



# If someone goes on a journey he can tell some stories

The European Association of Mangalarga Marchador e.V. ([www.eamm.de](http://www.eamm.de)) has been invited again this year from Brazilian Mangalarga Marchador breeders' association ABC-CMM to Brazil. Together with a group of Americans and Argentines as well as press people from different countries, the 15 Europeans experienced a fantastic trip to the horse country of Brazil and it went like this ...

(report by Astrid Oberniedermayr, photos Sabine Stuewer)

„... but when you come this time you visit me first, because I really want to show you my new house, „said Rogério Bivar, when he hears that we come again to Brazil in July. It sounds as if he lived just around the corner. In fact, his hotel Marinas and his Mangalarga Marchador farm Haras Agua Boa is located

3,000 km from our final destination. On the other hand, he's a great friend, a „hot person,“ as he himself describes his happy temperament and a fantastic host. So we decided to start our trip with a „stopover“ in Natal - Northeast of Brazil – at Rogério's place. To visit Rogério means for us, riding excellent

horses in the marcha picada on endless beaches, it means to ride through the rain forest, over dunes and into the villages of the tourist beach resorts. Rogério is famous for his so-called „pit stops“. After a wonderful ride in the Marcha with a maximum speed of about 14 km in an hour, we take a lunch

break on the beach. On plastic chairs, our feet in the sand, we eat freshly caught lobster and grilled fish. Delicious! Then we go with the horses through the waves of the sea either in Marcha or gallop! Some of us start screaming out of joy – this is how vacation should begin!



**With Rogério's stallions Predileto und Hacker in the waves - but not all horses trusted the water!**



**This is how holidays should begin: with a nice galopp on the beach**

After three exciting days we left for Belo Horizonte in the state of Minas Gerais - the Mecca of Mangalarga Marchador.

It was amazing for us to follow the generous invitation of the ABCCMM. The hospitality begins with the shuttle from the airport and a welcome dinner with more than 30 people. The ABCCMM invites us for everything: the hotel, the bus tour, lunches and dinners, nights on the farms, we get offered great horses to ride everywhere, even during the National Championship and we have free admission, including eating and drinking, Monty Roberts show, auc-

tion and evening events. Once again we are very impressed by this generosity and extremely grateful and hope that we will have the chance to give some of the hospitality back to the Brazilians sometime, somehow.

But let's start at the beginning of our journey in Minas Gerais, Brazil.

After a 4-hour bus ride we arrive in Lavras and visit the Haras ElFar of the President of ABCCMM, Magdi Shaat. Here live approx. 1.000 horses and Magdi Shaat is one of the most successful breeders of Mangalarga Marchador.

## The Horses

Mangalarga Marchadores are the 3rd biggest breed of the world. The Brazilian breeders' association ABCCMM registered more than 400.000 horses.

The breeding goals are beauty, excellent character, rideability, endurance and comfort of the special gait Marcha.

There exist two different Marcha: Marcha Batida and Marcha Picada. As Marcha Picada is comparable to the Tölt of Island-horses, but with triple support instead of single support, the Marcha Batida can be compared with a broken, dissociated trot without suspension.

The horses are very balanced, brave, intelligent and secure in their steps and they are very good in many different riding disciplines like dressage, endurance, working equitation and others.





**Approx. 1.000 horses live on haras ElFar  
young horses in the morning dust**

In addition to our group there arrive about 50 riders of the Brazilian Sela de Ouro competition at Haras Elfar in order to start the Sela de Ouro final. Also from the European Group 7 riders qualified in Germany and participate in the Sela de Ouro. They ride for 5 days about 30 km distance per day. All are excited and looking forward to this ride.

But we would not be in Brazil, if the night before would not

be celebrated properly with cachaca - Zucherrohrschnaps - Caipirinha and with a pig and half of an oxen on the grill. Many helping hands are preparing a fantastic dinner with some foreign spices and foods. But everything is delicious, the atmosphere is full of friendship and very soon all people are happily dancing. The Brazilians know how to celebrate a party night! When our shuttle leaves we are all very sorry to leave that wonderful place.



**the European Sela de Ouro  
riders**



**host and president of  
ABCCMM - Magdi Shaat**







**The horses of Haras de Maripa look like paintings  
Marcelo Baptista has good reasons to be proud of his breed**

Early next morning the Sela de Ouro starts – for some “hangovers” may be too early! The rest of the group makes a tour around the Haras ElFar with explanations from Magdi Shaat. Huge herds of mares eat grass peacefully in the morning dust. The horsemen drive a big herd of foals to a corral and the foals come running towards us, pushing and kicking each other just like such young horses behave some times. The stallions of Haras Elfar live in their own little stables each with his own pasture around it. Horses, horses, horses everywhere horses - simply fantastic.

After lunch we get into the saddle and ride into the nearby mountains, great views to enjoy in broad land, we ride through coffee plantations in Marcha until the sun goes down, just like every day at 6.00 pm. Now the stars are coming out and we're still in the mountains. Here you can see the stars as nowhere in Europe. You can clearly see the Milky Way and the moon shines brightly. Without problems we rely on the sure-footedness of Mangalarga Marchadores that bring us back to Elfar at 8.00 pm.

At dinner we are still full of the experiences and agreed that we would love to stay longer, but the next day our journey goes on - and how wonderful!

We reach Haras de Maripa in Sao Paulo and all are simply overwhelmed by the beauty of the buildings and facilities,

the park, the stables, and especially the horses. The Mangalarga Marchadores of Sophia and Marcelo Baptista are all beautiful like paintings. Every single horse is just amazing and the pride of Marcelo, who has been breeding these horses for 30 years. We get a presentation of the roots of the breed and are impressed of the steadiness and care Marcelo followed up his idea of the ideal horse! It's really hard to comment on the foals, young horses and mares, without being boring, because every horse has to be commented with words like „fantastic“, „beautiful,“ etc.. This breed is amazing and we look forward to tomorrow's ride.

Again we get into the saddles in the morning dust. Sophia and Marcelo lead us through the land of their ranch, passing by huge Nelore bulls and riding through big herds of cattle. We are impressed and have fun on our horses which are all in Marcha Batida. This gait is a little bit comparable to a “broken” – dissociated - trot without suspension and therefore very comfortable for the rider. We are excited and overwhelmed of the great hospitality of Sophia and Marcelo. The time was way too short but we have to leave as there are other exciting items on the agenda:

Cruzilia! Cruzilia is the beginning of the breed Mangalarga Marchador! Here on







**the horseman takes care of the mares while riding a stallion  
excellent character and rideability are top goals of the breed**

the old farms it had its start: this extraordinary breed. On the old country farms Brazilian mares were crossed with stallions of the breed Altér. Beauty, good character, rideability, endurance and comfort were already top breeding goals at that time.

And on our trip so far we can confirm the success of reaching these breeding goals with 100%. With the help in organization of Domingo Lollo-bridgida (real relative of Gina Lollobridgida) the owners of the old farms prepare a wonderful welcome. All the neighbors (about 200 km radius) have come together and have brought stallions from famous bloodlines to show us. In addition, we again see many youngsters and mares and of course we are invited to ride. All horses are dressed up and wearing new halters. Especially for our visit a microphone and loud speakers were organized.

We are speechless and grateful! After a wonderful lunch with all those breeders of the old farms we leave again for Belo Horizonte because of the opening of the National Championship the next day. The National Championship in Belo Horizonte is the world's largest tournament of a single

breed. More than 1,600 horses have qualified for national contests and compete to win the title Champion of Champions in the various disciplines and categories. Here the „who's who“ on four legs is present. Horses that have been sold short time before for 2.5 million reais (approximately, 1.3 million euros), auctions where Embrios for 25.000,- Euro will go on sale, show horses, 250 horses for sale in the „Shopping“ and horse beauties that deserve a catwalk.

You must have experienced this once! You must have seen this once! And WE? We were right in the middle of it, pampered by the wonderful people of ABC-CMM! We are very, very grateful for all these experiences and this amazing trip!

AND ..... We will definitely come back next year! ■



**Brazil is a great land with wonderful landscapes,  
fantastic horses and lovely people**

