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Photo of Mangalarga Marchador La Paz
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Photo of Mangalarga Marchador stallion
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GOING GAITED

ONLINE MAGAZINE

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The Mangalarga Marchador

The national horse of Brazil, the Mangalarga Marchador, originated in Brazil over 200 years ago. Each breeding farm, having chosen a specific bloodline from which to perpetuate the breed with a unique genetic contribution, would use their farm name as part of the horse's name. "Mangalarga" was one of the original breeder farms during the period of time when the Marchador started attracting local attention, and the name was adopted overall. The horses were known for having a smooth rhythmic cadence to their gait, not unlike a march, lending further description to the name of this new breed, becoming Mangalarga Marchador. Reminiscent of Arabian breeders, meticulous written breeding records were kept and today's Mangalarga Marchadors can often be traced back to more than 20 generations.

It is said that when Napoleon invaded Portugal, the King, D. Joao VI, fled to Brazil by ship in 1808, taking with him his cavalry and some of his best stallions. Then, in 1812, Prince Pedro I (later named Emperor of Brazil) gave as a gift to his good friend Gabriel Francisco Junqueira (the Baron of Alfenas), one of his prized stallions. This stallion, an Alter Real (a branch of the Lusitano breed based on Spanish mares) named Sublime is considered the foundation sire of the Mangalarga Marchador (MM) breed. Sublime was bred to the native Spanish Jennet and Barb mares, many of whom naturally exhibited a smooth, ambling walk.

Gabriel and his sons are accredited with being the founders of what is known as the "Campo Alegre" or "Favacho" bloodline, named of course, after the family horse breeding farm. Even these early Marchadors were said to be very expressive and smooth gaited. Gabriel's sons continued the tradition by founding different MM lines throughout Brazil.

Local breeders, having chosen specific bloodstock from which to establish future lineage were acknowledged as "foundation" lines, and breeding programs developed in an attempt to perpetuate specific genetic traits.

Aside from the delicate nuances which differentiate between the bloodlines, borne from topographical necessity or work usage, the breed also became known for having an exceptional disposition, intelligence and athleticism.

Mangalarga Marchadors excel at cattle work but are appreciated in a wide variety of disciplines ranging from stock horse to sport horse and everything in between. Their friendly disposition, willingness to please and tendency to form strong bonds with their humans have surprised and delighted owners and trainers alike.

The ABCCMM, the biggest registry office [of any breed] in the state of Brazil holds annual competitive testing wherein type, gait and performance are judged. Cash purses and national ranking points are awarded.

The Mangalarga Marchador horse is known for being fast and smooth, its two unique ambling gaits each with moments of "triple support". This means

In 1994, two 60-year-old Brazilian men completed a 8,694 miles trail ride to prove the stamina of the Mangalarga Marchador. For one and a half years they rode the same horses during the day and resting at night, earning an entry into The Guinness Book of World Records.

Functional performance testing is rigorous and includes reining, cross country and endurance competitions covering 32 to 62 miles. There is also a stadium competition similar to a timed extreme cowboy race wherein the obstacles include gates, barrels, poles and jumps. Gaiting competitions are designed to showcase carriage, brio and consistent timing of footfalls at varying speeds, and judges will often mount the horses to determine the final placement of the winners!

The Mangalarga Marchador horse is known for being fast and smooth, its two unique ambling gaits each with moments of "triple support". This means that there are times when there are three hooves on the ground at a time. The Marcha Batida (roughly translated as "march" and "to hit") is a diagonal gait wherein the legs move in a four beat sequence similar to a broken trot in pattern of footfalls, but with no suspension. The longer and more frequent the moments of triple support; the more comfortable the gait. This gait has been compared to the trocha gait performed by the Paso Fino. The Marcha Picada (roughly translated as "march" and "light touch") is also a four beat gait and is usually the smoother of the two MM gaits and is characterized by lateral leg movements. The hind and front footfalls of one side following one another before the other side makes contact, each footfall a fraction of a second before another in a broken pace movement. The triple hoof support of this gait combined with the overreach of the hind hoof make this gait exceedingly smooth. This gait is similar to the paso llano performed by the Peruvian Paso. Additionally, a third gait is often acknowledged in the MM community. As the Marcha Picada is on the "pacey" side of the gait spectrum and the Marcha Batida is on the "trotty" side, the Marcha do Centro is often described as the gait that a Mangalarga Marchador can perform that is executed at the center of the spectrum. Although there are no formal classes in shows to exhibit Marcha do Centro, it is used to describe an exceedingly smooth horse.

The Mangalarga Marchador has been described as being the "Porsche" of the horse world, with imported horses boasting not-unheard of prices of \$30,000 to \$40,000 per horse and in Brazil, MM royalty is auctioned at hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars. Worth it? Let's see. The Mangalarga Marchador is a breed literally developed and cultivated by royalty. Very intelligent and easy to train and smooth as silk, the MM excels at nearly every discipline it has been used in including Dressage, Hunter/Jumper, Polo, Trail riding and ranch work. In addition, it holds a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for endurance. Porsche? Indeed.

This brochure brought to you courtesy of Going Gaited Online Magazine (www.goinggaited.com) and Lynn Kelley of Summerwind Marchadors (www.summerwindmarchadors.com)