore, a 5-length winner on debut for the same Didier Guillemin who conditioned Rocket Song. That gelding was in tight down the lane, but had his chance and could not peg back his barn mate. L’Amour Code, J.C. Rouget’s co-second choice, was too far back in midstretch and closed nicely for third. [VIDEO](#)

Guillemin said “Rocket Song goes well in this sticky sort of going and the 1600-meter distance fits him perfectly. He is comfortable on the lead and he responds when there is a fight. We must run him back over this same course and trip in the Criterium next month. A great victory. Congratulations.”

Short Strokes: the colt earned \$20,000. His official rating is now 88. In 4 starts, he has a pair of seconds and a pair of wins back-to-back. His next start in the listed Criterium de Languedoc will be a decided step up in class, but he acts over the course and likes the trip.

Barry Irwin said "This was a big step up in class and quality and it was gratifying to have our judgement borne out with this well-deserved score."