

\* fun facts about the Mangalarga Marchador

# The Mysterious Mangalarga Marchador

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PHOTO: JUDY WOOD

» There are two similar versions of the Marchador's development and some combine both stories together. The first states that they are a product of crossing the Portuguese Alter horse and local breeders' horses in Southeast Brazil by the Campo Alegre Farm and its owner Gabriel Francisco Junqueira. The other version says that the horse was bred after the King of Portugal fled to Brazil with his royal stallions, and one of these stallions, Sublime, was crossed with Barbs and Jennets to create the Marchador. Both stories agree that the breed is about 200 years old.

» The Mangalarga Marchador has two gaits of its own—the Marcha Picada and the Marcha Batida. Both are fast and smooth with the legs moving diagonally, laterally, and with triple hoof support. The Picada is smoother and has more lateral movement while the Batida is more diagonal.

» A third gait, the Marcha de Centro, was recently discovered and is distinguishable by the diagonal and lateral movements of the gait being equal. This gait is not yet recognized as a fully distinct version of the Marcha.

» Mangalarga Marchadors are versatile and can be used for endurance, dressage, jumping, cattle work, and therapeutic riding. They are thought of to be the ideal family, leisure, and competition horse.

» The Mangalarga Marchador is the National Horse of Brazil.

» The Brazilian breeding association of the Mangalarga Marchador will not register cremello Marchadors as it is believed that they have bad depth perception and they do not want them bred.

» The Marchador set the Guinness World Record for longest endurance ride—8,694 miles—in 1994.

» Because of the small number of Marchadors in the U.S., an annual clinic consisting of a competition and instruction is held instead of a national show. The competition section of the clinic is called the Complete Horse Test and involves riding a course and being judged on gait, execution, and horsemanship. The clinic is moved around the nation to allow a wide group of participants, and auditors without a horse of their own are encouraged to borrow a local Marchador to compete.