

Sunset Farm and the Mangalarga Marchador

It is always special to find something truly unique. To find something so rare that it is still a secret. This is a secret that we are happy to share.

Sunset Farm is located on 20 acres of beautiful York county country located near Rock Hill, SC. The farm breeds Mangalarga Marchador horses. What is a Marchador? The breed is so rare that only 150 to 175 horses are found in the United States. Sunset Farm, owned by Rock Hill natives Jim & Grace Funderburk, is the only Marchador farm in South Carolina and one of few on the east coast.

The Funderburk's decided to search for a horse with smooth gaits. Smooth gaits would be more comfortable on long trail rides. After two years of research and a visit to a Florida Marchador farm, they were sold on the breed. The first Marchador arrived in York County in 2003.

Jim, a knowledgeable host, described the Marchador as a "gaited" Quarterhorse. They are an outstanding horse with athleticism, stamina, wonderful temperament, smooth gaits and beauty.

During our recent visit, we met Cetine. Jim described Cetine as their "pride and joy". She is a beautiful dark mare with flowing forelock. She was curious, friendly and stood patiently while we learned about her and the history of the breed.

The 200 year old Marchador breed was developed after the King of Portugal fled to Brazil to escape Napoleon. The King brought his best stallions and mares to Brazil. These royal horses were crossed with Spanish Barbs and the smooth gaited Spanish Jennet, which is now extinct, and this breeding resulted in the modern Marchador horse. The breed has two distinct gaits. One is a lateral gait called the "picada", similar to other gaited horses. The "batida" is a lateral gait with diagonal pairs, which is unique to this breed. The gaits are smooth and are described as having "triple hoof support" meaning three hooves are always on the ground.

The Marchador is used for ranch and cattle work in Brazil but can perform in any discipline. Known for their hardiness, soundness and ability to learn, they are the perfect "can do it all" horse. They are especially suited for endurance rides and hold the record for the longest trip, over 8,500 miles. The same horses were ridden every day and took over a year to complete.

The Marchadors at Sunset Farm are gray, roan, chestnut, dun, and dark bay. Their stallion is a beautiful chocolate palomino. All are beauties in both mind and body. The gorgeous stallion is in training for the reining competition arena.

We completed our visit with a special treat, a personal introduction to the 2008 foals. Lightning, a beautiful two week old chestnut colt, was born during a summer evening lightning storm. JJ, a striped dun with a white star, was very brave and friendly at six weeks of age. He loved all the rubs and scratches courtesy of Jim. Named JJ, because he jumped more than

walked at birth, his registered name is Havai Por de Sol. Traditionally, the farm name is included in the registered name of each foal and Por de Sol means Sunset Farm in Portuguese. Beautiful name, beautiful foals, beautiful breed.

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