



Carthusian Monestary: The origins of the Cartuja



The origins of the Cartuja

The Carthusian monks are a closed religious order which, governed by constitutions approved by Pope Innocence II, lead a rigorously ascetic life in retreat. The origins of the Cartuja de Jerez can be traced back to the XV century, when the landowner Don Álvaro Obertos de Valeto, made a proposition to the Friar of the Carthusian Monastery in Seville to found a monastery of this order in Jerez. Don Álvaro ceded the rights of the land which he owned in the municipality of Jerez to the Carthusian monks who requested the necessary licence from the Archbishop of Seville in order to found the monastery, which was granted in 1475. Three years later, work began on the building which we now know. In a short period of time, the Carthusian monastery had managed to amass substantial wealth from donations, the sale and exchange of goods which was added to the already significant assets inherited from Don Álvaro. Among the land acquired, was the Dehesa de la Fuente del Suero, which until then had been the property of the Genoese Celin de Bilbao who sold the land in exchange for 140,000 maravadies. Grazing on this farmland in the present day, five centuries later, are the beautiful specimens of the **Yeguada de la Cartuja - Hierro del Bocado**.

The true origins of this stud farm are unknown, although one popular anecdote has it that when tenant of the Carthusian monastery, Don Pedro Picado, was unable to pay his ground rent to the monks, he decided to pay them with in kind by offering them his mares and colts. These animals had been bought by Don Pedro from the brothers Andrés and Diego Zamora, farriers to trade, who formed this small stud farm from a stallion bought from a soldier, and one of its sons, a colt of extraordinary beauty and grace, called "Esclavo". The descendants of this stud farm, which enjoyed great prestige, were called "zamoranos". However, evidence which has come to light and which has recently been analysed along with historical studies, has shown that the monks already had a breeding stock at the end of the XV century.



The Carthusian Monastery and its times

The XVI century represented the time of greatest splendour for the Carthusian Monastery, which coincided with the years of glory of the Spanish Empire and the reign of the Hapsburg dynasty. The dominion of the Spanish crown around the globe during that era brought with it the first great expansion of the thoroughbred Spanish horse: the horse was introduced into the Americas under the command of several Conquistadors. During the Empire of Carlos V, the Spanish horse reached its highest levels of popularity and well-deserved acclaim, being represented in paintings and present in the breeding stocks of emperors, kings and nobility throughout the entire world.

The spreading of the Carthusian horses around the world means that there is a blood line descending from the Carthusian breed in many races around the world in the present day: Lippizza, Kladrub, Orloff, Holstein, etc. In addition, it is the Spanish horse which has given its name to the Picadero Español and to the extremely famous Viennese Spanish Horse School, founded by the Royal Court of Vienna in 1565, as well as the present day picadero, constructed by Carlos V in 1729.

However, this opening up to the outside world has also meant the introduction of foreign horses into our country which have been crossbred with the autochthonous breeds. The Carthusian monks were aware of the difficult situation that equine stockbreeding was going through. But they were also aware of the fine qualities of the mares and the Jerezano horses. At the end of the XV century, and following in the stockbreeding tradition of the Carthusian Monastery of Seville, the monks of Jerez decided to create a stud farm, which they would remain in charge of until well into the XIX century.



The XIX century

The XIX century represents an era of convulsion and drastic changes for the Stud farm, following its past years of splendour and stability. The Napoleonic invasion and the dissolution of the property belonging to the Church meant that the stockbreeding of Carthusian horses would leave the hands of the monks and become the property of various owners, eventually incorporating the present day brandings.

More articles on the Carthusian Cartujano Bocado Horse:

[The Hierro del Bocado Stud Today - Spanish National Monument](#)

Paintings by [Jose Manuel Gomez](#) available through [La Tienda Espanola](#)



The bell brand of the Monks

