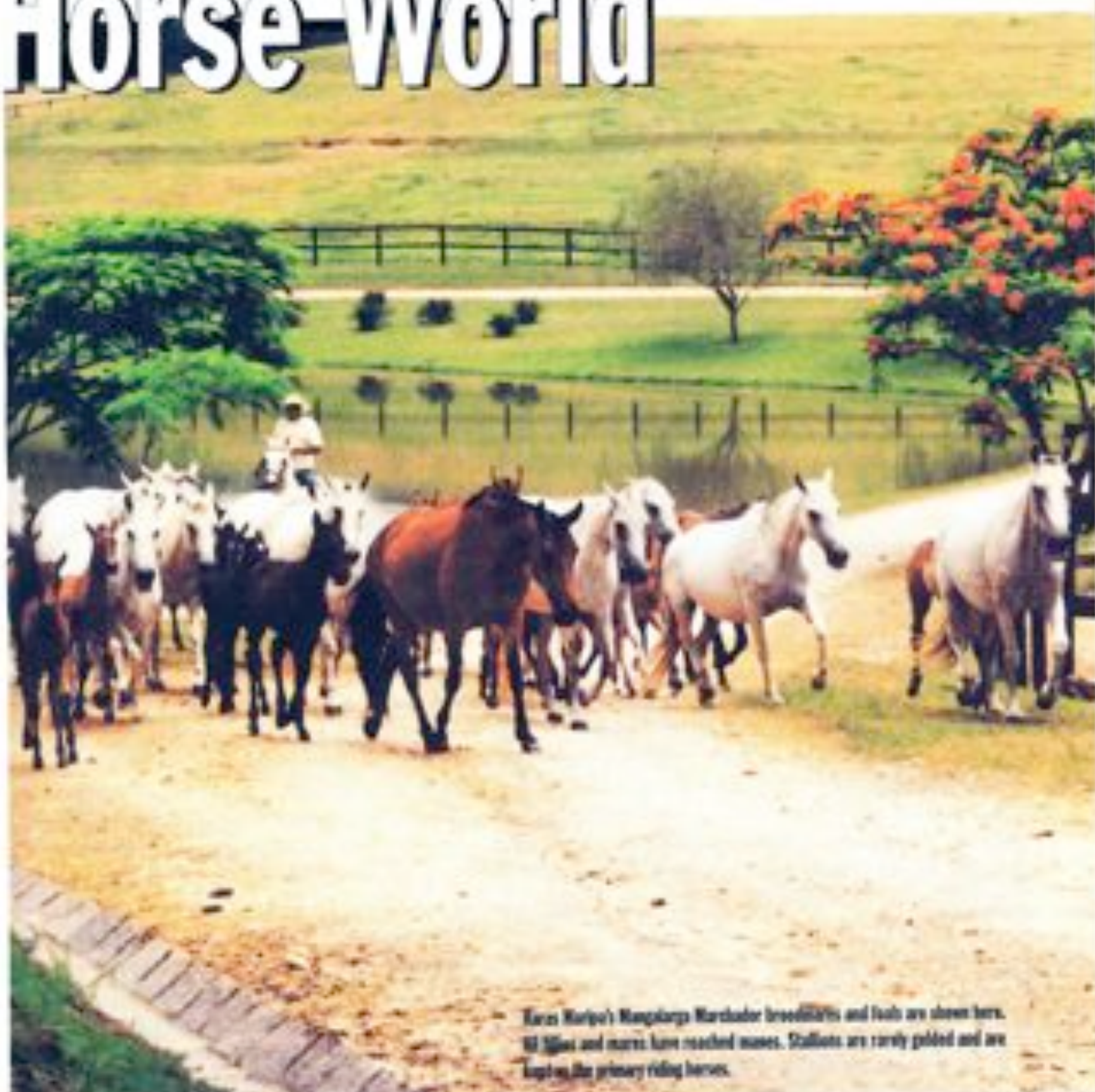




# The BRAZILIAN Horse World

Horsemen from another country seem very different in some respects, but much the same in others.



Ferns Kuripe's Mangalarga Marchador breeders and foals are shown here. All sires and mares have reached mares. Stallions are rarely gelded and are kept as the primary riding horses.

*Editor's note: Zane Davis, a former national high school and intercollegiate bareback-riding and all-around champion, grew up in the horse and rodeo world. He trains ranch, roping and reined cow horses professionally, dividing his time between Florida, Montana, and Idaho. Each year, he scripts and coordinates the opening ceremonies for the Wrangler® National Finals Rodeo. His horses are trainers from the mid-20th century: Matlock Rose, Jimmy Williams and Dan Dodge, diversified trainers who trained horses for many different disciplines. Contact Davis at [zbranch@hotmail.com](mailto:zbranch@hotmail.com).*

When a Merrill Lynch representative asked Davis to conduct horse-training demonstrations for Brazilian investors, Davis thought it a great opportunity to share natural horsemanship methods that haven't yet been accepted as widely in Brazil as in North America. Because he's fluent in Portuguese, Davis could work closely with many Brazilian owners and trainers during his four-stop tour. Here are his impressions of the Brazilian horse world.

## The Sale

My first tour stop in Brazil was Haras Maripa, a horse and cattle ranch owned by Marcelo Baptista De Oliveira and home to one of the most prestigious Mangalarga Marchador auctions in Brazil. (See sidebar on page 155) My colt-starting demonstration was scheduled as presale entertainment, and Andalusian and Warmblood stallions were shipped from southern Brazil for the demonstration.

As in the United States, Brazilian horse sales are huge social events. Nearly 700 people arrived early to watch me start a 3-year-old Andalusian stallion that had been handled roughly. Though natural horsemanship methods have been practiced in parts of Brazil for some time, the idea is still foreign to many horsemen there. Before long, the colt was calm, accepted his first saddle and bridle and allowed me to drive and ride him. He also allowed me to pick up all four of his previously untouched feet.

The sale following my demonstration was different from any the Americans in attendance had witnessed. They described it as a cross between a high-class Keeneland select-yearling sale and the Grand County Auction! The auctioneer screamed into the microphone and loud '80s rock-and-roll played between each sale lot.

The horses, some of the finest of the Mangalarga Marchador breed, were presented on a 150-foot stage. Some were ridden; however, most were shown in hand. Handlers asked them only to pace speedily back and forth across the stage to demonstrate their gait. When I asked why the sale horses weren't asked to demonstrate other skills, I was told that buyers are interested only in the horse's gait. Those having a nice, steady gait averaged \$10,000.

Free drinks and hors'd'ouves were served 1 hour prior to sale time and continued until 1 hour after the last horse was sold. Spirits obviously were high by the end of the 4-hour auction. One of the final sale horses, a 5-year-old Mangalarga Marchador mare, brought more than \$100,000.

## Ranch Work

The following day was business as usual at Haras Maripa Ranch. I stayed to help the ranch cowboys doctor calves. Besides more than 100 head of horses, the ranch is also home to several hundred cattle. Brazil is one of the largest beef-producing countries in the world.

Because November is spring in the Southern Hemisphere, the ranch was right in the middle of calving season. Calf-doctoring is done there much as it is in the United States. Brazilian stock saddles, however, are very different. They have no horn and are similar in appearance to an Australian saddle. Traditional lassoes are made of hemp with a heavy iron honda-ring. The rope is tied hard and





Zane works with an Arabian stallion packing a saddle for the first time.

fast to another ring at the back of the saddle. When an animal is caught, the roper drops his slack and rides in the opposite direction. Although this seemed a bit unusual to me, the Brazilians use the method very efficiently.

When ranch manager "Hari" couldn't catch a particularly tough calf, he passed his rope to me. Hari had watched horses being roped during the ranch's private clinic and decided that



Zane rides the primary Mangalarga Marchador breeding stallion at Minas Gerais in a budge riding arena.



Ranch manager Hari brings in a sick one.

an American cowboy might have better luck. And I did – but instinctively made three turns around the area where the saddle horn should've been. As the rope slid quickly through my hands, I looked down. I wasn't missing my daddies – I was missing a horn. This was all very entertaining to the Brazilians, who'd seen enough Western movies to know exactly what had gone wrong.

## Touring

After leaving a 50-foot poly lariat with a grateful Hari, I continued my horse-handling demonstration tour in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. I started several colts during the demonstrations and worked with a never-ending number of "remedial" horses that backed, bit, kicked and had a host of other issues. As I finished working with one horse, another would take its place, and the training sessions lasted late into the evenings. Brazilian spectators were very laid-back and willing

to sit for hours. Even when it rained, they simply opened their umbrellas and continued to observe and ask questions.

It was refreshing to work with people so hungry for knowledge and ready to learn. Many breeders brought their trainers and handlers to observe and participate in demonstrations, and the Brazilians were determined to take as much knowledge back to their own horse programs as possible. To help them continue their studies, I recommended videotapes by and Web sites for American horsemen. I also accepted Brazilian apprentices, who wish to further their equine education, and I continue my clinics in South America, most recently returning for the National Mangalarga Marchador Show in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.



A stallion shows in hand during the Mangalarga Marchador Breeders' Festival.

## The Mangalarga Marchador: Brazil's Horse

When Napoleon's armies invaded Portugal in 1807, Prince Regent João VI and his court fled the French and settled in a Portuguese colony, which later became known as Brazil. They brought their prized horses with them.

Once established in the New World, the prince presented a stallion to plantation owner Gabriel Francisco Junqueira, who'd established a successful breeding program. Little is known about the stallion, but it's believed that he was of Barb-cross descent. Junqueira utilized the prince's gift by crossing the horse with Oloulo mares, which helped produce the type of saddle horse Junqueira desired.

This cross produced an extremely docile horse with a smooth, comfortable gait and sufficient stamina to cover long distances. Junqueira took his new breed public, and today the Mangalarga Marchador, as the crossbred horses came to be known, is the most numerous breed in Brazil. Though popular primarily in its native country, the Marchador has gone global with a number of breeders now in the United States.

The Marchador is different from other gaited breeds in that his gait is hardly recognizable to the untrained eye. Breeders brag that the Mangalarga Marchador provides the comfort of a gaited horse without the extra gaited motion. The most common color is gray, although every color exists. Standing between 14 and 15 hands, Mangalarga Marchadors are used

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