

THE PUREBRED SPANISH HORSE IN HARNESS

BY STEPHANIE SEARS

PERHAPS MORE THAN ANYTHING, SPANIARDS LIKE TO “PASEAR” OR PROMENADE. If they can do it with elegance and brio, in a carriage drawn by Spanish horses, all the better. The Spanish Purebred horse or Pura Raza Espanola (PRE), and carriage driving, called in Spain “el enganche,” are in many ways a marriage made in heaven. More tangibly, it is a marriage made with particular frequency in Andalusia, but also in other parts of Spain. It is an alliance founded on tradition, beauty and elegance. In 1979 Spain held its first three-day event in carriage driving and in 1984 the Enganche Club of Andalusia was inaugurated.

While cart and chariot driving goes back to Babylonian times, it was the Celts, then the Romans who brought two-wheel war and triumphal chariots as well as four-wheel transportation carts to the Iberian Peninsula. But it was in the seventeenth century, with the building of new roads and the development of court life, that carriage driving flourished in Spain. Later, during the Civil War, the lack of gasoline caused a brief comeback of carriages to replace cars, and then they disappeared again in the 1950's. But today's enthusiasm for this refined equestrian occupation derives probably more from the court life created in Seville in the middle of the nineteenth century through the influence of the Duke of Montpensier. Carriages were then used mainly for promenading in parks, the main purpose of which was to show off to best advantage one's carriage and team of horses, and the occupants' elegant getup, including that of the lackeys.

Still a controversial subject, the origin of the Spanish horse is generally said to go back

to around 1000 BC, perhaps even further back to the Paleolithic and to be related to the Barb. In the eighth century, the Moors are thought to have come with few horses of their own and made use of local Iberian stock taken from the enemy. Of course, there were some crosses between the Iberian and the Barb and later – at the time of the Cordoban Caliphate – with a few Arabians, but the actual Spanish Purebred is considered to be essentially a descendant of an indigenous horse.

As with carriage driving, the seventeenth century was a golden age for the PRE. His elevated movement, his superb, rounded gallop, his combination of willingness and fiery energy embellished any carriage he drew. His action and character were for a long time, preferred to those of any other breed.

The emergence of sport carriage driving events in 1979, however, put his athletic abilities to a new test that posed challenges to his specific morphology. Because of a straighter shoulder than other breeds and a build described as

Opposite page: Traditional Spanish carriage and costume. Photo courtesy of and by Rafael Lemos.



A competitive carriage team, demanding solid training, endurance and stamina. Photo courtesy of the Real Club de Enganche de Andalucía.

"HIS ELEVATED MOVEMENT, HIS SUPERB, ROUNDED GALLOP, HIS COMBINATION OF WILLINGNESS AND FIERY ENERGY EMBELLISHED ANY CARRIAGE HE DREW."

sub convex, rounded or square, he has less extension and speed compared to, say, a German horse or crosses like the Hispano-Arab and Anglo-Arab. He tends to bounce rather than stretch forward, a tendency, which can be, if too exaggerated, detrimental to harness work. Consequently, he will have trouble keeping within the times required in a sporting event; he has also less endurance than, for example, the Arabian. But in the last twenty years, overall competing and participation in sporting events has led to some breeding out of these problems, while this same breeding has been careful not to lose his qualities. Some of the newer stock already shows denser bones, more muscle, a longer stride and greater speed.

There are sufficient qualities in the PRE, however, to forgive the weaknesses and still make him a favorite in Spanish carriage driving. Nobility is certainly the first and most frequent quality attributed to him. His compact morphology gives him wonderful balance and a supple action, which in turn, give all his movements a flamboyance, which irresistibly attracts the eye. This natural brilliance is what Mr. Ramon Moreno of the Real Club de Enganche de Andalucía calls his ego-centrism, attributing to his personality an equally innate tendency to perform and show off. His "egocentrismo" is however counterbalanced by a character full of good will, intelligence, generosity and bravery. As for this last quality, the Spanish horse was in the past used in battle where his outstanding manageability, his quickness to stop or to burst into gallop, and his great heart made him an ideal complement to the warrior.

The PRE's character serves carriage driving well, and in training he has been found to be an ideal student. According to Sira

Mata, a young Catalan owner of an equestrian school in Sitges a few miles south of Barcelona and whose father is a member of the Real Club de Enganche de Andalucía, the Spanish purebred is so clever and gentle that he proves to be a fast learner, faster than most breeds of horse. He is, on the other hand, somewhat slow in his physical development and reaches full size only at the age of seven. Nevertheless, he will start training for harness work at four and may begin competing at five. Being a sober and rustic horse, he generally lives a long healthy life and may be used in carriage driving until sixteen or more.

In Sira Mata's estimation, a PRE's whole training may last no more than six months, (though Mr. Moreno's estimate is of a year or two). The collar is the first element to be put on the horse, and worn alone for no more than two or three days if accepted readily. Spain commonly uses the English or Continental harness which has a collar: a rigid piece made of leather, featuring a cushioned part, the "cojinete", that fits over the shoulder blades; more rarely used in Spain, the Hungarian style is characterized by a petral harness instead of a collar. The other popular harness is in the Spanish style called "a la calesera", where the collar is replaced by a woolen blanket, usually in bands of vivid color in a leather base, doubled by a wood piece placed higher up on the horse's shoulders. This style is gaily decorated with pompons called "borlajes" on the head, neck and chest and is favored during Ferias. "Calesera" harnessing is often seen in combination with the "break" type of carriage, particularly appreciated in Andalucía; the most popular team arrangement in Spain are "media potencia", that is three abreast in front and two in trunk behind, or a "cinco a la larga", that is five lengthwise (two, two and one in front).

In the following stages of the training, the rest of the harness is added on, the bridle and blinkers coming on last to avoid unnerving the young horse. He is then, for a couple of days, schooled at a walk, with long reins, in a rectangular enclosure, and using a five-horse team whip. He is taught to move forward, halt and basic action such as semi-volts, volts and figure eights. Once ready to learn how to pull, he is hooked up, (usually) to a tire. Two people on either side of him apply more or less pressure on the weight to measure his reactions and to habituate him gradually. This method called "a la rastra" lasts two weeks to a month after which the novice is hooked up to his first carriage. Sira Mata prefers to use a two-wheel low carriage because a higher one is more liable to upset during a ninety-degree turn. For a week, one person will sit in the carriage, driving, while two other people will walk



Top: A lovely team of four in traditional Andalusian tack and attire. Photo courtesy of and by Rafael Lemos.

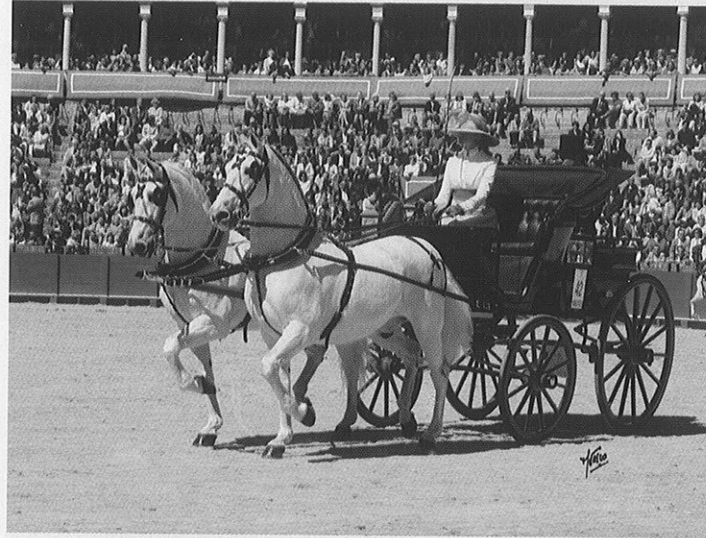
Above: An enganche team of cinco a la larga: two, two and one. Photo courtesy of the Real Club de Enganche de Andalucía.

on either side holding leads, ready to control the horse at the first sign of trouble. In this way the novice is trained to make turns with the carriage, to back up and to perform at the different speeds.

Placing a more experienced horse next to the young one is another method that Miss Mata disapproves of because the young horse may let the older one do all the work. Apart from this risk, the PRE proves more compliant than other breeds when working with other horses. Because of his exceptionally good disposition, a stallion

may be paired with another; in fact, a team of stallions, particularly in Andalusia, is preferred for exhibition and classical driving competitions. Mares are customarily teamed up with mares or with geldings. The breed's congenial character makes it easier to drive larger teams, but in all cases, the more experienced horses are placed in the lead.

The same type of bit is usually used on the whole team, though some variations may occur to accommodate different sensibilities of mouth or temperament; this is preferably avoided in competitions. The problem can be solved by using a "Barcelona" bit with three different level holes to which can be appended the reins, the lower hole being the hardest on the mouth. However, the PRE is generally so prompt to change



A beautiful team of PRE horses in a continental style harness and carriage. Photo courtesy of the Real Club de Enganche de Andalucia.

"CARRIAGE DRIVING IS ONCE AGAIN, GROWING IN POPULARITY."

gaits and to stop when asked that a snaffle may be sufficient. Part of this promptness is due to excellent balance thanks to which he can easily transfer weight to his hindquarters when required, therefore able to stop or take off very rapidly.

Depending on the type of competition, the reins (the most important of the three aids, the other two being the voice and the whip) are held in two different styles. For sporting competitions, the two-handed "western style" is used, in which the left hand goes to the left rein(s) and the right to the right, and is becoming more popular in Spain. For traditional carriage driving all reins are held in the left hand, the right hand used only as a support, this being still the most widespread and classical form.

Of three types of competition:

Exhibition of traditional carriage driving in which competitors are judged on appearance and form of the horses, carriage and occupants.

Classical carriage driving in which competitors are judged in the course of three trials: presentation, manageability and a marathon of varying length depending on the team and weight of the carriage.

Sporting or combined event in which one horse, or a two or four horse team is hooked up to a four-wheel, low, metal carriage, usually of the phaeton, speeder or dogcart type, with a petral harnessing instead of a collar and where competitors must perform in dressage, manageability and marathon,

While the Dutch and the Germans, followed by the English, dominate carriage-driving competitions worldwide, the Spanish have attained international levels in exhibition and traditional driving. Carriage driving is once again, growing in popularity in Spain, demonstrated by the 1,470 carriages at the last Seville Feria. But on a total of 10,000 Spanish competitors and a 75% participation of PRE horses, last year there were only 120 competitors in three-day eventing. This proportionately small number of participants would seem to some extent to indicate that the Spanish Purebred still has some way to go to catch up with more athletic breeds; though it could also indicate that the Spaniards, continue to favor tradition and elegance over sport in carriage driving. Sporting events are still a relatively new form of enganche in Spain despite the assiduous efforts of the Real Club de Enganche de Andalucia in organizing and promoting them in the country. A new center for training in carriage driving was inaugurated at the racecourse of Dos Hermanas this last November. Enganche authorities hope that it will be the most important center of the sort in the world. Such initiatives may well draw more sport carriage-driving amateurs. A consideration Spaniards may have in favor of participating in sporting events is how relatively economical they are compared to participation in a traditional carriage driving competition. The price of a modern sport carriage is less than a traditional carriage. The price tag on a Mulbacher Caleche in one superb Catalan collection is \$200,000 and in the same collection a Landau is worth \$150,000. Such marvels also cost a great deal to be transported, as does transporting the horses and competition prizes are not high. A team of two PRE horses can cost between 12,000 and 30,000 euros. The upkeep and training of one PRE horse for carriage driving costs about 10,000 euros a year.

In light of this, the pressure is on to further develop the Purebred Spanish horse into a strong international competitor, while careful not to lose his precious qualities of good character and beauty. These assets have made him one of the most important breeds in the world and make him one of the main attractions in carriage driving events. ▣

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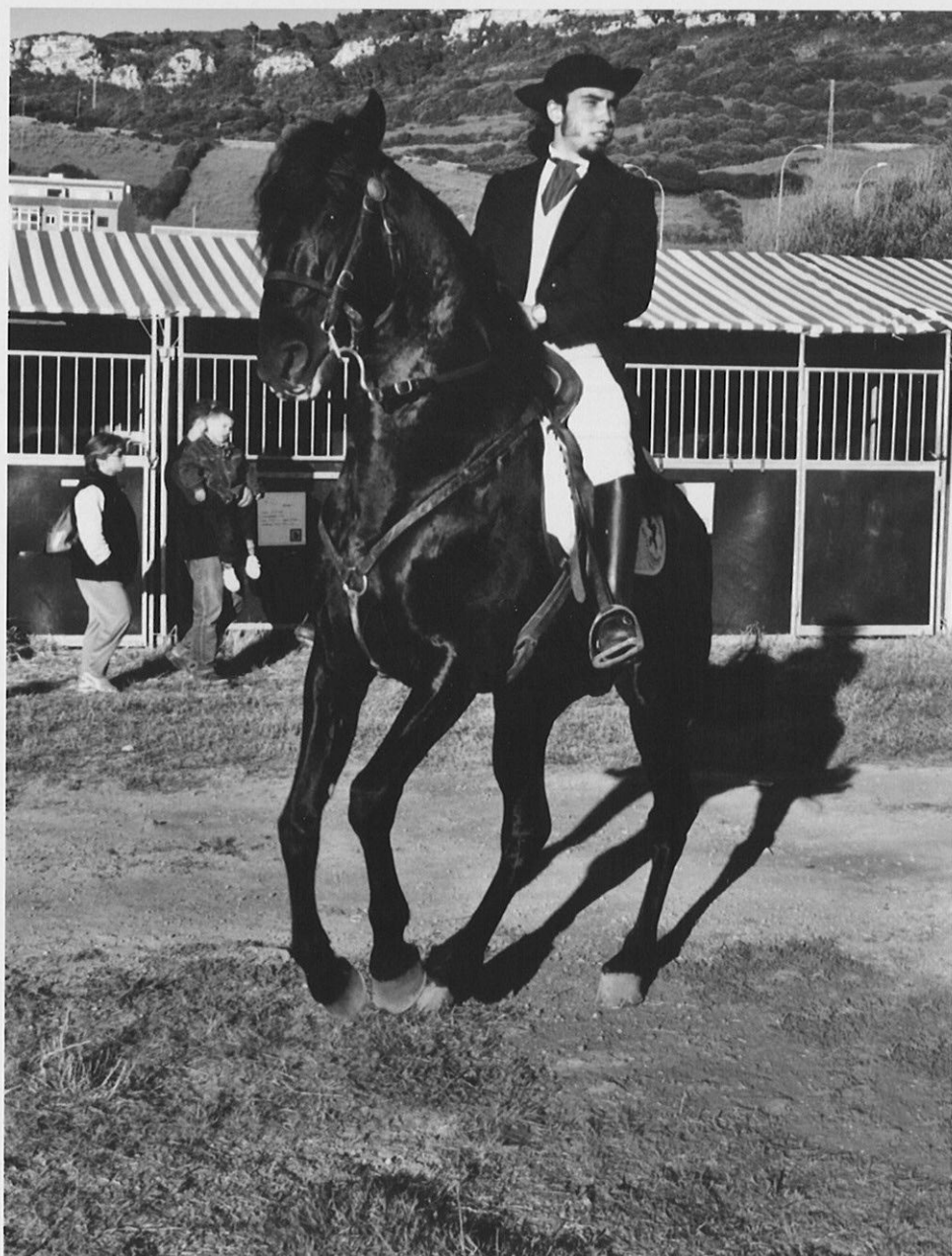
THE BLACK STALLION OF MINORCA

BY STEPHANIE SEARS



On the Balearic island of Minorca, off the eastern coast of Spain, lives a breed of horse so black, imposing and spirited in character that its presence on this dainty speck of land 47 km long and 10 to 19 km wide seems at first incongruous. In fact, the warm-blooded Minorcan horse has for centuries adorned the island with its exotic splendor, and participated actively in the island's long and tumultuous history.

From 2100 B.C. onward, a succession of conquests and occupations by Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Spaniards, English and French each left its indelible mark on the island. Unmistakable cultural traits still appear, one of these in horse breeding and riding. For example, the Arab tradition of not castrating colts and the Spanish style of riding 'a la ginete', holding the reins in the left hand also known as 'vaquero'. Because of the complexity of Minorcan history, but also because of the successive invasions by Barbarossa in 1535 and by the Turks in 1558, during which the island's archives were destroyed, horse ancestry remains somewhat of a mystery which current research is attempting to clarify. The blood type and morphology are closest to the Spanish or Andalusian horse, though the Minorcan is longer in the back and with a more extended stride; he is also a better jumper and of hardier health. His low-set tail and slightly convex nose are similar to the Barb's. But he also shows subtle physical affinities with the English thoroughbred. In the course of research, comparisons have been made with the ancient Catalan horse, also dark-coated and with a convex nose, and with the Merens breed from the Pyrenees; Dr. Antonio Sanchez Belda who was first to declare the horse apt to be made an official breed, suggested common origins with the La Morge, an Italian breed of Spanish origins and/or with the Czech Kladruby. The Minorcan breed was made official in December 1987 under the auspices of the 'Registro Fundacional del Caballo de Raza Menorquina.' Since that date, only black Minorcans have been accepted as purebred, though there had been bays and chestnuts before. White markings are acceptable but only if small and limited to the head and the extremities. The parents of the newly registered horse must be good reproducers; the sire particularly, must have proved to be a good stud horse during the year prior to the birth of the candidate.



Opposite Page: Morning training of a Minorcan stallion.
Above: Warming up before the show at Mercadel.

The stallion is officially 1.52 meters high, the mare a bit shorter, though a richer diet has tended to increase that height. The head is long, preferably narrow in profile, the ears short, the nose straight but for a slight convexity beginning above the nostrils; the neck robust and well arched, the back long, the tail set low and abundant like the mane, the legs long and sturdy. Noble

in appearance and temperament, the Minorcan is nonetheless rustic.

The larger neighboring island of Majorca breeds a very similar horse, registered separately by the PRAM (Patronato de Razas Autoctones de Mallorca) created in 1980. Over the years, however, the Minorcan grew into a finer-looking and more vivacious animal than his close cousin used as a

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Local equestrian school showing off the Minorcan Bot.

“ The Minorcan population has developed a feeling, somewhat mystical in nature, of a sacred, indestructible connection between the land and its horses. ”

farm horse, possibly because the paucity of farmland on Minorca preserved him almost exclusively for riding.

The Minorcan horse's martial temperament reflects the role given to him after 1287 when Minorca became part of the Aragon Kingdom, when Christian knighthood needed war horses to defend the island. In the early fourteenth century, under King Jaime II, each Catalan and Aragonese knight, was obliged to own at least one warhorse. Tournaments and jousting provided necessary training and became a tradition, which lasted until the seventeenth century. Such medieval traditions led each village to have its own annual celebrations in honor of a particular patron saint. The main ones combine both religious and military aspects in which the Minorcan stallion holds a major role. They take place between June and September. The island's most important celebration or fiesta, in honor of Saint John the Baptist, takes place at the end of June at Ciutadella, Minorca's capital until 1722, (but Ciutadella remains the horse capital of the island). Through its lovely streets, left over from its aristocratic past, the black stallions parade and caracole for the great pleasure of the spectators. The horses are bridled in the usual Minorcan black leather adorned with silver Maltese crosses, and additionally decorated for the fiesta with multicolored ribbons on head and tail called 'galtas and coa', and with the embroidered undersaddle, the 'buldrafa', also made by

local women who traditionally did not ride in these celebrations, but in the last twenty years or so have been able to. The riders are elegantly dressed in nineteenth century costumes which vary from village to village but always include a two-cornered black hat, a black tail coat, a white shirt with bow tie, black or white trousers, top boots or not, depending on the village. The enthusiastic crowd presses against the horses to pat and prod them into performing the Minorcan 'bot', also called 'levade' when the stallion rears high, leaping off the ground as he does so, and then walks a few steps on his hind legs. This natural defense mechanism of a warhorse has been turned into a gregarious display encouraged by the rider who wears spurs to that effect. One is nonetheless surprised to find this spirited and powerful horse act with such tolerance amidst a noisy and pressing crowd. In addition to the caracole around town, the riders perform various games of medieval origin on Ciutadella's main square of Born, once the jousting field as the name indicates, in a space much diminished by the unruly crowds.

To improve the breed, Minorca has added to its already considerable number of equestrian events a conformation competition, the 'conkurs morfologic'. This year's fourteenth competition took place the 8th and 9th of May in the central village of Mercadel and was composed of ten different categories, dividing the horses by age and gender. But the most anticipated

competitions were those for three year old colts and for stallions. Spectators, mostly locals, were drawn during the intervals between categories to the temporary stalls at the back of the ring where the stallions, nostrils dilated red, snorting, roaring, and generally acting like wild animals, put on a show which Minorcan people expect from them. While Minorcans recognize in this behavior an essential quality attached to the island's identity, it seems to a foreigner somewhat excessive.

What future lies ahead for the Minorcan horse? One of the judges at the event, the veterinarian Antonio Roca, believes that beyond his performances at the fiestas, the Minorcan has little future in other disciplines. Though he has a good memory and can be taught various techniques in three to six months and he performs well in dressage and other sports, Roca thinks that he will most likely not gain as much notoriety as other breeds. Yet the wonderful show given the last night of the event, a combination of local and classical dressage and of circus-style creations demonstrated, to the contrary, not only how spectacular this horse is, but how agile and how versatile he can be.

But even on the island, the distinctness of his character and the specialized training he is given in preparation for the fiestas prevents him from being employed more broadly. Notwithstanding the relatively recent development of formal equestrian activity on Minorca, the Minorcan horse has

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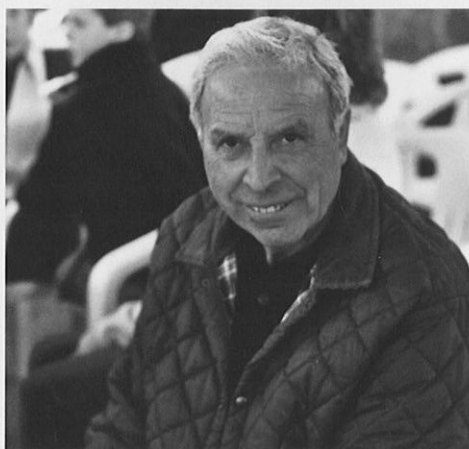


A street in the center of Ciutadella.

“ He thus created the Minorcan style, which consists primarily in making the horse’s action look spontaneous... ”

become paradoxically less accessible to riders not familiar with the local style. His natural exuberance will preclude the average rider from riding him along the bridle path that will follow the whole of the island’s coastline and will be completed by next year. Of the 1,800 horses on Minorca, 1,230 are purebred Minorcans and only the stallions are ridden and in very specific fashion. Consequently, pleasure hackers will be given to ride the remaining animals of different breeds and crossbreeds, also welcomed by this horse-loving island, which has ten equestrian clubs and two race-courses. Or, they will have to learn to ride the Minorcan way.

Joan Pons Marti, a Minorcan native, was the initial impulse that led to the first riding club in 1979, Club Escola Menorquina, where the Minorcan horse’s natural propensity to collect himself and rear was developed into a local dressage. Joan Pons Marti began giving classes to individuals wishing to learn his methods so as to participate in the fiestas. He thus created the Minorcan style, which consists primarily in making the horse’s action look spontaneous as it is supposed to be during the fiestas, while it is in fact a controlled effort. To this, Joan Pons Marti and his wife Consuelo soon added more sophisticated classical dressage and other equestrian activities such as Gymkhanas to demonstrate the versatility of the breed. Joan Pons Marti’s enthusiasm caused an outbreak of interest and emulation over the whole island; his students increased



Joan Pons Marti, the initial impulse that led to the first riding club, Club Escola Menorquina.

in number, new riding clubs sprang up throughout the island, and the first official competition in Minorcan dressage took place in 1990.

The island’s inhabitants strongly identify with the Minorcan purebred’s assertive temperament and dark beauty, whether the toughness common to both was forged by the austerity of life on this poor and windy island or their close collaboration throughout its flamboyant history. In any case, the Minorcan population has developed a feeling, somewhat mystical in nature, of a sacred, indestructible connection between the land and its horses.

The simplicity and rural traditionalism of the Minorcan countryside becomes immediately evident when crossing the island. It is all rolling landscapes of fields bordered by low stone walls, white farms and Colonial mansions left by the English, punctuated by swaying groves and dotted with cows and black horses.

In accordance with this pristine scenery the people are conservative regarding their environment, and, similarly, they appear in no hurry to make money from their horses. Its breeders are generally content with occasional trade within the Balearic archipelago.

Yet price evaluations are finally given, if with reticence or a certain indifference. A prize mare is evaluated at 2,000 euros, while it was agreed that a stallion is worth much more, the breeders did not pursue the subject, giving no price. This impression of overall reserve was confirmed by Llorenc Pons Bosch, President of Minorca’s breeder’s association. Though reserve is a common trait of the Minorcan character, it may, in regard to the island’s native horse, be more specifically due to the fact that most breeders on Minorca have small establishments; two or three mares per owner is the average. They may also fear that in a foreign environment the horse will lose its qualities of rusticity. Finally, and perhaps not least, they may fear that some of the horse’s charisma will be tarnished abroad, and by the same token, some of the appeal of the island where he is fast becoming one of the main attractions.

But as a foreigner, one can’t help but imagine the success this showy black breed would have in a place like Hollywood, playing the part of a legendary steed in a film on some medieval or Transylvanian theme, or in yet another Zorro remake, or better still, performing in the wonderful Zingaro horse theater in Paris. ▀

Rejoneo – an Aristocratic Tradition Popularized



by Stephanie Sears

Angel Peralta, 78, rides every day at his Rancho El Rocio near Seville though he walks with difficulty after a serious injury received during a *rejoneo*, a bullfight from horseback. Yet on the back of his gray horse, Aviador, he becomes once again the centaur who, with his brother Rafael, was one of the scintillating *rejoneo* figures of the twentieth century. Angel himself is best known for the story of the 'suerte de la rosa' which epitomizes the combination of risk and daring with refined grace in this kind of combat. A woman threw a rose at Peralta during a *rejoneo*, and dismounting, he retrieved the flower and tied it to a 10 cm harpoon-tipped lance or *banderilla* which he then pinned to the bull, later writing a poem to the woman.

The origin of the special character of the *rejoneo* is aristocratic which accounts for the display of arrogance toward danger and love of the 'beau geste' expressed in the *alarde* or taunting of the bull, one of the principal actions in *rejoneo*. In the thirteenth century lighter gear and smaller stirrups allowing the leg to bend at the knee began to replace straight-legged medieval riding and the enormous stirrups needed by heavily armored knights. Then, the aristocracy who had exclusive right to mount horses began the tradition of the *corrida caballaresca* - predecessor of *rejoneo* - performing at weddings, after military victories and other important events of the nobility. The style of riding used, called *a la ginete*, allowed more supple riding and more control of the horse.



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In the eighteenth century, under the dynasty of the Bourbons, peons of the aristocracy began to fight bulls on foot. It seemed then as though the *corrida cabalaresca* would disappear for good. It did in Spain, for a time, but continued uninterrupted in Portugal where still today the *rejoneador* wears an eighteenth century costume of the nobility called *a la Frederica*; it consists of an embroidered jacket, lace cuffed shirt, plumed three-cornered hat and top boots.

The Spaniards had meanwhile continued to farm their land on horseback and the cattleman's or *ganador's* manner of work was eventually to provide a substructure for the return of the equestrian bull-fighting now called *rejoneo*. Though similar to the *corrida cabalaresca*, it uses in place of the long spear of the past, shorter *farpas* or *banderillas* which stick into the bull's withers. The Spanish *rejoneador* borrowed his costume from the *ganador*, a suit composed of a short jacket and waistcoat over a simple white shirt, high-waisted pants, boots under chaps and a round-brimmed hat or *sombrero* worn cocked on the side. The latter is wielded during the *rejoneo* to excite the bull or to communicate with the crowd. This rustic outfit called *campero* indicates a stronger tie to a rugged country life than to aristocratic tradition. The other principal departures from Portuguese *rejoneo* are the killing of the bull in Spain

and a more brusque style of riding called *vaquero* versus Portugal's more classical style which uses a lighter bit and spurs. According to the Portuguese *rejoneador* Jose Samuel Lupi, the Portuguese *rejoneo* horse receives a more sophisticated and thorough training (in a manner closer to a French style of riding) than in Spanish *rejoneo*.

Equestrian bull-fighting made its official reappearance on September 2, 1923 in San Sebastian. Its reintroduction is generally attributed to the son of an equestrian instructor, the Cordovan Antonio Caneras.

While other great Spanish *rejoneadores* in the twentieth century such as Alvaro Domecq y Diaz, Alvaro Domecq Romero, Fermin Bohorquez, Angel y Rafael Peralta also instilled the tradition with their own brand of bravado they nonetheless continued to look to Portugal for purity of style, personified by Joao Moura who dominated *rejoneo* for some twenty-five years. Today's prominent *rejoneo* figure, the Navarran Pablo Hermoso de Mendoza, is known for his Portuguese style and generally, for the heightened elegance of his performances.

Rejoneo proceeds in three stages as in a bullfight afoot: receiving the bull, placing the *banderillas*, putting the bull to death. A number of moves, called

generically *suerte*, are identified by name much like classical positions and steps in ballet and are the action which allows the rider to place the banderillas with maximum precision in the bull's withers. Some of the most common are the *suerte al estribo* where the rider pierces the bull as the animal charges perpendicularly to the stirrups; the *suerte de caracoleo* where the rider must pin three small banderillas decorated with three roses while the bull is charging; the *suerte de la garrocha* where the rejoneador approaches the bull with the banderilla from a diagonal. The farpas, rejones or banderillas used to weaken the bull range in size from around 80 cm to less than 10 cm; the shorter ones, of course, narrow the distance from the rejoneador to the bull and all but eliminates the separation between them.

3 to 5 centimeters are cut off the bull's horns to spare the horse's fine skin but rejoneo requires nonetheless very skillful riding and remarkably able horses. These are generally trained by their riders to create as much confidence and understanding between them. "The horse wants to play, the bull wants to fight", explains Angel Peralta. According to most rejoneadores, the horse must have a sense of the

bull-fight which amounts to artistry and must perform the *suerte* like a dancer, with combined grace and courage. As in bull-fighting a foot failing leads to serious accidents. Regardless of whether they are stallions, mares or geldings, horses are carefully chosen in their particular strengths for different moments in the fight or *lidia*. A rider will therefore change horses three to four times during a rejoneo.



Angel Peralta admits his preference for the brilliant movement of the roman-nosed type of the Spanish bred Cartujano. Other rejoneadores may have Lusitanos, Hispano-arabs, Anglo-hispanics, straight Arabians. But pure-bred Spanish or other, there is common agreement that a rejoneo horse is priceless, most of all because of a rider's emotional attachment to him: names of famous rejoneadores are always linked with the name of a favorite horse, as for example, João Moura with Ferrolho, Alvaro Domecq with Opus, Mendoza with Cagancho. An average price of 240 000 euros (US\$300 000) was nonetheless quite matter-of-factly quoted for a rejoneador's horse of that caliber.

Since 1999 Mendoza has spent a greater portion of the rejoneo season (March to October) in Mexico and in a few other Latin American countries (Columbia, Ecuador) where his performances have

been emulated by local bull-fighters. Consequently, the quality of bull-fighting, both on foot and horses has much improved in Latin America in recent years.

Though no longer restricted to the aristocracy, rejoneo's tight circle is still very difficult to penetrate. But as a result of Mendoza's absence from some of the main bull rings in Spain, young rejoneadores, no longer *novilleros*, but bull-fighters having already completed the required preliminary twenty bull-fights, have had the opportunity to show their talent in major arenas and to win the ultimate prize, the rabo or two ears and tail of the bull. In this case a bull-fighter is said to

The other principal actor in rejoneo, the bull, has also improved to make rejoneo more exciting to watch. The *Murubena* or *Murube* bull is more and more frequently used in rejoneo because unlike other bulls which only trot or gallop sporadically, he has a strong and rhythmic gallop which favors a more precise suerte and a more spectacular *quiebro*, a side dodge made by the horse just before the charging bull reaches him.

More varied and more accurate rejoneo has been selling more tickets and to younger crowds, including more women. It is noteworthy that there are now in Spain more bull-fighting horses than bull-fighters on foot, since there are eighty-six active rejoneadores, each with about ten rejoneo horses. The question whether people come to see the horses or the riders is moot since the two are inseparable. Yet, nonetheless, one may wonder if it is not thanks to the presence of the horses that rejoneo may become in the future more popular than bull-fighting afoot.



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abrir la puerta grande and is carried triumphantly around the arena and to his hotel on the shoulders of men.

Recently four young rejoneadores have proved their worth and risen to fame: Andy Cartagena, acknowledged as Mendoza's main rival, Sergio Galan, Alvaro Montes and the Portuguese Rui Fernandez. This new wave of talent has revealed styles so distinct from each other as to be systematically commented upon in the press.



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