

# Brazilian horses being raised in state Marchadors

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BOULDER — Tresa Smith had waited three years for this day.

On the family cattle ranch here, she's raising horses of a Brazilian breed known for its special gait and easy disposition. Mangalarga Marchadors have a four-beat stride in which three hooves will momentarily be touching the ground at the same time, delivering a uniquely comfortable ride.

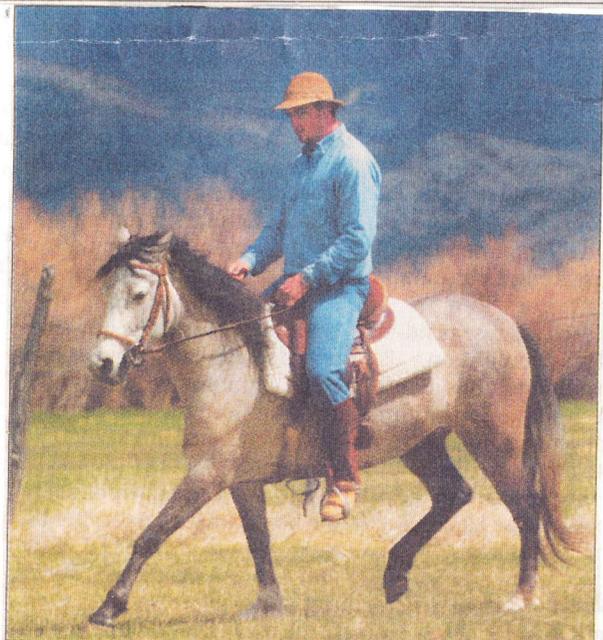
But to be registered as Marchadors, according to Brazilian standards, the

horses must be inspected at three years of age. On Wednesday, two Brazilians who would decide if the horses met the standards stood in the ranch yard.

Getulio Tadeau Vieira, a veterinarian who has worked with Marchadors for 17 years, was the inspector. Jose Eduardo Castello de Teves, who has worked with Marchadors for nearly 30 years, was the breed judge.

Together they would evaluate the horses' conformation, disposition and gait — their ability to "march."

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Smith had hired another Brazilian, Felipe Ribeiro Souza, to come to the ranch last month and train the horses — the 3-year-olds hadn't been ridden until two weeks ago.

Vieira and Castello inspected and measured the horses. Then Souza put a mare, Helga, through her paces as Vieira and Castello watched.

"The feature of our horse is the smooth way of walking," Vieira explained. "We don't want the trot."

In fact, if the horse breaks into a trot, he cannot register it.

With about a dozen friends and neighbors looking on, that created a bit of tension for Smith.

But the mare performed flawlessly, and after a neighbor had also taken a turn at riding, Vieira had his decision.

"She's the first mare approved by her standard, in her walking, in Montana," he announced.

Marchadors are Iberian horses, with Spanish bloodlines that can be traced back many generations. The breed was started in Brazil in the early 1800s and became known for its "marcha" or march.

Smith first rode Marchadors while on a business trip to Brazil in 1990 and was immediately smitten. After she retired to the family ranch in Montana, she set her heart on bringing the horses to her home.

The first of her Marchadors, including two mares with foals, arrived in 2002.

Eliza Frazer, a friend of Smith's, said she comes out to the ranch once or twice a week to ride the Marchadors.

"They're like a dream," Frazer said. The gait is part of it, she said, but the horses are

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also "sensible."

"They don't spook," Frazer said.

Smith plans to build her stock of Marchadors and offer horses for sale.

"I think they're one of the smoothest horses for a mature rider, like me," Smith said.

But Marchadors aren't inexpensive.

"Ballpark, what they're on the market for is \$25,000 for an adult, trained horse," Smith said. "The problem is there are only 89 of them in the U.S."

Smith figures Marchadors are the perfect horse for people now buying ranches in Montana, many of whom didn't grow up riding and would appreciate a smooth-riding, easy-going horse.

"They want something that's fun and sexy and new," Smith said. "Women have always loved horses and there are a lot of older women who have that kind of money."

Of the horses, Smith said, "They're calm, decent yet fun. ... They're kind of the new horse for the Old West."

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Above, Brazilian Felipe Ribeirode Souza brushes one of the Mangalarga Marchador horses before its inspection Wednesday afternoon at Tresa Smith's ranch near Boulder. Lower right, Souza rides Helga, a mare Marchador to show its marching gate which must be inspected