

BREEDING VS. MULTPLYING HORSES

WHICH ARE YOU DOING?



**MLM Valentina. Photo
by Stephen Lasko/courtesy
of Rocking M Ranch.**

This is a question that every mare owner needs to ask himself each time they select a particular breeding. Breeding Peruvian Paso Horses is not simple task; if you want to be a serious breeder, it takes years of learning, dedication and developing a keen eye. Here are a few insights that will help guide you in your breeding program.

First of all, if you want to be a horse breeder, then you must understand what your role really is. The goal of every breeder should be to improve the overall quality of the mare they are intending to breed. To achieve this, the breeder must know both the good points and the faults of the mare and find where these faults come from in her ancestry. Ideally, the mare has a solid, typical phenotype as well as her ancestors (genotype). To properly analyze a mare or stallion, a breeder must have a “cold” or objective mind to realistically analyze both the pros and cons of his mare (conformation, gait, brio, arrogance, etc.) and relate these characteristics with the ancestors/bloodlines of the mare. This can sometimes be difficult for some people

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***ERM Genoves (JRM Predilecto x VCB Dona Leli). Notice the similarity of structure between Genoves and his half sister, *ERM Genovesa (below) and his daughter, MLM Valentina (below).**



***ERM Genovesa+ (JRM Predilecto x VCB Dona Leli). Photo courtesy of Estancia El Corcel.**



MLM Valentina (*ERM Genoves x *JRM Aqua Marina). Photo courtesy of Rocking M Ranch. She is very similar to her father, especially in her movement. Photo courtesy of Rocking M Ranch/photo by Stephen Lasko.

as they become very attached to their horses and forgive or even fail to see their horse's shortcomings. The reality is that there is no such thing as a perfect horse and a breeder must recognize this fact but still strive for perfection, hoping to create a horse as close to the breed standard as possible. A breeder must know the mare well and recognize her good and bad points so that the next generation will be better than the present.

The next step is to look for the right stallion to improve your mare. I have emphasize the fact that you are looking for a stallion to improve your mare, not for a mare to improve your stallion. When you look for the stallion, you don't look just for the individual that can improve your mare, but pay close attention to the stallion's bloodlines as well. He has to come from a family that improves the faults that you are trying to fix. A good sire is not born by chance, but is created by a serious breeder through many generations. Today, all around the world, we would be lucky to find twenty proven, top sires that have produced excellent offspring who have, in turn, produced top quality horses as well. Using these top sires would be one way to improve the whole breed.

It's important to remember that crossing extremes often doesn't produce the desired results. My favorite example of this is when producing a grey horse. If you cross a true white horse with a black horse, you will not necessarily produce a grey horse. This idea still holds true when looking at conformation, temperament, and gait as well. Look for a stallion that compliments your mare but is still true to type and the standard.

In other animals such as Holstein Dairy cattle, to find the bull to improve your herd is a lot easier because you have many bulls that have been already tested in thousands of cows so you have many of his offspring to analyze and make your decision to use him or not for your cow. Statistics is a great tool when looking to improve your herd.

In the Peruvian Paso breed, our stallions typically do not have as many offspring as Holstein bulls, so the law of statistics must be used with caution. However, there are some aides, like the show results from many different countries. In Peru, every show has a Best Sire Award, and in the show results magazine, we publicize the Top Ten Sires of Show. This is a very useful tool for the breeders to check how the top sires are producing and how well their offspring are competing. In the United States, there are similar Top Ten Sire lists kept by the breed organizations as well as a Top Sire awarded at the National Show. Also, I think it is important to analyze what the top breeders are doing; it's very helpful to talk to them to

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learn their experiences with certain stallions or bloodlines and how they cross with others. To be a successful breeder you need to have a lot of experience and a great way to expand your knowledge is to talk to people who have been involved in the breed for many years. They are often very willing to share their experiences if you ask!

It's important to remember that the better quality your mare is, the more difficult challenge you have in selecting a stallion. Why do I say this? To improve an average mare is easy with a good stallion, but when you have a very good mare the number of stallions superior in quality is small so you have fewer stallions to choose from. So, for a good breeder that has very good quality mares, his challenge's difficulty increases as his breeding stock improves with each generation.

The selection of good foundation mares is key. It's not a matter of the number, it's the quality that counts. Behind a



ERM Espontaneo (BCH Primor x ERM Revancha). Again, note the similarity of conformation between Espontaneo and his foal (right), particularly the neck and head carriage.



While this foal, sired by ERM Espontaneo, shows some of his father's traits, he also shows some from his mother as well such as the refined head, shoulder angle and rump.

good sire, you will always find excellent mares. The aim of the successful breeders is to find mares that are going to produce the horses that come as close to the breed standard as possible.

Much of the knowledge and experience that I have mentioned are critical tools that new breeders do not often have or have access to, so it is the responsibility of the established, successful breeders of the world to share their knowledge with people who want to breed this great horse. Breeders, both new and old, must always study horses, their bloodlines and particular attributes to constantly strive for a better horse. Our breed will not flourish as a whole if we don't communicate our experiences with each other. Anyone can produce good horses, but what about the outstanding? The challenge of the successful breeders is to produce outstanding horses, not just multiply horses. This is the best contribution you can make to the breed for generations to come. TPC