

From the Past to the Future - New Mexico's Own

SPANISH BARB HORSE

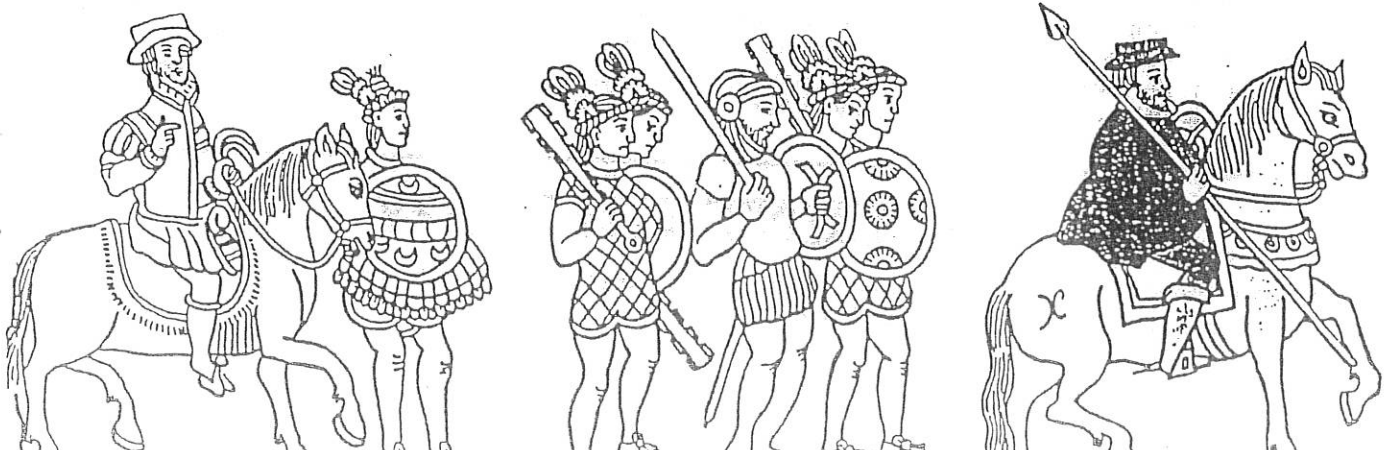
Today's Spanish Barb horse is the culmination of efforts since the 1930s to save this historic North American horse. In those days, when the pickup truck was displacing the cowpony, some ranchers and cowboys decided to make sure this sturdy partner in innumerable adventures in human history did not disappear.

They called the horses "Spanish" to honor their long time association with the servants of the Spanish crown who colonized the Americas. They called the horses "Barbs" to remind everyone of the ancient heritage of the North African Berber breeding of these horses of the Renaissance which were imported to the "New" World.

These horses were part of the Iberian and African heritage of the earliest colonizers. They carried the soldiers and gave birth to the mules for the pack trains. They horses mobilized whole Indian tribes; pulled their travois; carried their hunters and warriors; and sometimes served as food. They were the often unsung, but absolutely necessary, basis of ranching in the Americas.

The Spanish colonizers of New Spain and New Mexico were the heirs to the cultural, religious, and linguistic influences that had thrived in the Iberian peninsula for hundreds of years. Jews, Christians and Muslims, all were at home in the northwestern Mediterranean peninsula that is now Spain and Portugal. The Spanish Barb horse is a living example of the mutual benefits of this pattern of intercultural exchange and acceptance. Sale of horses across the straits of Gibraltar and throughout the Iberian peninsula and "The Maghrib"; or North Africa from Morocco to Egypt, had gone on for thousands of years. After the ethnic Berbers who were converts to Islam conquered a large part of the Iberian peninsula in 711 AD, all warriors and nobles learned to ride "*a la ginetá*" - Berber style. The name came for the *Zenata* Berber tribe, who were known as the best horsemen of the Western World since the times of Carthage.

Today the Spanish Barb and Spanish Mustang horses of New Mexico represent our human ability to live in a world where many traditions exist side by side, where many languages continue to be spoken, and where understanding of our past is part of our future.



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ORIGIN OF THE PERUVIAN PASO

The Peruvian Paso is a truly unique breed of horse but only during the past ten years has it been well known in the United States. In Peru, they have been cherished and selectively bred for centuries. The ancestors of the present day Peruvian horse came from Spain with Pizarro and were of Andalusian, Friesian, Barb and Spanish

Jennet blood. These horses were largely credited by historians with the fall of the centuries old Inca Empire as they gave the Conquistadores a distinct advantage over the natives. Horses were reportedly so valuable that many were shod with silver and young foals were carried by porters in "hammocks" during the long, forced marches.

DEVELOPMENT

As Lima became the Vice Royalty of New Spain, the owners of Peru's large haciendas favored horses with fast, smooth gaits. Generations of strict selection have genetically fixed these traits and the breed can guarantee 100% transmission of its gait to all purebred foals. A major principle with Peruvian breeders is that great Peruvian horses are born - not trained. Training is designed to bring out the animal's inherent ability but not modify it artificially. To help insure retention of completely natural action and gait, no horse is allowed in the show ring with shoes or

with hooves longer than 4 inches. All Peruvian breeders use basically the same training methods and equipment so that no advantage is gained through artificial devices or aids. If a horse will not collect properly or can't be managed with a mild bit, he is not deemed suitable for breeding. If a horse lacks termino, well known exercises to increase termino are not used as this would only prolong the fault in future generations. The guiding philosophy is that it is easier to cull undesirable qualities immediately than to deal with them in future generations.

CHARACTERISTICS

The gait of the Peruvian Paso is a broken pace which gives the rider neither the vertical movement of the trot nor the lateral motion of the pace. It is undoubtedly the smoothest ride in the horse world. Another "trademark" characteristic of the Peruvian horse is "termino" or the outward rolling of the front limb during extension. This showy action gives the Peruvian horse the appearance of always being "on parade" and is also completely natural due to selective breeding. It is not a wing or paddle and originates in the shoulder giving the horse the ability to swing the leg forward with minimum vertical force to the back.

The Peruvians did not breed exclusively for gait. Disposition was equally important. The horses were used for transportation and riders did not want to deal with temperamental, stubborn or nervous horses. In fact, the disposition of the Peruvian horse is probably his most appealing virtue although the smooth gait is probably more renowned. As a result of strict culling, the Peruvian horse is

intelligent, tractable and eager to please. However, he has retained the presence and arrogance of his war horse ancestors. The modern day Peruvian horse still "travels like a conqueror." The Peruvian Paso comes in all the basic colors: black, brown, bay, chestnut, gray, palomino, buckskin and roan. They boast a long, luxurious mane and tail. Size ranges from 14 to 15.3 hands with the average being about 14.3. Since their importation to North America, many Peruvian Pasos have proven their ability to adapt to all climates and they are quite easy keepers.

For knowledgeable horsemen, the Peruvian Paso is an enigmatic blend of extremes. They have the fire of the old Spanish warhorse and yet are noted for tractability. The Peruvian Paso combines the world's smoothest gait with the most spectacularly stylish action known to the equine breeds. It is an animal of refined beauty with the strength to cover many miles a day - year after year. These are the qualities genetically locked in by centuries of selection

RECENT HISTORY

The Peruvian Paso, in a few short years, has gained tremendous recognition and popularity in the United States. They are in use for show, pleasure, trail, endurance and parade riding. Breeders in this country have already exported

horses to Europe, Australia, the Orient and Canada. Owners have an important part in the future of this breed and are not merely statistics. They also have the privilege of preserving a unique breed which could never be duplicated.