

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and a dark blue cowboy hat with a white band, is riding a brown horse. She is looking down at the horse's head. The background is a lush green field.

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Mangalarga Marchador

by John and Lynn Kelley

In Brazil, they weave the history of the Marchador as if telling an epic legend. Eyes glowing and with great pride, the breeders recount the sires and the mares that were the foundation of the breed. They willingly share where they are taking their breeding – to the *Nuevo tradicao*, the new tradition. Breeding horses for generations, you might say the Mangalarga Marchador is in their blood.

In the U.S., while the history has just started, every Marchador breeder or owner has their own story of how they fell in love. This journey, to bring a new breed to the U.S., is really a love story.

The Mangalarga Marchador (MARCH A DOOR) is a breed that descends directly from ancient Iberian stock. This gaited horse is known and bred for its smooth step – the *marcha* – and is the National Horse of Brazil. It has a gentle temperament, intelligence, stamina and a comfortable ride. We compare them to the Andalusian horses of the 1800's.

History

In 1807 Napoleon invaded Portugal, forcing Portugal's Royal Family to flee to the Portuguese colony of Brazil. They took their best horses with them from the Royal Alentejo Stud Farm. Napoleon was after horses for his army. One young stallion named "Sublime" went to the Baron of Alencar, owner of the Brazilian breeding farm, Campo Alegre. The stallion was bred to local gaited mares of Spanish Jennet and Barb Hood and produced offspring with a smooth rhythmic gait.

The horses, all descendants of Iberian imported stock, were selectively bred in Brazil for over 200 years. In 1948, the first breed association

was formed in Brazil to promote the breed, the ABCMM.

Inspections

In Brazil, all Marchador horses must undergo an inspection by the ABCMM breed inspectors to be approved for permanent registration and breeding, a process similar to PRE Andalusian horses and European warmbloods.

The U.S. Mangalarga Marchador Association is dedicated to maintaining the breed's purity and high standards. We invited the ABCMM's inspectors (trained as vets and judges) to travel

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the U.S. to inspect our U.S.-born Marchadors. This was the first inspection ever performed outside of Brazil. Since that first visit in 2005, there has been an inspection again in 2008 and one planned for 2010.

Horses must be three years old or older and are inspected for conformation, gait and temperament. Approved horses are branded with the horsehoof M brand of the ABCMM.

Because of the long tradition of the inspection process, the Marchador has solid conformation, a lot of bone and good feet, plus that wonderful personality which is really why we love them so.

Breed Description

The Mangalarga Marchador stands between 14.2 and 16 hands, averaging 15 hands and weigh between 850 and 1300 pounds. Gray is prominent, but chestnuts, blacks, bays, buckskins, palominos and pinto horses may also be found. A versatile, sure-footed horse with plenty of cow sense as well as stamina, this breed holds the Guinness book of World Records Endurance Ride of 8,694 miles in 1994.

Gaits

The Mangalarga Marchador's two special gaits are "marcha picada" and "marcha batida". Both are four beat gaits and provide moments of triple hoof support. The picada is a lateral gait and the batida is diagonal. Personal preference and riding terrain determine which one is better. The Marchadors all possess a wonderful canter, which does not disturb their natural marcha.

In Portuguese, picada stands for a light touch and of the two marchas, the marcha picada is a bit smoother. It is a broken pace and therefore creates little vertical movement. The gait can be sustained for long periods of time, allowing the rider hours of enjoyable riding with little discomfort. The timing of footfalls is similar to the paso llano-of the Peruvian Paso Horse.

Batida (BA CHEE DA) means to hit and describes the gait considered to be a broken trot. This gait, unlike a trot, shows very little suspension (all the legs in the air) as the horses are always in contact with the ground. This creates stability and smoothness. The longer and more frequent the moments of triple hooves support are, the more comfortable the gait will be. On flat ground,



Imported bred stallion, La Paz Diego

performing the batida at a normal speed, the hind foot overreaches the track of the forefoot on the same side, adding to the smoothness of the ride.

Shows

This versatile breed may be used for many types of riding and competition from ranch work such as cutting and working cattle to performance sports such as fox hunting, endurance, dressage and mounted shooting.

There are several states, like Arizona, California, Florida and Montana, where there are enough horses to hold all-Marchador classes. In other areas, all-breed shows, all-gaited shows, endurance competitions, or discipline shows such as hunt shows have welcomed our new breed to their events.

In North America

Although the Marchador breed numbers over 200,000 in Brazil, this breed is truly an exotic here in North America with fewer than 200 horses.

There are now Marchador owners and breeders in many states and Canada. In the US: AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, OH, OK, OR, MD, MI, ME, NC, NM,

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PA, SC, TN, TX, UT, WV, WY. In Canada: BC, AB, SK. You can find them at the <http://usmarchador.com> website under CONTACT MEMBERS. They would be happy to tell you their story about how they fell in love with the breed.

About the authors: John and Lynn Kelley are two of the founders of the U.S. Mangalarga Marchador Association and John Kelley serves as its current President. They have been instrumental in developing close ties to the ABCMM, the Brazilian association that brought the Brazilian inspection process to the U.S. in 2005. Lynn and John travel to Brazil almost every year to learn from the breeders first-hand and to carry on their tradition of excellence. "After years of riding Arabians and age taking it all on our joints, we wanted horses that we could relax and enjoy riding the West where we had retired." They purchased two mares, then, wanting to learn more, traveled to the horse's country, Brazil. "In the end, we returned as Marchador breeders, with nine horses, a lot of them pregnant to champion stallions and our own breeding stallion as well." While they have slowed down in their breed activities, they still enjoy riding in the deserts of Arizona and the hills of Colorado. Lynn says, "Now my favorite discipline is barrelback!"



The First Marchador in Pennsylvania - Azenha de Maripa

Owner Signa Stoen recalls, "I was looking for an endurance horse when I acquired Azenha in 2008 eight weeks from Summerwind Marchadors. I got her the beginning of October and...throughout October, I worked with [her]. In the beginning of November, I entered her in my first endurance ride—the Mustang Memorial in New Jersey. We had a blast! We actually finished in third place.

There is no end to the things that Azenha wants to learn though – we've been taking cross country lessons and some basic Dressage... They're gaited horses, but not gaited in the sense that Americans think of a gaited horse. It would be better to say that they have a smooth way of going."