

THE TRAIL RIDER

TRAIL-BREED

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WHERE-TO-RIDE GUIDE

Our exclusive listing of North American trail rides, riding vacations, overnight stabling, horse camping, and horse-friendly public lands.

President's Letter

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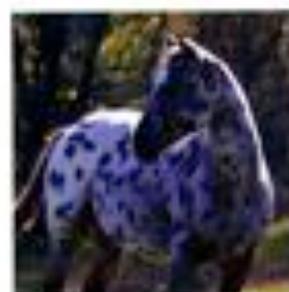
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JOURNEYS: A WOMAN AND HER HORSE

THE WORLD OF SPANISH HORSES

FALL 2007

CONQUISTADOR

**ALTA
ESCUELA**
AND THE PERUVIAN
PASO HORSE

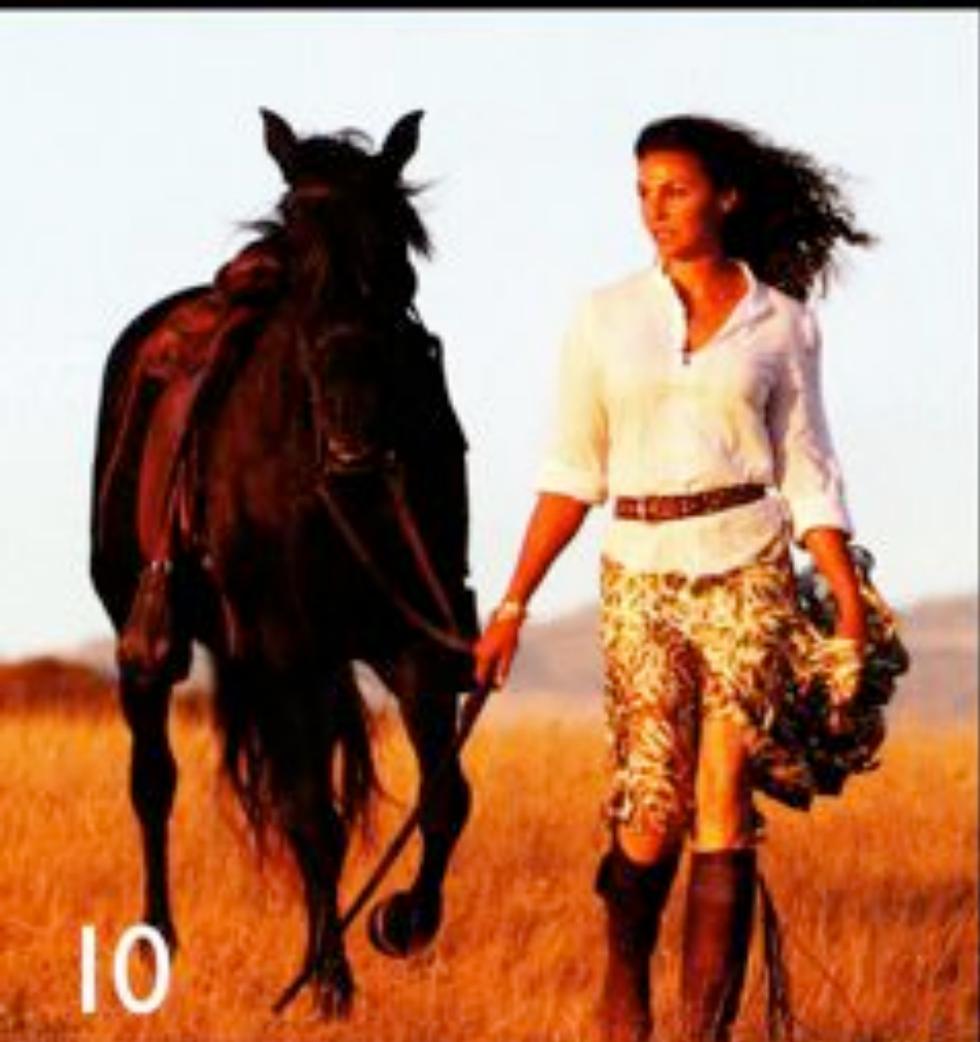
THE NEW HORSE OF THE OLD WEST
**MANGALARGA
MARCHADOR**



VOLUME 10, NUMBER 4 \$5.99



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Fall 2007

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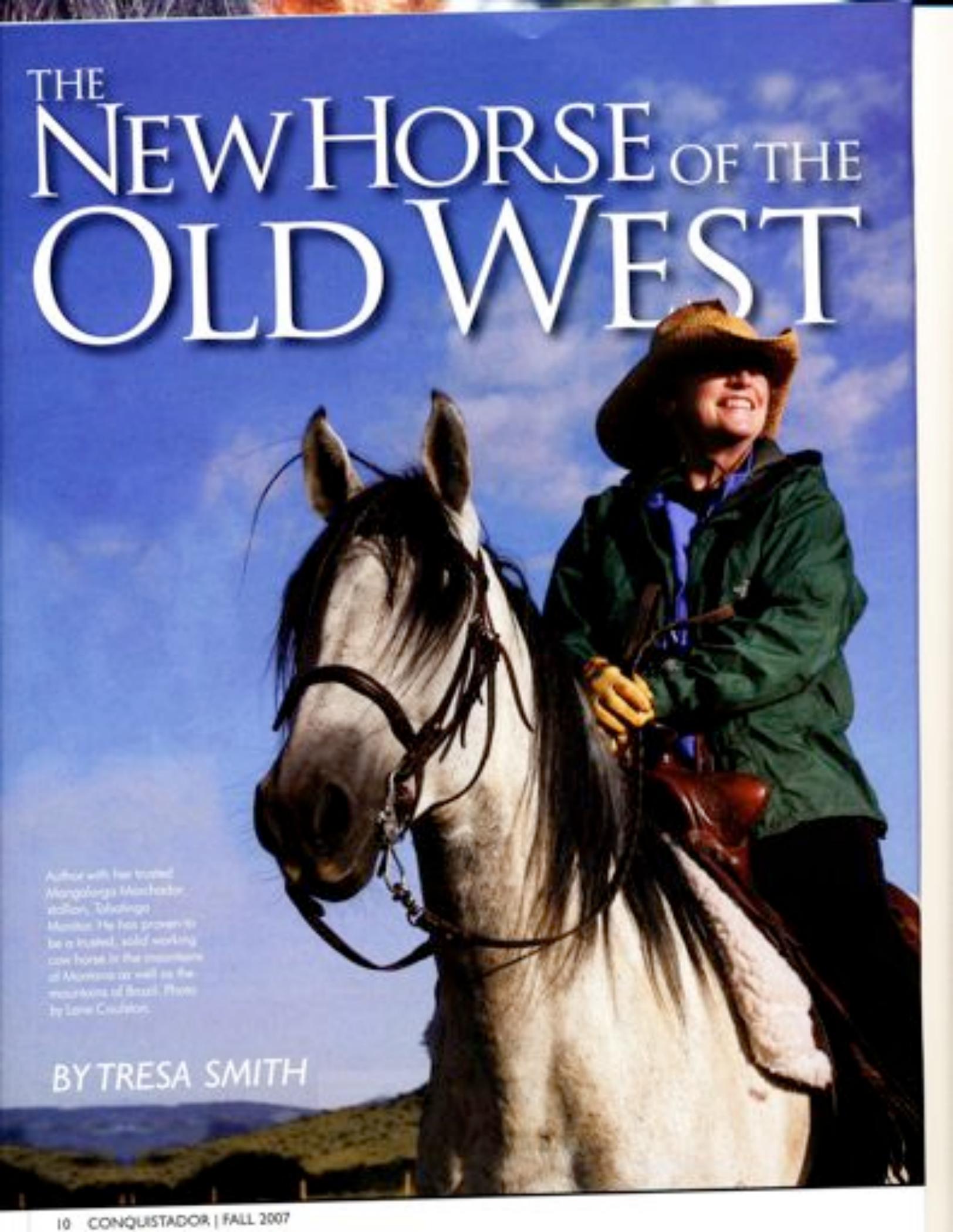
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OUR COVER

International Correspondant Shehkar Jah riding her Lusitano mare, Nubia. Photo by K. Perez.

THE NEW HORSE OF THE OLD WEST

A man wearing a brown cowboy hat and a green jacket is smiling while riding a white horse. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds. The horse is facing left, and the rider is looking towards the camera.

Author with his trusted Mangalarga Marchador stallion, Tokwings Manikou. He has proven to be a trusted, solid working cow horse in the mountains of Montana as well as the mountains of Brazil. Photo by Lorie Crutcher.

BY TRESA SMITH

Recently **“Working Cow Horse”** has become a name for a big buck Western competition event bringing fine trainers, fancy horses and common cows together. Working Cow Horse has always been a term used on cattle ranches such as ours in the west. The working cow horse, cuts cattle, pens cattle, drives cattle, ropes cattle, searches the plains and mountains for cattle, and even on occasion, hauls salt to cattle. It is a term that applies to just about all the horses on our ranch except those that are too young or too old. So when I went to Brazil in 2000 to purchase Mangalarga Marchador horses, the cow horse of Brazil, I wanted not show horses, but tough, athletic animals that would work on our cattle ranch.

I instantly fell in love with this 200 year-old Brazilian breed of Iberian bloodlines when I rode them in 1990. They have a great natural smooth gait, good disposition and lots of cow savvy. Their cow sense, according to Bonnie Hendricks, author of the *International Encyclopedia of Horse Breeds*, was because of their Iberian background.

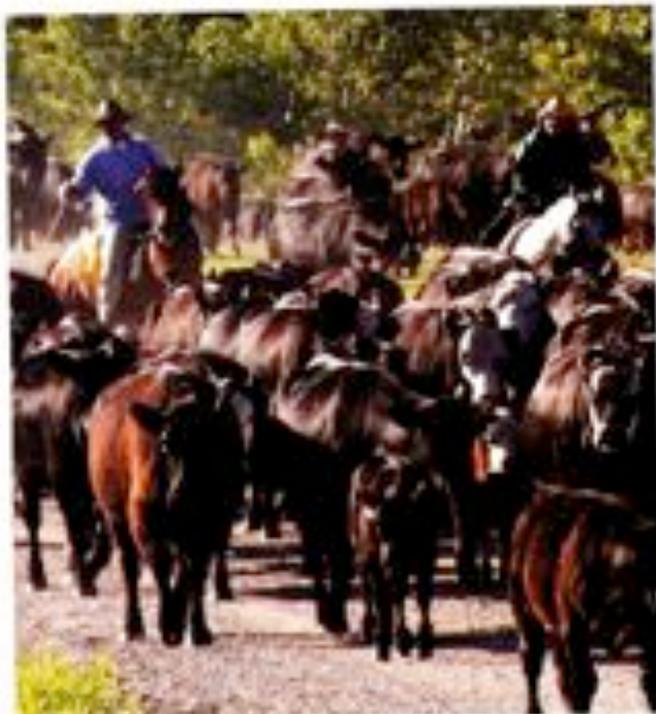
“The horses of Spain and Portugal have long been used to work the fighting bulls and wild cattle and it makes sense to me that their close descendants such as the Spanish Barb, Quarter Horse, Mangalarga Marchador of Brazil and other “Spanish breeds” would find working cattle a natural ability.”

PREPARATION

However, all horses, even cow-smart ones like the Mangalarga, have to be trained to work cattle. On the job training is how most ranches in our area teach their cow horses. Because of our cold winters in Montana, we begin in the spring to teach the young three and four year old horses how to work cattle. Roping for branding, sorting, “cutting” out the cattle for drives to summer pastures and herding the cattle to their high mountain summer residences provide the basic educational venues for the young Marchadors.

Roping comes easy to the Marchador because of their calm disposition. It doesn't take them long to get accustomed to the whizzing of the rope and catching solid posts. Soon they are roping real calves in branding corrals.

Sorting cattle is a major spring focus because the main cattle herd in the valley must be divided into smaller bunches to take to different mountain pastures. The young horses start out by holding the main herd together while the trained horses cut the cattle. However, since Marchadors are naturally cow smart, it does not take them long to graduate into cutting out pairs of cows and calves. Most of this work is done at a slower pace except when the cattle bolt, then the horse must be able to accelerate from a walk to a flat out run instantly in order to turn the cattle. This initially takes some adjusting for the Marchadors; they are accustomed to going from a walk to a marcha (as fast as a trot) but they seem to learn the “fast-forward” with no problem. One thing my father taught me to making a good cutting horse is



Mangalarga Marchador stallions, Tobatinga Jobim and Tobatinga Manter, along with their riders, Brazilian Trainer Felipe Ribeiro and Jess Smith, drive Lazy T Ranch cattle to the summer range. Photo by Lene Coulton.

to always keep the horse's head turned toward the cow. It keeps everyone's attention where it should be.

Driving the cattle to their summer ranges is a long and slow process. The main cattle drive involves moving several hundred head of cows, small calves and bulls to pastures that can be as far as fifty miles from the home ranch. Such drives take nearly a week to do and are mainly along roads and cattle lanes. It's a great work opportunity for the young horse because the pace is mostly slow and they get to watch and work cattle for eight to ten hours a day. During this time their education can be varied from just driving the cattle, to turning cattle who try to go back, to practicing roping, to really roping a calf that has fallen into a river and needs rescue.



In the fall, when we bring the cattle back home, it is a more difficult process. For the riders and horses have to search thousands of acres to find the cattle and often encounter many types of adventures getting them back from the hills. The following is such a story.

A DAY ON THE RANCH

Tabatinga Monitor is my eight year old, gray Mangalarga Marchador stallion. I imported him from the Fazenda Tabatinga, a Mangalarga Marchador foundation farm in Brazil where he learned the cow horse trade. He is a rope horse, a cutting horse, a reining horse, a penning horse, a trail horse. You name it.

Monitor has the smooth marcha, the unique gait of the Mangalarga Marchador. This gait is as fast as an extended trot but so exceedingly easy that one cowboy riding a Marchador said, "He was so smooth I didn't know we were moving until I saw the fence posts going by." This gait makes him my horse of choice for long, tough rides.

Such was the October cattle ride where we rode the high country of the Bull Mountains to get our replacement heifers from their summer pasture. The day began early at our ranch, The Lazy T, when Monitor and I went to gather the horse herd so we could select some other cow horses for the ride. Once you put a saddle on Monitor, he becomes a horse not a stallion for his mind is on the business of the day.

With their backs toward the home ranch, Marchador stallions face the mountains and begin the fifty-mile cattle drive to the summer range.



Photo courtesy of Montana Mangalarga Marchadors.



“They have a natural smooth gait, good disposition and lots of cow savvy.”

consequently, running in the horse herd was not a problem for him. However, I thought we soon would have problems when we encountered a cow moose in the meadow. While I was worrying over Monitor's reaction, a Fish and Game helicopter, tracking the moose, flew low over our heads. Neither moose nor helicopter distracted Monitor from his herding job.

Back at the ranch, we caught, saddled and trailered the four horses we were to ride to the base of the Bull Mountains. It was a cold fall day when we four riders, Karen Davidson, Kindle McCauley, my brother, Paul and I went after the heifers. It was snowing heavily and blowing as we climbed up the steep rocky gulch and ice covered streams toward the top of the range. Monitor took the lead given his fast marcha and I let him keep there because we were both freezing.

When we reached the top, it was even colder for the elevation is high. The top is so high that one time when I heard snow geese and was looking to find them, I actually saw them flying below me. But this day you couldn't see anything. It was silent, cold and foggy. We rode and shouted around the parks and the timber but no visible/audible cows. So we headed down the opposite side of the Mountain.

Going downhill, Monitor was not in the lead. It was the first time since he had come from Brazil that he had encountered heavy snow that stuck to his feet, causing his hooves to

be elevated. The snow stilted would hold him high and then crumble. Monitor was not pleased with this footing and was reluctant to head down the slippery slopes, until he found he had no choice unless he planned on wintering at six thousand feet. So he forgot his tropical background and joined the Montana natives.

When we reached the far side of the mountain, we looked up to a rocky peak and finally saw the heifers. We rode up an icy ridge; the snow-covered grass stopped and the snow-covered rocks and boulders began. We dismounted for this tough terrain. Karen and I left our horses and started the ninety-degree, slippery climb up to get around the cattle. Just as we got above them, about two hundred yards from where we dismounted, I heard shouting from Kindle below. I looked back and there was Monitor following me.

We shouted the cattle down the gulch and began the decent to drive them the out of the mountains, to the flats and then the Carey Ranch corrals. Karen was still recovering her horse from the hill, so it was decided Kindle would wait for her and trailer their two horses to the corrals. My brother and I would take the heifers across about seven miles of foothills and flats to the corrals.

To say heifers are crazy is redundant but we thought if we could keep them moving along the fence line we would be ok. What we didn't count on was driving them through another

THE NEW HORSE FOR THE OLD WEST

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herd of cattle in the neighbor's pasture. We knew when we opened the gate to take the heifers through this range we would have trouble.

My brother felt his horse, a green quarter horse gelding, was edgy and would not be of great help. So I was forewarned as we attempted to move our cattle through the pasture. However, I was not forewarned about what was to happen. When we opened the gate, the heifers stampeded toward the neighbor's bawling cattle. My brother's horse blew up over this excitement and started to buck. Really buck. High hard bucks. I gunned Monitor to head off the cattle and as I did, I saw the ground was a minefield of barbed wire.

Undaunted and unscathed, Monitor turned our cattle and kept them separated from the others through much spinning and cutting and perseverance. My brother rode his bronc, and eventually joined us. It was just becoming dark when we reached the Carey Ranch but our good neighbors were there, like air traffic controllers with their four wheelers and flashlights, helping to guide us into their corrals and a happy ending.

The new horse of the old west may be doubly true. My bones thank me at the end of every working day that I have the smooth ride and the sound temperament of the Marchador working with me.

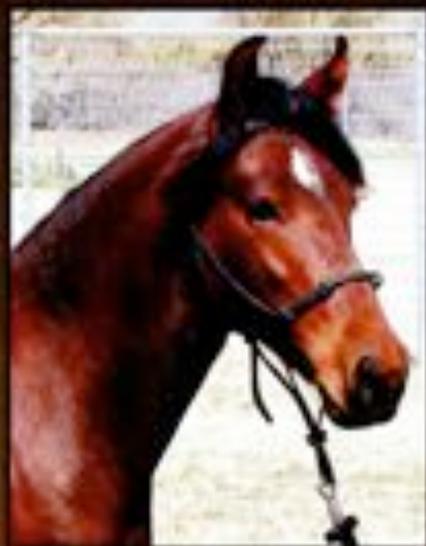
My Marchadors are not the only working cow horses in the Rocky Mountain West. There are others in Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, Colorado and further south in Texas. With only a few hundred horses in the entire U.S., we don't have enough to enter a competition, except for those that happen every day - on the ranch. **R**



About the Author

Tessa Smith imports, breeds and trains Mangalarga Marchadors of her historic family cattle ranch in Boulder, Montana. Montana Mangalarga Marchadors, features the Tabatinga bloodline. Tessa is currently the President of the United States Mangalarga Marchador Association, the USMMA. In 2004, she was a co-founder of the USMMA along with Lynn and John Kelley (Summerwind Marchadors, Arizona and Colorado) and Cristiana Guerra (MM Horse Farms of Florida).

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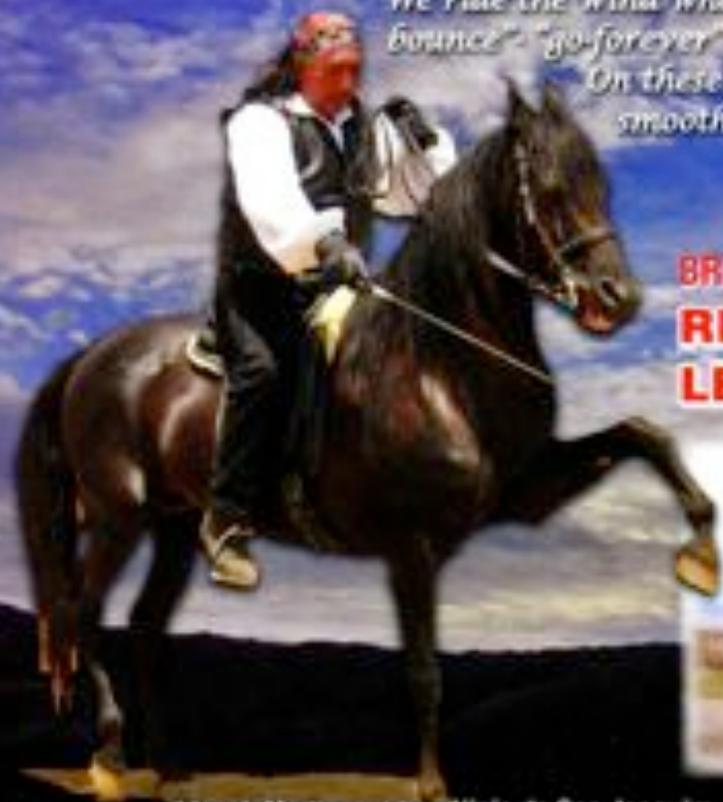
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Supposing you caught the wind in your hand and just in the moment it escaped, the wind took shape... it would gallop back to the sky

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