

JUAN LLAMAS PERDIGO:

A Life of Passion for the Spanish Horse



Juan Llamas is considered an Institution in Spain in the horse world. He has not only written many books and been the principle teacher of Spain's Judges today but he is particularly noted for having launched the competitions for the Spanish horse.

Until 1979 there was only one show a year in the whole country. That took place in Jerez. In 1980 Juan organized the first show in Seville which was the first Sicab (Salon Internacional del Caballo). The following year he organized the first show in Madrid. That started the movement. Today there are more than 200 horse shows a year dedicated exclusively to the Purebred Spanish Horse.

Juan's international judging career started in 1984 when he judged the championships in Seville and judged in Costa Rica.

In 1985 Juan organized the first classes about the conformation and history of the Spanish horse. They were held at the breeding farm of the Marques de Salvatierra and Francico Olivera.

Juan first started investigating the history of the Spanish horse interviewing many people hoping that the oral tradition would give him the information he was looking for. He found much had been lost due to the civil war and the isolationism under Franco. From there he went to the libraries and every afternoon for a period of 3 years (1982-84) he poured through all the books he could get his hands on. Most started from the 15th century.

Juan was born in Melilla Spanish Morocco which is the other side of the Mediterranean in 1932. He started riding at 8 years old studying with Don Jose Reche who had been the horse training for the Ringling Brothers circus for over 17 years. At 12 he won first prize in jumping on a horse called Sobaco who later claimed international fame.

After high school he went to college getting his law degree in Zaragoza in 1955. He continued his training and became a judge. After graduating he returned to Melilla for 3 years where he was a judge in the courts there. Restless, he returned to Zaragoza where he ran a law practice by day and attended school at night to become a legal advisor for the Military. Part of his job once in the Military was buying horses for the Cria Caballar. Six months of every year was spent as a buyer where he traveled all over Spain and Europe buying horses and donkeys for the Military. The lasted for over 14 years.

He was also instrumental in reviving Doma Vaquera which has become a popular sport here in Spain. He became director of the military club La Dehesa. He developed it to be the largest riding club in Europe. The Dehesa produced many fine riders, many which went on to the Spanish Olympic team.

It was always fun to talk to Juan as he is like a walking encyclopedia on the horse. If you ask a training question, he has the solution, if you ask a nutritional question he also has the solution, a riding problem, he has the solution. It is rare to know someone so well informed in every aspect of the horse, Spanish or not!!

He also had a list of superstitions for the horseman or bull-fighter. Yellow is out. Why because it was the color used by the French executioner. Bullfighters today avoid yellow with a passion. Wine must be poured with the wrist facing down. Why -because the poison ring was real at one time in history. Salt cannot be handed; hand to hand it must always be put down before the next person takes it. What does this mean-a colorful individual that I assure you wasn't boring!!

After his retirement, Juan enjoyed spending time traveling all over the world judging horse shows and training people to judge and understand the Spanish horse. He was one of the 12 people selected to classify the Spanish horse for the Cria Caballar on a world wide basis. He passed away in April 2018 and is remembered by the many thousands of PRE aficionados worldwide that he educated, influenced and inspired.



Androsia Design

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One of Sr Llamas last projects, a film entitled 'HORSE OF KINGS, Thief of Hearts' won the 2015 Equus International Film Festival Award for Best Documentary

