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Ridden by Alejandro Medellin, First Moonflash defeats a tough field in The Championship at Sunland Park.

LUNAR ECLIPSE

First Moonflash wins the last Grade 1 of 2008 in world-record style.

By Andrea Caudill

THROUGHOUT HIS 17-RACE CAREER, FIRST MOONFLASH HAS shown raw talent – in September 2007, he won the New Mexico State Fair Senor Futurity (RG3) by 1 1/2 lengths – but has also struggled with breaking problems. But apparently, the First To Flash colt has it figured out. Of his seven lifetime wins, four have been in his last four starts, including a world record-setting win in the December 27, \$400,000 Championship at Sunland Park (G1).

Owned by Pierre and Leslie Amestoy and Maria G. Gonzalez, the brown colt capped his sophomore season by defeating champions Ketel Won and Little Bit Of Baja by 1 1/2 lengths and winning the 400-yard test in :18.735. The clocking broke by 130/1000ths the record set by Blazin N Shakin earlier this year. He earned a career-best 108 speed index and earned \$182,500.

First Moonflash was trained by Edgar Maldonado and ridden by Alejandro Medellin. In First Moonflash's previous two starts, he won the November 9 New Mexico Classic Derby (RG1) and the December 13 Jess Burner Memorial Handicap (RG1), both of which were restricted to state-breds.

"Now that he knows what the break is about, he has turned into quite a runner," Pierre Amestoy said.

First Moonflash's dam, the stakes-placed 10-year-old Major Rime mare Nagano Moon, has produced four winners from five starters, including Dash Ta Moon, a four-time stakes-winning Dash Ta Fame mare who won last year's Lubbock Stakes (G2) at Zia Park. Nagano Moon has a 2-year-old full sister to Dash Ta Moon named Full Moon Dasher and a yearling filly by Furyofthewind named

Viva La Moon. First Moonflash is one of three stakes winners from 47 starters by the late First To Flash, a champion by First Down Dash out of the Six Fortunes mare Marcy Darling. The stallion sired only one crop of foals before he died in December 2004.

First Moonflash was bred by Dosi and Norma Alvarez of La Union, New Mexico. The 10-year breeders' 56 starters have earned more than \$1.9 million and include five stakes winners. The Alvarezes and their breeding program were featured in the May-June 2008 issue of *The American Quarter Horse Racing Journal*.

"We'll probably race (First Moonflash) one more year, but beating the type of horses he beat today, he certainly has the credentials to stand anywhere in the country," Amestoy said. 🐾

CHAMPIONSHIP AT SUNLAND PARK

ORDER OF FINISH	TIME	MARGIN
First Moonflash	:18.735	—
Ketel Won	:18.800	1/2
Little Bit Of Baja	:18.937	1 1/4
Sassys Tuffy	:19.014	1 3/4
A Stoli Mate	:19.118	2 1/2
Coronas Leaving You	:19.160	2 1/2
Jessgottahaveit	:19.171	2 3/4
Heavenly Trip	:19.188	2 3/4
DMNV Mountable	:19.349	3 3/4
Diamond Tres Seis	:19.567	5 1/4