



# USMMA JOURNAL

Spring Journal from the United States Mangalarga Marchador Association

April 2012

## To Bit or Not to Bit—That Is the Question

Notes from Editor Tresa Smith

When I first imported my stallion Tabatinga Monitor from Brazil, I emailed his previous Brazilian owner to ask what type of bit she used on him. She answered, "No bit," so I used a hackamore on him. A year or so later, her son visited me and we went riding. He was riding Monitor and asked for Monitor's bridle. I handed him the hackamore. He was aghast. "No bit," he exclaimed! "Monitor needs a bit." After some discussion, it became apparent his mother did not know what the word bit was. She said "No bit" in reference to not knowing the word, not to what Monitor needed. Anyway, Monitor was fine being bit-less. Marchador owners use bits, hackamores, halters, bit-less bridles and cordeos. It seems Marchadors do well whatever we use on them.

In this issue, we have two articles on the "guidance" of Marchadors. Brazilian Kate Barcelos, ABCCMM Inspector and Veterinarian and Dressage Instructor, has written an article on the different types of bits. This edition will focus on the level one bit, the snaffle. Kate likes to use bits with Marchadors, rather than go "bitless." She says bits "give her more gears."

The other article is on Tackless Handling with the Cordeo by Canadian Shannon Ford. Ford, an internationally known artist and trainer of hunting dogs and horses, often rides her Marchadors without bits or bridles. I think you will find her article fascinating.

Besides our two international correspondents from Brazil and Canada, this issue also has an interview with Brazilian Pedro Werneck, an International Endurance rider, on the Marchador as an endurance horse. At the end of the journal, there is an article about the "Peace Corps on Marchadors" and a wonderful announcement from USMMA board member Lori Silcher.

The idea behind the USMMA Journal is to present a forum to deal with long, in depth articles concerning the Mangalarga Marchador. I hope you enjoy our first edition. If you have an article you would like to submit for upcoming editions, please feel free to contact me at [montanamarchador@gmail.com](mailto:montanamarchador@gmail.com).

## A Bit of Bit Advice

Kate Barcelos

"What bit should I use on my horse?" is the question I most often hear from both experienced and beginning horsepersons.

There are many different questions about bits. They can come from a problem during a ride or about a Marchador's performance during competitions. The question that many

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**ask is there a rule in the choice of a bit or does it make a difference?**

**Bit is the generic term used to describe a piece of metal, rubber or other material that is placed in the horse's mouth to guide the horse. The rider uses their hands on this bit to regulate the shape and progress of the horse and to give direction to the horse's movement.**

**The choice of the bit should come from observations we make about our horse. Choices range from the type of bit to use on a young "green" horse to an older animal which is already trained. It can also vary according to what the horse is being used to do. One must also look at the individual horse's comfort, its sensitivity to the bit and its acceptance.**

**The mouth is the most sensitive region of the horse so I advise always to look first to a "lighter bit" before going to the so-called heavier one. Following this guide of light to heavy, I hope to give you some guidelines to choose the the most appropriate bit for your horse. Obviously I can not discuss all types of bit models. I will present the three major types of bits (snaffle, pelham and curb) and from the features of each, you can better understand what is the best choice for you.**

**How the individual rider handles the bit is key. Remember that there is no substitution for good equitation and the way we work with the horse can generate greater benefits.**



**The author riding in Brazil.**

**Let us classify the bits: (1) Snaffle, or bridao; (2) Pelham and (3) Curb, or brake.**

**In this first article I will deal with the snaffle, the lightest of the three types. In following journal articles, I will discuss the other two.**

**When we speak of initial bits, and the mouth that is best for schooling, it is the snaffle. It is the lightest bit among the groups.**

**Its main features: It has a nipple that may have one or more central articulations or joints. These articulations allow the independence of movement of the bridle in the corners of the mouth.**

**The bridle is fitted to the ring which is part of the bit.**

**It is a mouth more suitable for most animals because it is softer than other groups. The smoothness is due to several reasons.**

**The thicker the bit, the softer is it on the mouth. The thick snaffle (Bocado Grosso) exerts mild pressure on the lips of the horse. The medium snaffle (Bocado Medio) exerts an average pressure on the horse's lips. The thin**

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snaffle (Bocada Fino) exerts stronger action generating a greater pressure on the horse's lips. This is due to its smaller contact area with the same generating pressure on a single point. Thus the bit will be softer the thicker the thickness of the piece and more aggressive the thinner the thickness of the bit.



A thick and a thin snaffle bit.

The greater number of joints, or articulations, the bridle has the softer it becomes. This is because the number of joints divide the forces that act on the corners of the mouth.

The increased thickness of the bit together with an increasing number of joints creates a softer effect. However, multiple bit joints require a greater knowledge of riding if the rider is to get full advantage.

The fitting of the bridle also influences the activity of the mouth. Make sure not to have too much space on the side of the mouth in relation to the corner of the mouth. If too much space occurs, it is too large for your horse. See also how many folds are formed in the corner of the mouth. Keep in mind that only one small bend, fold, can be formed to be considered well adjusted to maintain the comfort of the horse.

The next two levels of bits, the intermediate, the Pelham, and the curb will



A single and a double jointed snaffle bit.

be discussed in detail in the next edition of the journal. The following is a brief description of the two.

The intermediate bit, Pelham or similar, has this demarcation because it can be used as a brake and sometimes as a brake and guide both contained with the same bit. Its construction differs from the conventional bit for it has four rings for the attachment of the reins. It has one or more central joints: two where two rings attach to the bit and two rings on the ends of the shanks.

Its action is stronger compared to the snaffle but it is softer than a "curb" or "brake" bit because of the existence of the joints. Four reins are used, two in the bridle position and two in the brake position.

The curb bit is a commonly used bit of choice when the animal is already trained and on the job and when we want to ride with one hand. Because it is a much more severe mouth, the rider needs to have lighter hand for its correct performance.

## Tackless Handling and Riding of the Mangalarga Marchador

Shannon Ford

When Tresa asked me to write about the way Denis and I handle our two Marchadors, I was thrilled, and hope you enjoy this quick

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introduction article on using the cordeo .

Denis and I have two Mangalarga Marchador mares, that we bought from Tresa when they were 2 and 3 years old. Rosa and Regina have proven to be very eager, intelligent and willing to try whatever crazy thing we have thought of doing with them. They both were introduced to tackless handling and riding with ease, and though both mares are trained to respond to halters and bridles, tack is rarely used.

Riding a horse without bridle, halter or rope is something that has fascinated me since I was a child. I have had horses since I was 12 years old, and all have been subjected to my fantasy of handling and riding my horses without tack (no bridle, no halter, no neck rope, no string around the nose). I love the feeling of having my horse run up to greet me, and then eagerly standing still while I swing up on their back so we can go for a ride in the hills. My goal is to ride our Marchadors without halters or ropes, as I have done with my other horses.

It leads to the creation of some amazing artwork. As an artist, I am most attracted to depicting the spirit and beauty of a horse when free to move and express himself with his body, and I especially love painting a horse who is in collection and expressing his joy and vigor and with arched neck and fluid movement.

In order to attain this ideal in day to day life, to have a horse that is freely ridden and managed daily without the use of halters, ropes or bridles, requires that we and our horses have had to come to a different understanding. It started the day they came to live with us, but the longer Rosa and Regina are handled without tack, the more I see them use a different part of their intelligence, and I find that I also shift into a different kind of awareness when handling them without the use of tack.



The author using a cordeo on her horse Rosa.

At a minimum for daily handling, we “walk” each of our mares individually from the night paddock to their daytime grazing fields all without the use of tack or ropes. It is a profound feeling to walk beside Rosa or Regina whether they are calmly walking or they are in a collected trot beside me, eager to go forward, with just with a cordeo or with a hand lightly touching the side of their neck.

It is especially delightful when we are walking through ankle high grass, and they are right with me and ignoring the delicious green grass at their feet even though they have been in the paddock all night and are eager to eat grass.

And, of course they are lead back to the paddock each night loose, walking beside us.

It is my pleasure to share our adventure with you.

## Safety first: human basics

With Rosa and Regina, I have always found

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it helpful to concentrate my energy and my intention so that I am clear when I am with my horse. This can be use of my breath and energy, to "expand" or "contract," eye contact and awareness of my own body language and thought process.

When I am with my horse, I am with my horse. If I find myself daydreaming, it is a good time to take a break, since my horse will sense this and we will get nowhere. I start by focusing on my horse, especially when I start, I spend lots of time watching him, concentrating on what he is telling me. I prefer to let my horse loose in an enclosed space that is considered "mutual space" and study his unique ways and take note of his mental state, and get know my horse's unique specific subtle signals, so I can best understand the effect of my actions on him. I am conscious of his eyes, and ears, and what he does with his mouth, whether he swishes his tail and how he carries it, how he carries himself, moves his legs. Does he throw his head about? Arch his neck? Is he bored? Is he excited? Is he concerned?

## Safety first: horse basics

I require my horse to start with a sense of respect for my personal space. Horses are powerful animals, and it can take mere moments to get hurt by a horse. Some horses do best when their owners are carrying an aid, whether it is a long piece of grass, a thin bamboo garden stake, or a dressage stick. When I can trust that my horse respects my space, then we can both relax. And my horse must be in a stage where he trusts me and is interested in me.

The first thing Rosa and Regina learned was to give Denis and me space. We walk through their paddock with an armload of hay for each feeder. They must walk a safe distance away from us, and they cannot approach their hay manger until we say it is

okay to do so. We may even make them stay away from their hay manger longer sometimes, just to be sure this is understood.

I work toward developing my horse's confidence in me as a consistent, reliable, safe haven, a decision maker, and as a leader. This is enhanced by spending time with him. Just being in his immediate the area when he is eating, rubbing him with an open palm, letting him show me where he wants to be scratched. I watch for my horses seeking contact with me, asking for scratch or a cuddle (depending on the stage my relationship), and always with them knowing to respect space and to defer to me.

## The decision

This process accesses a part of the horse's mind that is not possible to access with treats, or force. So, make up your mind from the start that you will not use food treats, nor force. You will not have the same results if you use food treats or force.

The horse is always right. If your horse chooses not to engage with you without the use of treats or force, then evaluate what is going on in your interactions. Once you take away the treats and the tack, your horse will tell you the state of your relationship by every move. If your horse stops to graze during the exercise, expand your perception of what is going on and view the situation from your horse's perspective.

For Rosa and Regina, we started at ages 2 and 3, but younger is also great. Of course the goal is to have nothing on the horse, but to begin with, the horse is invited to allow a light neck rope or cordeo to be placed over his head and onto his neck, draping down long the line of the shoulder.

## Making a Cordeo

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The neck rope/cordeo can be a strip of light leather, a length of light cotton twine, anything that is light and soft on the horse's neck. Find something that you welcome the feel of, too. If you have more than one horse, make a separate cordeo for each horse, as they will likely require different sized loops. Avoid the use of heavy cord, metal clips or beads. The less your horse notices the cordeo, the better. The cordeo is just a tool to start with until your horse and you share clear communication. You can have something special made or you can knot a length of nylon binder-twine.

Remember that your horse has incredibly sensitive skin, and can feel a fly light anywhere on his body, so the lighter your cordeo the better. The purpose of the cordeo is simply as a communication tool, it is not used to force or guide your horse.

## Stage 1: Cordeo

Take your horse to a mutual space, that is safely fenced.

Be sure that you are choosing a time of day that is a naturally active time for your horse. If your horse normally sleeps in the afternoon, then make sure that you are not choosing that time to work with him.

The first time you put a neck rope on your horse, give up all expectations, and be prepared for your goal setting mind to be frustrated. A horse that is used to being always told what to do, may take a while to "wake up."

With the cordeo on your horse's neck, stand with your horse on your right lightly holding the cordeo with the fingers of your right hand. At first, simply be there, get in balance, breath or do whatever you do to be present and truly with your horse. Listen to your horse's breath, and when you have his

attention, slowly and deliberately start to walk forward and talk to your horse. Use your body language and intonation of your voice. Point with your full left arm up in the direction you want to go. It is going to seem odd at first but Marchadors really get to understand this.

A few steps is wonderful. One step is wonderful. As long as there is no force and no treats. Remember: no treats and no pulling on the cordeo. You want to stimulate a different part of your horse's brain.

Because the goal is NOT to use the cordeo as a device of force, you must decide not to pull on the cordeo right from the start. Remember that horses benefit from having time to respond. Because of the habits formed from handling a horse with a halter, it is automatic for us to pull on the cordeo so you will probably have to stop yourself from using the cordeo like you would use a halter. With traditional training, horses are expected to respond immediately, however, it is not uncommon for a horse handled loose or on a cordeo to be asked to do something and to have a time lag of several seconds before they actually respond. Give your horse time, be patient.

Be aware that at first your horse may simply stand there or may put their head down and start eating. That has to be okay with you. Have no agenda. One or two steps may be all some horses will offer in the first days. If your horse eats, then you can reach down and snap your fingers or call your horse to get their attention again. Do NOT pull on the cordeo to get your horse's attention. You may stand there and snap your fingers for a few minutes before he pays attention to you again, but once he is paying attention, lift your left hand to show the direction you want to go, and step forward this time hopefully with your horse stepping along with you.

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If your horse will not engage, then you can either stand still and wait, or leave him and come back later to see if he is in a more receptive mindset.

Once he is walking with you, encourage your horse with your voice and your energy, tell him "stay with me" "this way" "that's right" -- whatever words feel right to you. It is not so much what you say, but how you say it and how your body language is. Watch how your horse interprets your actions and words. If your horse responds by stopping, then hold your body differently, shift your gaze, speak differently. Always be aware of how your actions are affecting your horse moment by moment.

If you already have a relationship with your horse to the point where he is interacting and recognizing you as a leader and decision maker without a halter or treats, then you will probably find that your horse will walk beside you quite naturally, and that he will willingly accompany you to your destination. Still you must raise your arm to point, and use your voice, but with this more connected horse, you could let go of the cordeo and place your flat hand gently on the side of his neck while walking with him. (Once he is walking with your hand laid flat on the side of his neck, the final step is to take your hand off and have no physical contact.)

Keep your sessions short, end on a positive note, if you feel yourself getting frustrated, then conclude the experience for now, and start again when you are feeling more balanced and in a more receptive mindset. An experienced horse person will know exactly what I mean about this.

Whether you are just building your relationship with your horse, or you already have a well developed relationship, there will be a point in the first days of walking with a cordeo that your horse will realize that he

"has a say," and that he can say no and that you are listening and hearing him.

Even once you have been walking together with the cordeo for a few days, your horse may decide to put his head down and eat, there is nothing you can do to force him to move. And when your horse realizes that you are actually listening to him and what he wants to do, your relationship has the potential to change forever.

Typically a horse that has always been led on a halter will go through a "wow" period where they lighten up and become very bright and curious about what has changed. You can see a change in them.

Let your horse continue to go through the "wow" period, and as you do your cordeo walks, just be present with your horse. Point where you want to go, let the horse know with your voice and your energy that you are together. Keep it short and without an agenda, always in a safe environment.

If your horse has been heavily used for riding and trained to the point where he responds automatically, then it may take a while for your horse realize that he now has a voice and a choice. Just keep nurturing your horse and be patient and watchful for his natural curiosity to emerge.

Watch for what happens in your relationship when your horse realizes that he has a voice, and that you are listening. It is common for a horse to test this out now and then as if to determine if you are still listening to them.

As you progress, keep it interesting for your horse. Increase the distance between stopping, try different intonations of your voice when you talk, sidepass, walk over things, do things that your horse likes to do, and that they would normally do. Keep doing

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things that will encourage the horse to use their intelligence. Be safe, but also playful and open to the unique qualities of your particular horse. Horses are each different and respond to stimuli and opportunities in different ways. You are building a base of trust, respect and communication for future tackless handling and riding.

Let stage one take as long as it needs to take. Every horse is different, every relationship is different. However long it takes is the correct amount of time for you and for your horse. Take time to enjoy your horse and to laugh when he is really trying to work things out. Your horse will use an entirely different part of their intelligence and their senses when being handled without the use of treats or tack. You are empowering your horse.

If walking with a cordeo is not working for you and your horse, then problem solve. Use your intuition to discover how to improve your communication with your horse. Think of different ways to best communicate with your particular horse, to speak his language. It may seem easy to give up and put a halter back on, or to pull hard on the cordeo and force your horse, but often when you are ready to give up, if you persist a little longer things will start to shift. When your horse willingly walks freely with you, turns, stops when you stop, it is probable that your communication has improved to the point that your horse is more fully engaging with you.

If you have two horses, work them individually at first. Either by only having one horse in your area, or by telling one of them to leave you alone while you work with the other.

## Stage Two: Head into the cordeo

Getting your horse to put his/her head into

the cordeo.

Now you have your horse walking beside you, and the biggest leaps will have happened. Your horse will be realizing that there is something interesting happening and their natural curiosity will be amplified.

Watch for your horse to volunteer and be part of the process. Once the horse knows he is listened to and he realizes he is allowed to say no, you want there to be more invitation from you to your horse to engage. At this point, getting your horse to offer behavior will be very easy.

With Rosa and Regina, we started this in the mornings, when they were eager to go to the grass field. I would hold the cordeo out, and whomever put their head into the loop first was the first one that would go to the turnout grass field.

At first they didn't get it. Before this, I had always put the cordeo on them, and they expected to just stand there passively in "beast of burden" mode. I gave myself lots of time and would wait until they offered the behavior. No coercion, no treats, just patience and them using their minds to figure out how to get what they wanted. Every time they put their heads in to the cordeo loop, I would say "cordeo" (name the behavior) and the "winner" would go to grass first. The second horse also had to put her head into the cordeo loop before she could go to the grass field as well. Marchadors are very smart, and can think their way around things very quickly especially when access to grazing is involved.

## Stage Three: Apple walk

Now your horse has the cordeo walking understood, and he knows he has a choice. You have listened to your horse, and honored him when he says no, and as a result you have developed a greater appreciation for him

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when he says yes.

Having a purpose is next. Decide on a destination. Keep it short distance at first. You want to continue to be the one who is the leader, but you know that an effective leader always understands that those he is leading must have a benefit and be treated fairly. Here you will use food, but it will not come from your hand in the form of a treat.

You can also start your "apple walks" in your mutual territory area. Before bringing your horse to the fenced area, walk around it and place cut apples or carrots in different locations around the mutual territory. You can put them on things, under things or just on the ground. Do not leave any carrots in your pockets. You don't want your horse to think of you as the source of the carrots.

Just as in Stage 2, have your horse put his head into the cordeo and start off by standing by his shoulder and being present with your horse. Hold the cordeo in your right hand (or alternately, place your hand gently on the side of his neck) and with your left arm, point to where you want to go.

Your first destination will be to the closest apple/carrot that you have hidden. Walk up to the first carrot and point at it on the ground with your left arm. You can help your horse find the carrot at first, horses learn very quickly to follow your pointing finger to the ground and to find the treat.

**DO NOT** bend over to point at the carrot unless you have established a relationship with your horse in which he respects your space. Always be safe first.

The next destination will be your next hidden carrot, and so on.

As your horse grows to understand the "apple walk," he will be even more eager to

follow your lead, as you obviously are very successful at knowing where the good food is.

Carrots or apples on the "apple walk" should never be given from your hand, just point at them on the ground, or on a stump, wherever you have put them.

## Stage Four: Always watch for opportunities

This stage is up to you. Once your horse has gone through the "WOW" stage, and is mentally engaged and ready, you are ready to start handling him without tack and really communicate.

Watch for opportunities to communicate in every day situations. With tackless riding and handling, you will be far ahead to always watch for the first time your horse offers something useful and notice it and reward it. No matter what it is, if you think you can use it later, notice it, put a cue to it or a word to it, reward it a scratch or praise, and watch for it again and again. Let your horse decide and take a part in his own progress, they will have so much more interest and involvement. It is what the greatest trainers do, and have done through history.

For example, Denis and I value the calmness of the Marchador. But when we take the first horse back to the paddock at night, the horse left behind sometimes gets overly eager and may start to run around in anticipation of her turn.

In my mind, this is an opportunity for me to let the Rosa or Regina know that they get what they want when I get what I want. So, instead of walking back to a horse that is running around and acting silly, we stand and wait until they are standing still. The moment they are standing still, with eyes on us, we will walk toward them. If they move and start to run around, we stop again, only walking

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forward when they are still and looking at us. They get what they want by doing what we want. I like to think that they believe they are training me.

Marchadors are very quick to learn and very eager to work. It is an amazing combination of traits that has been selected by the dedicated breeders of Brazil.

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I hope you enjoy this brief introduction and that you consider the potential involved in including some of these ideas in the way you interact with your own horses.

Often changing one thing leads to change in other areas. The increased communication from loose handling and riding will reflect in your regular riding and handling. The micro is present in the macro.

#### Notes:

If you are practicing "Natural Horsemanship" with your horse, you are best to suspend your Natural Horsemanship practice while you explore the loose handling and riding of your horse.

There is a method of tackless riding where first you train the horse and habituate it using full tack, and then remove the tack once the horse is fully trained to the cues. This is NOT that method.

I have trained horses but I am not a professional trainer, and I purposefully buy unhandled horses or very young horses to start with tackless handling and riding, (as that way the introduction to tackless riding and handling is seamless) however, many fully trained and habituated horses do very well when introduced to tackless handling with this philosophy.

Bits, bitless bridles and rope halters all put pressure on the nerves in the mouth or just under the skin of the nose. The nerves under the skin are as reactive as those in the mouth. Web halters are the gentlest to use as rope halters have knots positioned over the horse's sensitive nerves.

## The Mangalarga Marchador as an Endurance Horse: A Conversation with Brazilian Endurance Rider Pedro Werneck

Tresa Smith

The Mangalarga Marchador is featured in the Guinness Book of World Records for endurance, for the longest horse back ride. The same horses, with their 60 year old Brazilian riders traveled, 8,694 miles in an 18 month period.

Though most endurance rides with the Mangalarga Marchador are not as long, the Marchador continues to excel in endurance and trail riding internationally. Their stamina, gait, athletic ability and adaptability to all kinds of terrain and weather, make them a serious contender in endurance competitions.

Here in the U.S. several USMMA members have used their Marchadors in endurance competition. Lori Silcher, Four Seasons Marchadores, and John and Lynn Kelley, and Signa Strom, Summerwind Marchador, have successfully completed endurance rides. Many other members have expressed an interest and it will only be a matter of time before the Mangalarga Marchador establishes itself here as it has in Latin America and in Europe as the horse to ride for endurance.

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In March of 2011 at the home of Dr. Serio Lessa and Cindy Lessa in Brazil, I had the privilege to meet Pedro Werneck, a Brazilian endurance rider of 25 years. He competes internationally in endurance for Brazil and recently was a member of the Brazilian Pan American Team. His mount of choice, whether in Europe or in Latin America, is the Mangalarga Marchador.

In Brazil he has won Brazilian Championships and State Championships and many classifications. This year he won the control speed Rio de Janeiro State Championship with the Mangalarga Marchador Raro do Corumba. In June of 2011, he, his horses and his team took four first places in Endurance Ride Ranking with Digno Tabatinga in the Graduate Category; Raro do Corumba in the Open Category; Jeca do Conforto in Young Riders and a team first place in Regularity. He classified a Mangalarga Marchador, Quincas de Santa Crus, for the Young Rider's world Championship 120 km in England. Quincas arrive in 18th place in more than 100 horses.

The following is a Q&A with Werneck, conducted by email in the fall of 2011, that touches on some points of interest.

**Q.** How is the Mangalarga Marchador as an endurance horse? What are the breed's strengths?

**A.** The Mangalarga Marchador is a good horse for endurance riding. He is a strong horse with a good and rustic metabolic system. He has great resistance for long distance rides. Mangalarga Marchadors have special ability in mountains and irregular terrains. They are not as good in flat ground because they don't have a large gallop like the Arabians and Thoroughbreds. They have special ability in control speed and also in free speed. They are good in different kinds of weather and temperature and have a great



Pedro Werneck, right.

adaptation capability. They have a very good temperament, a special quality when we ride for many hours. They are easy to ride. The natural "marcha" is very comfortable to horse and rider. Good things for the rider!

**Q.** In selecting a Marchador for an endurance horse, what do you look for in confirmation, size, march?

**A.** Size 1:50 m to 1:54 m (14.3 hands to 15.1 hands) but the most important is that the horse have more than 420 kg. (924 pounds).  
March: March Batida.

**Q.** What march is the preferred gait for an endurance horse? Picada, Batida, Centro?

**A.** Soft Batida.

**Q.** What type of disposition do you look for in a Marchador for endurance?

**A.** The horse should have a good saddle temperament and a good disposition to walk ahead.

**Q.** What was or is your favorite Marchador endurance horse? Why?

**A.** Here we have some good endurance horses. It is difficult to say the best because they have different qualities. [He did name a however, name a few favorites.]

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**Jeca Do Conforto: Raro do Corumba, Digno Tabatinga, Quincas de Santa Cruz, Unico de Santa Cruz, and Calipso PFG.**

**Q.** You said in Brazil there were two types of endurance riding. Can you explain the difference?

**A.** **Control speed:** The distance is between 20 km and 50 km ( 12.42 miles and 31 miles) The speed is between 10 and 12 kms hours in irregular terrain. There is an ideal time for this event. Normally we use this kind of competition for young horses and young riders. The veterinarian controls the rules. In this kind of competition we don't have a mass start The start is with 2 or 3 horses each time with 2 or 3 minutes between each group.

**Free speed:** It is a competition in FEI Rules, with a mass start and the winner is the horse who arrives first and passes the veterinarian's exam. The competition starts at 60m to 160 km ( 37 miles to 99 miles) The difference is in distance and timing . The difficulty of terrain is the same.

## **Brazilian Peace Corps on Marchadors: The Sela De Ouro Endurance Ride**

Tresa Smith

Brazilian Lucio Flavio Baioneta, Junior had a vision: to promote the Mangalarga Marchador through social tourism rides, to highlight environmental respect and to increase the income and conditions of poor Brazilian Families.

Lucio brought these disparate ideas together and his vision became reality through Project Caminhos Gerais and its Sela De Ouro ride, a kind of Peace Corps on Marchadors.

This 15 mile endurance type ride, featuring Mangalarga Marchadors, goes through the Brazilian countryside from village to village to help bring medical help and technical infrastructure improvements to lower income residents. Professionals from Brazilian universities, such as doctors, dentists and engineers accompany the riders and offer their skills to the locals in pre-arranged designated areas of help. This "traveling Peace Corps" also brings income to the local communities featuring overnight stays, barbecues, parties more parties and other events.

In July of 2009, during the National Mangalarga Marchador Horse Show in Belo Horizonte, ABCCMM President Magdi Shaat and Lucio Flavio Baioneta invited the European Marchador Association EEAM and the USMMA Association to join the Brazilians in their Sela De Ouro. They proposed that the Europeans and Americans do this by establishing qualifying events for the Sela De Ouro in their respective countries. Presidents of the EEAM and the USMMA, the ABCCMM and officers of Caminhos Gerais signed letters of agreements for this international effort.

Europe was the first to participate and has had two qualifying Sela De Ouro events in Germany where over one hundred riders participated. By qualifying in the three day Sela De Ouro, individuals in Europe earned the right to travel to Brazil and participate in the Brazilian Sela De Ouro ride on its Mangalarga Marchadors.

Now it is our turn. USMMA board member Lori Silcher has agreed to be the point person for the board on the Selo De Ouro in the U.S. In April of 2012, the USMMA and the ABCCMM hope to feature a U.S. qualifying competition for the Sela De Ouro on the East Coast in Florida. For information contact Connie Claire at [connieclaire@gmail.com](mailto:connieclaire@gmail.com). In 2013, the Sela

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**De Ouro will be scheduled for the West in Montana. For information contact: Lori Silcher at [silcher@montana.com](mailto:silcher@montana.com)**

The Sela De Ouro ride qualifying event featuring Mangalarga Marchadors has three parts. Part one is a cross country ride of 25 km. This ride is much like the control speed endurance ride. Riders start in small groups at different 5 minute intervals. Time is not a criterion but is generally around 14 kmlh and horses at the end of the ride are expected to pass a vet check for pulse and condition in order to qualify. (Interestingly both years in Europe all participating horses passed the vet check at the end of the rides.)

Part two is an evaluation of the marching gait of the horses. Brazilian judges evaluate riding skills and rank the marching gaits of the horses. In Europe, horses gaited around an oval track and competed by sex: stallions vs. stallions, geldings vs. geldings, mares vs. mares.

Part three is the Ideal Horse Competition. Horses and riders are expected to do the Complete Horse or Ideal Horse Competition that features opening gates, backing up, marching around poles, galloping around barrels, jumping an obstacle and coming to a complete rest and stop at the end of the competition.

To read about Europe's participation visit the EAMM website at [www.eamm.de/eng/home.htm](http://www.eamm.de/eng/home.htm)

## Tapi's baby!

Lori Silcher

Well, "The Eagle has landed" For those of you that have followed the amazing saga of my favorite mare Tapixaba's death, harvesting of her ovum, sending the immature ovum to Colorado State University's WONDERFUL repro center, growth of that ovum in a dish, insemination with frozen semen, THEN shipping of the embryo to Idaho's, Outback Stallion Station & Embryo Transfer Center, THEN hauling the recipient mare to our ranch, we have a BAY COLT (no spots) standing in our barn!

I learned a LOT through all of this. We got some snow last night and this morning. While I had mom and baby closed in a stall with straw, my GREAT vet Dr. Shawn Gleason came and gave me such helpful advise to help keep this baby warm.

This is good stuff for all to know. We closed the other horses in their stalls in the barn to add to the warmth, bedded them down in deeper straw, put on a baby blanket and wrapped his legs. Turns out, babies loose a lot of heat through their legs. Never knew that one! Thanks all for your interest and support! Thanks for your last contribution my Tapi girl...

