

## **Brazilian Tradition Follows the Marchador to America**

Sounding very much like the start of Moby Dick, the letter began..."My name is Getulio Tadeiu Vieira.....". The American breeders had waited more than three years for this letter.

The letter was the start of a historic journey across the U.S. Accompanied by another vet and judge, Jose Eduardo Castelo de Teves, Getulio performed the first inspection and branding of Mangalarga Marchador horses outside of Brazil.

The Mangalarga Marchador is the National Horse of Brazil. Descendents of Royal Alter stallions brought to Brazil when Napoleon invaded Portugal; these horses are a matter of great pride and passion in their native country. The Brazilians employ an inspection process similar to that for the warm bloods or PRE horses, to ensure that only quality horses will be entered into their breeding books.



Mangalarga Marchador stallion, Acaun de Itajoana, age 3.

Getulio described the process to the American breeders and owners. "Animals over 3 years of age, should be shown in halter first while identification and paperwork is verified. This shall be followed by a demonstration for the gait of each saddle mare and stallion ridden by a qualified handler for the observance of the Marcha, a dynamic movement characterized by independent leg action that allow moments of three-legged support. The technician performing a test ride is optional. After the ridden test, the saddle shall be removed, leaving only the halter for evaluation of the conformation of the horse and a review of possible disqualification characteristics against the standard of the race".

The U.S. owners and breeder of Mangalarga Marchadors had pleaded for this moment. Now it had come and we were worried. *Would our horses pass?*

Integrity and efficiency marked the way Getulio worked. Not all horses did pass. Not all records were correct. In our eyes, the correctness of his work made the inspection more valuable and credible.



The ABCMM M brand is placed on the right shoulder of inspected and registered Mangalarga Marchador horses.

The Brazilians have produced a breed that is extremely sound, well balanced with a natural gait. But equally important is the intelligence and good nature of their animals.

Essentially, the inspection evaluates what are the characteristics of a good horse - conformation, movement and temperament. The Inspection Standards for the Race include a description of the breed standard and a table that assigns points for each breed characteristic. The inspector (always a vet and usually also a judge) examines each individual and assigns points in conformation categories, and on the horse's way of going at all gaits for a total of 100 points. The MARCHA, the gait unique to the Mangalarga Marchador is graded for another 100 points.

For a stallion to pass inspection, the total score must be over 140 points with at least half of the points in conformation and half of the points in the Marcha. A good horse needs to have both. Perfect conformation and a bad gait would not pass and vice versa. The mares require 120 points.

There are also a lot of disqualifying characteristics that eliminate the horse from registry in the breeding books. These are serious faults that the Brazilians do not want in their genetic pool.

Examples of Disqualifications (partial list)

- ☐ Lack of Pigmentation – Albino, Blue Eyes
- ☐ Temperament – Viciousness, Bad Temper
- ☐ Profile – Convex, Roman nose, not straight
- ☐ Ears – Fallen, badly directed
- ☐ Mouth – Overbite
- ☐ Neck – Ewe neck, bad insertion
- ☐ Back – Flat back, fallen back, swayed back
- ☐ Croup – Uneven, of superior height to the withers (tolerate 2 cm)
- ☐ Legs – Cow hocked, Toe in, Toe out
- ☐ Genital – Absence of testicles, 1 testicle, asymmetry of testicles.
- ☐ Gait – Trot or Pace

Now you can understand why we were worried!

However, we believe it is this attention to their breed standard that has maintained the purity and the quality of the race. As one Brazilian told me “When you breed a Marchador to a Marchador, you get a Marchador.” They are surprisingly consistent.

The branding was the other major fear for all breeders. No U.S. breeder had ever been witness to a branding. Our recollection of it was television viewing from old Westerns like Rawhide and those memories were not pretty.

Again, Getulio was the ultimate professional. The branding iron was heated and applied for a fraction of a second. The horses at our farm twitched as if a fly had landed on their shoulder and it was over. The preferred treatment for the brand afterwards is to rub it with half a lemon to prevent infection. Following tradition was important. Many of us ran out to the store when they turned to us with their arm outstretched asking for the lemon.

Traveling from coast to coast, the two men visited Florida, Tennessee, Ohio, Arizona, California and Montana, on a two-week trip. They left behind the legacy, lore, training methodology and romance of the Mangalarga Marchador.



Bambino de Itajoana and Jobim de Lazy T at the Lazy T Ranch in Montana. Both stallions passed inspection in 2005.



Chanel de Miami, at Summerwind Marchadors in Arizona, now inspected and approved for breeding by the ABCCMM. Chanel is from the Guerra farm in Miami, FL, the oldest breeding farm in the U.S.

We breeders, tried to coordinate our efforts and bring horses to common farms. But in the end, the distances were too great and the inspection team took the brunt of the long distances sometimes traveling for more than 18 hours in a day. They were wonderful enduring the hardships of travel and the extra security attention they received at every airport. (Getulio had to carry the branding irons with him, requiring explanation at every point)

Their biggest question was how cold it would be in Montana in May.

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Speaking English became easier for them – our Portuguese was almost non-existent. However, the love of the breed brought us all together and every breeder speaks of the wonderful times we all had together.

“One breed, one passion” is the Marchador slogan. One world too.

Written by Lynn Kelley, President, US Mangalarga Marchador Association. USMMA members sponsored the Brazilian Association visit and inspection. For more information on the breed and to locate breeders in your area, visit their website at <http://usmarchador.com> or call (480) 683-8848,