

August 6, 2017

ANIMAL KINGDOM NOTCHES 2ND STAKES WINNER AT DEL MAR SUNDAY CAL-BRED CONTINENTAL DIVIDE SCORES AS MAIDEN IN GRADUATION S. FROM 9 RUNNERS, LONE 1ST-CROP SIRE WITH MULTIPLE STAKES WINNERS

Animal Kingdom, from just nine starters in North America, was represented by his second stakes winner on August 6 when Continental Divide prevailed as a maiden in the \$100,000 Graduation Stakes for juvenile California-breds at Del Mar.



Animal Kingdom will stand the Southern Hemisphere season at Arrowfield Stud in Australia. Bronwen Healy photo

At this point, Animal Kingdom is the only first-crop sire with more than one stakes winner. Both of them have come in dirt sprints, as Continental Divide joined the filly Sunny Skies who scored in the six-furlong Debutante Stakes at Churchill Downs in late June.

Continental Divide sat back in fifth early and made a sweeping outside move turning for home to take control in the 5 1/2-furlong Graduation. He scored by three-quarters of a length in 1:05.27, registering a 77 Beyer under jockey Victor Espinoza. The runner-up, Smokem, had defeated Continental Divide in their respective debuts on July 21 at Del Mar going 5 furlongs.

"That was a nice move; a really nice move," the Hall of Famer Espinoza said after the Graduation. "He can do that; he's talented. When he ran the first time, he was green. I didn't want to force him that day. He's got time to learn. He looks like he could be a good horse. The breeding is good and he's a Cal-bred, so that opens a lot of doors. He'll run on, too."

Continental Divide commanded a sale-topping price of \$245,000 at the Barretts May two-year-olds in training sale, with trainer Jim Cassidy signing the ticket on behalf of D P Racing.

"Right from day one he has never, ever let anything bother him," Cassidy said. "You can set a bomb off next to him and he doesn't care. He's got the greatest mind. He's not fully prepared yet. I'd like to see a little more weight on him and a little more color in him and get a little bigger and stronger. We'll give him a chance now and see when he makes me run him again."

Sunny Skies is pointing for the Grade 2 Pocahontas Stakes at Churchill in September. Animal Kingdom also is the sire of the "TDN Rising Star" Untamed Domain, who won impressively on the turf at Saratoga and is slated for the Grade 3 With Anticipation Stakes.

Team Valor bred and raced Animal Kingdom, the 2011 Kentucky Derby winner and hero of the 2013 Dubai World Cup, and retains a 20 percent in his stud career. He stands at the farms of the other owners, Sheikh Mohammed's Darley in Kentucky and Arrowfield Stud in Australia.