

## Chapter II-3

### BIRTH OF A “HUASO”

He sits on his horse comfortably. He is relaxed, but he maintains an erect posture. His strong left hand rests on his horse's withers, where it gently cups the thick twisted rawhide reins. His right hand is placed palm-down on a muscular thigh that fills his dark pin-striped pants. In between occasional comforting strokes down the top of his horse's roached mane, he straightens out the loose ends of the wide, red sash that is tightly wrapped twice around his trim waist. He looks out serenely from under a black, flat-brimmed hat. He wears it perfectly perpendicular to his brow. His neat, short black hair is styled more like a military officer or airline pilot than a cowhand. A stampede string is tightened snugly behind his head and the two loose ends dangle down between his shoulder blades. His thick neck is enclosed in a white starched shirt that, in turn, is under a hip-length Sevillian-styled jacket of the same color. His red and blue “chamanto” makes a colorful contrast to the black and white undergarments it is draped over. This navel-length finely woven poncho has horizontal bands of color that accent the rider's broad upper body.

His position in the saddle is unique. He looks as if he were sitting in a chair. The one-piece, solid wood covered stirrups hang short enough that his knees are bent at nearly right angles. He makes no effort to put his heels back under his hip. Instead, he holds them well in front of his body, where they hug his horse's shoulders. The shine of his tooled black leather leggings contrasts with the opaqueness of the cloth pant legs that they partly conceal. The custom molded leggings cover the top of his black ankle boots and go all the way over his knees. It is nearly impossible to assess that they are two independent articles of clothing. He gives the impression that his knee-high boots are straight out of the romantic cavalier days. The narrow, squared toes of his boots are hidden inside the hollowed-out space of the ornately decorated, hand-carved “pig snout” stirrups. Behind the heels of his footwear hang enormous 36-point silver spurs with a rowel diameter of 4 inches. Occasionally, he shakes his ankle ever so gently. The corresponding jingle of the large spurs causes his equine friend to twist an ear back in anticipating attention.

His overall appearance is genuinely elegant. There is a sensation of proud confidence in the air, assuring onlookers that this attractive attire is more than just required dress for his activity. His traditional clothing is a telltale sign of a devoted and skilled horseman with a gift of knowing how to “read” cattle. The image he projects represents someone that identifies with everything that is related to his rural roots; someone that is well aware of his dignified personification of a nation he holds close to his heart. This distinguished horseman is the Chilean “HUASO”.

### Horsemen of the Americas

The Western Hemisphere is rich in ranching cultures that have given rise to horsemen full of traditional customs, attire and philosophies of life. Invariably, all these rugged cowboys that have been in charge of the cattle production in their respective countries have captured the hearts of their fellow citizens. Regardless of how their behavior, appearance and actions have been judged, these stockmen that have been the backbone of the cattle industries in the Americas have a romanticized appeal that leads people to forgive their shortcomings. Moreover, they are admired as icons that represent carefree, rural living. This heroic image is seen repeatedly in the cowboys, buckaroos and vaqueros of North America, the “charros” of Mexico, the “llaneros” of Colombia and Venezuela, the “chagras” of the highlands of Ecuador, the “morochucos” of Ayacucho and Pampas de Cangallo in Peru, the “vaqueiros” of Brazil and the “gaucho” of Argentina. So, it is not unusual that Chile should also have “huaso” fans that fantasize of making a living on horseback amongst the bawling cattle. In a sense, all these horsemen that pioneered the early development of their respective countries helped define the spirit of the modern nations they played such an important part in creating.

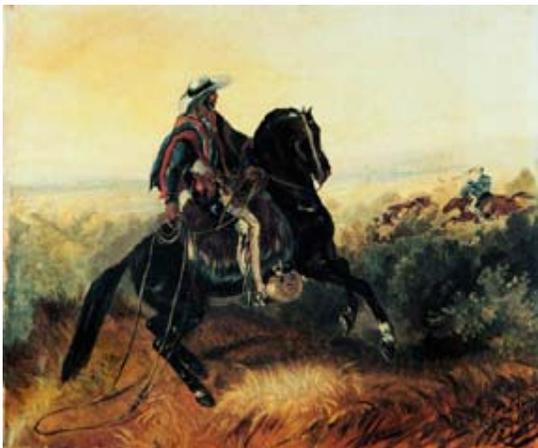
Throughout the Americas, they are respected as descendants of forefathers that created the unique, yet fixed, role in their respective societies. This strong sense of self-esteem is a refreshing attribute. The evolution of modern societies has caused a continual change in the lifestyle of the urban centers where the majority of the population growth occurs. On the other hand, these steady role models of the cattle industries have offered an ageless image that symbolizes the stability and fortitude that has persisted since the birth of these nations. These principles that elevate tradition to an inflexible, valued way of life cannot be seen more clearly than in the Chilean huaso. Their occupation, their tack and the breed of horse they ride all remain the rock-solid foundations of their existence.

In the fast-paced world that brings about never-ending changes in what we perceive as the norm, there is an important contribution of this emblem of time-tested horsemen. With roots that were planted alongside the oldest chapters of national history, they offer the reassurance of the continuity of an old way of life that, to this day, stands steadfast and reliable. Their philosophies are too sound to require psychoanalysis. They often appreciate the simple things that are most often overlooked by people in other walks of life. Their skills are too close to being an art to be measured, predicted or taught with formulas and owner's manuals. These horsemen remind us of our humanity and the fact that however important we think we are, we are still a pretty insignificant part of a larger, more consequential picture.

It is true that there is a common ground. All these glorified representatives of nationalistic pulses have lives that closely revolve around the stock horse that has become such an integral part of their lives. Yet, I must also point out that there are important differences amongst them. The huaso differs greatly from the dusty, tobacco chewing, six-gun touting, roughneck stereotype of the American cowboy. The huaso has very little of the free spirit that is such an important component in the nomadic origins of the gaucho, vaqueiro and llanero. The huaso has not had the tradition of brutally taking part in national conflicts or vigilante activity that has been such a critical part of the history of the vaqueros and llaneros. The huaso surely does not identify with living out of a bed roll on the long-drawn-out cattle drives that have been an integral part of the beef industry in southwestern USA, Brazil and Argentina. There are significant differences and, due to the history and geography of Chile, this horse- and cattleman is one of a kind.

### Gentlemen on Horseback

Although the huaso has his own idiosyncrasies, many parallels could be found between his lifestyle and that of the charros of central Mexico and the buckaroos of the American north



**Figure II.64** Rugenda's "Huaso Elegante" depicts the stately demeanor of the huaso culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

west. Like these two counterparts, the huaso, required three basic ingredients. One was being faithful to a specific piece of property in a rural setting. The second was a high regard for a quality horse of good stock. The third was a quest for social recognition by striving to act in gentlemanly ways. It is not happenstance that these three ingredients were very much a part of the Spanish culture that had such a heavy influence on the history of the cattle industry in these areas.

The word for a gentleman in Spanish is "caballero". The root of this word is "caballo", which means horse. The suffix of "ero" refers to someone that is "knowledgeable or experienced about" the root of the word that precedes it. Thus a

"carpintero" would be someone knowledgeable or experienced about the carpentry trade. A "minero" would be someone knowledgeable or experienced about mining, and so forth. The

world “caballero”, which refers to a gentleman, also implies that to be this refined and cultured person, one must be knowledgeable or experienced about the art of horsemanship.

There is little doubt that the ideal image of the charro and the huaso and, to a lesser extent, the buckaroo, applies this old Spanish concept of a true caballero. Each of these classifications of horsemen strives to give importance to appear and behave in a gentlemanly manner. “Good horse, quality tack, impressive attire and polite behavior” would be appropriate mottos for them all. Interestingly, these stereotypes are not limited by social hierarchy.

### **Huaso Camaraderie Erases Social Distinctions**

In the early agrarian economy of Chile, the main exports were wheat, leather and tallow. The main region of development in the country was in the central area between the rivers Aconcagua and Bío Bío. Later, it extended itself farther south to the Chacao Channel. These areas were incorporated into the large colonial block that was referred to as the “Cattle Breeding Territories” by the conquering Spaniards. They extended themselves over the Andes northward to Asunción, Paraguay, eastward to Montevideo, Uruguay, and southward covering a great deal of the central part of Argentina that revolved around Buenos Aires.

With cattle breeding becoming the mainstay of these regions, the huaso culture in Chile was evident across all societal levels. With landowners who lived on their properties, the lifestyle of the huaso-employer and huaso-employee did not differ that much. Granted, I use these terms in a retroactive sense, as the word huaso was not yet a part of the Chilean lexicon. Still, what we are concerned about is that consummate horseman by whatever name we wish to describe him.

Both the hacienda employer and employee rode the same kind of horses, used similar attire and had houses made of the same construction materials. They had the same passion for the country life, the livestock industry and for the rodeo and “rienda” (Chilean reining) competitions. They were conservative in their outlook on life, with strong nationalistic feelings for the country they proudly felt a part of. They made a united front against the vandals, cattle rustlers and vagabonds that threatened the stability of their families, but were largely pacific and non-intervening in nature. They were family men and were concerned about educating their children in being both scholarly and polite. Huasos of all social levels cared about being informed on the world around them, but little did this knowledge sway their opinions of the kind of life they felt was important to them. Whether as a requirement for participation in rodeos, or to fulfill the personal pride displayed in public, huasos of all walks of life made a point of always having a clean and neat appearance.

Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this camaraderie between the huasos had precedence over the laborer relationships. Commitments between the employer and the employee were very loosely defined, and little changed as the relationship crossed over from work to sport through their common interest in the rodeo. Even as the progress of Chile began to tempt landowners to live away from the farm in the convenience of the larger urban areas, the bond of competing together in rodeos has to this day established a faithful working relationship between huasos of different social status. It was this bond of fidelity that made the huaso brigades that participated in the War of the Pacific of 1879 so successful. These improvised soldiers gave their all as they followed their employers into battle with a sense of allegiance to the common friend they had back in the hacienda.

Of course, over time, a higher proportion of absentee owners in Chilean agriculture created an unfortunate lack of identity in the labor relationships. Still, even to this day, the manner of bridging this gap is for the hacienda owner to maintain a small stable of horses where he can participate in the local rodeos. Once the employer and employee have their hats, ponchos, leggings, boots and spurs on; a bond that is as old as Chile itself overrides all social differences and job descriptions. Invariably, participation in this, Chile’s second most popular spectator sport (only soccer has more fans), infects the participants. This is but the beginning of a lifelong addiction to the competition, to a network of friends and to the appreciation for these powerful little horses so full of heart. It is this fact that has Rodeo competitions full of entrepreneurs, executives, doctors, lawyers and just about any other imaginable line of

professional. In the presence of that medialuna, the huaso mentality overrides all other insignificant details regarding the participants.

### **There Is a Little Bit of Huaso in All Chileans**

Even though Chile is now a country of 15.5 million people, 87 percent of whom live in urban areas; the huaso mentality still runs through the veins of its citizens. In ex-Senator Alberto Cardemil's very interesting book *El Huaso Chileno*, he suggests that the huaso's desire to identify himself with the hacienda is a strong tendency in most Chileans. The agrarian reforms carried out by Presidents Frei and Allende in the 60's and 70's gave rise to a lot of small landowners. Senator Cardemil points out that it was interesting to note that even when these were owners of small parcels of land, a high proportion still structured their little farm after the large hacienda. Rather than looking for more profitable endeavors, they continued to depend on grazing ruminant animals and keeping a few **corralero** horses so they could participate in the rodeos.

The aforementioned book also indicates that urban housing often imitates their rural counterparts with a little flower garden in the front and a vegetable garden in the back. The houses are usually positioned with their backs facing the mountains. Whenever Chilean urbanites save enough money to invest beyond the needs of their city home, the most frequent consideration is buying a little plot of land in the country. Amidst the lovely rural settings found in central Chile, with enough land to graze a horse or two, their huaso dreams become a reality. Observers point out that, in spite of the modernization of Santiago, this rural mentality still prevails within its boundaries. One point that has been made to demonstrate this is that this city of more than 6 million people has a much more frugal nightlife than the large metropolis of Brazil and Argentina.

The point is that even if the percentage of true huasos in the Chilean population is minimal, there is still a little bit of the huaso in the great majority of the populace. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Champion of Chile. Here, in the modern rodeo facilities in the city of Rancagua, the National Finals of the Chilean Rodeo Federation are held. The best seats for the three days of the finals were sold out as 12-year packages, and the last day of competition is always filled to capacity. For those three intense days, most of the fans in the stands are wearing traditional headgear in form of the huaso straw hat that is known as a "chupalla".

As one begins to eyeball the general public, it is incredible how many businessmen and professionals from Santiago are distributed throughout the crowd. While watching the National Finals, one sees many transformations in the spectators. You begin to pick up on a guttural intonation in their speech that celebrates the indigenous origins of the huaso. As it is, much of Chilean vernacular has Quechua and Mapuche origins, but in the huaso jargon this is even more distinct. Huaso expressions that go back to the "Old Spanish" of the conquistadors are speckled in the conversation. Huaso pronunciation is heard that both suppresses and changes letters in words of the Spanish language. Huaso yells of approval ring in the air after a good pin, with the same gusto one might hear the "Olé!" during a Spanish bullfight. In the Champion of Chile, there are many clear signs that, although there are varying degrees of desire to admit it, most Chileans have some little corner of their personality that is "huaso-esque" in nature.

### **The Humble Origins Differ from the Contemporary Stereotype of a Huaso**

We can generalize that contemporary usage of the word huaso refers to an excellent horseman with gentlemanly ways who identifies with the hacienda. It is worth noting that such was not always the case. The Chilean ranch hand had a reputation of being an excellent horseman early on in the history of this country, but "gentlemanly" seems to be a more recent distinction.

The first reference to the word huaso did not come about until 1743. It took more than 50 years to see it crop up in the literature again, and this time it was in describing an Argentine. The word has also been used in Peru. Its origin is not certain. It appears in the early literature as



**Figure II.65** In the painting “Huasos Maulinos”, Rugenda captures the diversity of attire among huasos of old. Their garb had more resemblance to Andalusian bandits with head kerchiefs under various types of hats. The common denominator is the ever present Chilean poncho.

both “huaso” and “guasó”. “Guasa” is a similar Spanish word from the province of Andalusia that is used to describe someone who is ungraceful, unperceptive, not very astute, and slow-witted but with good intent. This same region of Spain that has so strongly influenced the Chilean huaso called a risk taker or a person who made fun of others to the point of hurting their feelings, a “guasón”. On the other hand, Don Rodolfo Lenz’s Etymological Dictionary states that the Quechua word “huasu” refers to something that is rustic, coarse or vulgar. In Ecuador, the word “huazo” refers to someone who is uncivilized, uncouth and impolite. In Cuba, a “guasó” refers to someone that is unrefined and wild.

There is frequent mention of comments made by the famous author of historic literature, Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, regarding the words “huaso” or “huasa”. He points out that these words were used in both the Quechua and Mapuche languages and that they make reference to a person’s back, or carrying something on one’s back. The theory was that since Native Americans saw the huaso on horseback all the time, they described him in this manner. This explanation seems a little weak, since the term really was not commonly used until 300 years after the Native Americans had first seen men on horseback, and by then no one spent more time on horseback than they did.

The fact that similar words can be found throughout Latin America where Andalusian conquistadores were an important part of the colonization would tend to give more credibility to the Spanish origins. Regardless of whether the genesis for the word “huaso” is Spanish or Quechua, there is little doubt that the huasos in the early history of Chile were a rowdier breed. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Chilean ranch hand dressed in coarse ponchos, baggy pants, crude sandals with huge overlying metal spurs and a medieval, conical-shaped, short-brimmed

hat. This image of peasantry was far from the debonair attire that distinguishes the Chilean huaso of the last century.

In the early history of Chile, there were sectors of land where the law could not be enforced. Bandits, cattle rustlers and contraband merchants that crossed the Andes were all commonplace. Back in those days, the huaso used a knife with a long white handle tucked behind the back of his belt. This was part of their traditional gear, much like the gaucho, who still incorporates it in his attire to this day.

Ironically, the worse huaso bandits played crucial roles in disrupting the stronghold of the Spanish royalists, and thus made key contributions to the independence of the Chilean republic. Most of these lawbreakers gained heroic reputations after the war and settled down into more reputable positions in the society of the new nation. As law and order were established, a more tranquil atmosphere reigned in the Chilean countryside, and the sedentary, responsible, faithful huaso we know today began to take shape. This also coincided with the more formal rodeo competitions being defined within the medialunas (half moon arenas) that were influential in creating a much more elegant image of the Chilean horseman. By the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the image we hold of the huaso today was solidly becoming a part of the Chilean culture.

It seems most reasonable to conclude that the word “huaso” is of Andalusian origin and that this sector of the population was responsible for initiating its use throughout Latin America. However, it was most likely the large population of Native Americans who spoke Quechua and Mapuche in Chile that made for the widespread acceptance of this term in reference to the rural horsemen in Chile. Later, the advent of the rodeo that refined the image of the huaso, was responsible for adding a more specific contemporary twist to its definition. The fact is, the word “huaso” has definitely come to mean “a gentlemanly Chilean stock horseman.”

### **From the Central “Island” to Nationwide Distribution**

The Chilean huaso has his origins in the central “island” where the majority of the cattle breeding originally took place. This intermountain valley was referred to as an “island” because it was delineated by the natural boundaries of the Andes Mountains to the east, the coastal mountain range and Pacific Ocean to the west, snow and ice to south and desert to the north. Nowadays, this area is more devoted to wheat, barley, oats and sugar beet crops. What little bovine production is found in the old haciendas now is more apt to be devoted to dairy cattle. The beef production has moved to the non-irrigated lands on the hillsides of the western slopes of the Andes Mountains and coastal mountain range, as well as creeping down the new frontier of the Austral Roadway that penetrates the lands south of Puerto Montt. The large haciendas of yesteryear have disappeared with the more structured farming of row crops. The agrarian reform also subdivided many large ranches and, as a result, the need for stock horses in central Chile is not as essential as it once was.

Thanks to the formation of the Chilean Horse Breeders Association in 1946, as well as the Rodeo Federation in 1961 that required the use of registered **Chilean Horses** in the certified functions of the association, the huaso spirit is alive and well in central Chile. The testing grounds for the registered corraleros are in the more than 200 officially approved half moon arenas around the country. Perhaps the existence of this stock horse is no longer due to the practical demands of the ranches, but the sport of rodeo has assured the stimulus of participants in every nook and cranny of this long and narrow country. Nothing demonstrates this more than the fact there are close to 500 additional privately owned “medialunas” in Chile that are simply used to train and scrimmage corraleros in route to competing in the prestigious certified functions. Not only does every little commune in the central region of Chile have a medialuna where rodeo fanatics can compete, but now the huaso’s skills are being practiced where they were never imagined feasible before.

The island of Chiloé is one such example that has an active rodeo circuit. This island, which depends heavily on the fishing and caged salmon industries, is isolated from the mainland with its own micro-culture that differs significantly from the rest of Chile. Yet, it has enthusiastically adopted the huaso spirit with a local circuit of rodeos. Farther south into isolated areas of Coihaique and Aysén, rodeo clubs are evident as well. These are new territories

with much more rainfall and colder winter temperatures than any traditional huaso would ever put up with, but the flat-brimmed hats, ponchos and large rowel spur have found a home in its environs. Moreover, competitors from Coihaique qualify yearly for the National Championship in Rancagua.

Even as far south as the very tip of continent, all around the city of Punta Arenas in an area known as Magallanes, this national pastime has spread like wildfire. It is true that Magallanes is 1,600 km from the traditional huaso stomping grounds, and is only reached by sea or air, but they have more reason to value the working stock horse than any other sector of the country. Within its boundaries there are more than 400,000 head of mostly Hereford beef cattle and one million head of largely Corriadale sheep.

At the end of the 60's, the then governor of Easter Island, Fernando Silva Molina and an enthusiastic huaso named Luis Hernán Reyes Hermann inaugurated the first rodeo in the newly constructed half-moon arena in Rapa Nui. In this unlikely setting, 3,842 km (2,401 mi) from the city of Santiago on the mainland of Chile, the huaso traditions were exhibited in public for the first time. In the land of the Moais\* that was originally known as "Te Pito Te Henua" (which means the belly button of the world), incredibly horses have been a part of the panorama for longer than modern man can attest to.

Although no one knows how horses were introduced to Easter Island, more than 2,000 head of feral horses roam the island with a similar number of Australian Merino sheep. However, aside from grazing down the natural grasses and sometimes disrespectfully stepping in and around the prehistoric relics that date to cultures before Dutch Admiral Roegeween discovered the island in 1722, the horses have been of little use to the islanders. Largely inbred from years as a closed herd, the island horses have since had some new blood infused to hopefully improve the quality on the island. Nonetheless, the time-tested hardiness of the island horses was exhibited as they were hastily prepared for the first Polynesian Chilean Rodeo in history.

Since 1870, ships from the Chilean navy have taken provisions to the 180,000 square km triangular island that was claimed as part of the Republic of Chile. However, it was not until approximately 60 years ago that the Chilean government began to see the tourism potential of this island's unique archaeological treasures and the convenient geographical placement that the island had as a stepping stone for travelers headed to the countries in and around Oceania. As Chile makes an effort to unify the identity of all its citizens with the traditions of the central provinces that played the most important role in this country's history, the huaso culture will continue to give the horses of Easter Island a unique role. Along with serving as a means of transport for tourists who desire to travel to all the corners of the island, the Rapa Nui horses can take on the important responsibility as Chilean ambassadors for the many tourists that come exclusively to see this part of Chile without ever setting foot on the South American continent.

The latest medialuna to be created is on the edge of the driest desert in the world. This is land that only sees a sprinkle of rain once every 10 years. It lies on the fringe of the Atacama Desert, parts of which have never seen a drop of rain as long as man has recorded history. This newest half-moon arena is in Alto Hospicio on the outskirts of Iquique, a city that has grown due to its free port status. One could theorize that the potential for tourism that is now being tapped in the region has given rise to this new attraction. However, this is not so. For all practical purposes, 100 percent of the participants and spectators are locals.

The same impediments do not deter clubs in other regions of the Atacama Desert as huaso alliances are found in Copiapó, Antofagasta and Calama, the latter prevailing over the challenges to "run cattle" for more than two decades. Even farther north, on the border with Peru, a very active huaso club is found in the Valley of Azapa that constitutes part of the city of Arica. In the middle of this long, narrow green haven that is famous its tart black olives and prehistoric geoglyphs, an unusually well organized and attractive club gives its members an opportunity to participate in the "huasomania". The identity with the huaso is not only seen in

\* - The Moais are Easter Island's famed giant head and torso statues 15-20 m, or 49-65 ft., tall that were carved out of stone.

their enthusiasm for the rodeo, but also because they host the yearly National Finals for the Chilean folkdance known as la Cueca. Here, couples made up of huasos and chinas\* of various ages come from all over Chile to compete for the coveted title in dance competitions of different age brackets.

Few people can even imagine how barren the Atacama Desert is. The stereotypical arid lands in North America with cacti, mesquite trees, and sagebrush, classify as semi-deserts in the Chilean context. The real thing gives scarce opportunities for any sign of life. It's almost like being on the moon. So, it seems incredible that in an area that has to import everything to sustain a horse, as well the steers that will be used in the rodeo itself, a sport such as this could even be a consideration. Yet these realities are living proof of the passionate manner by which the Chileans embrace the huaso image. It is clear that what once represented the central region of Chile has now become a national symbol of an entire country with a diversified geography along its 4,100 km (2,562.5 mile) long trajectory.

### The Homogeneous Origins of Criollo Stock

With so many different regions participating in the rodeos, one would think that the huaso is a role taken on by many different races and ethnic groups. To some extent that is true, and we see Croatian, English, French, German, Greek and Italian names not only participating now, but also in the history books of this sport. However, for the most part, the huaso has been comprised of a very homogeneous type of individual.

When the conquistador Pedro de Valdivia rode into Chile with his army of men and 70 horses, they encountered at least 10 different aboriginal tribes. It is estimated that around one million Native Americans lived in the land that now defines this country. There were Inca, Aymara and Atacameño tribes in the northern most frontier and later Yámanas, Onas and Alacalufes would be discovered on the southern tip of the continent. The seven tribes located in the areas where the Spanish focused their colonization were the most influential in mixing with the Spanish population. The Chiquillanes, Picunches, Promacues, Puelches and Pehuenches of the central valleys; the Mapuches that lived south of the Bío Bío River; and the Huilliches that were situated a bit farther south yet, were the main tribes that contributed to the growth of the Chilean population.



**Figure II.66** A chief of the Picunche tribe was captured by Rugendas in "Cacique Pincuche"

All these tribes became adept horsemen once equines were re-established in their territories. The abundant grasslands in the central valleys of Chile became fertile breeding ground for horses and, as a result, they multiplied in great numbers. During the 346-year effort to dominate the Mapuches of Chile, plenty of time elapsed for the multiplication of the animal that took that confrontation to another level.

For both sides, obtaining the advantages of a potential warhorse was readily resolved. Ever since the first efforts of the priest Rodrigo González Marmolejo to breed horses in this new land, colonists had actively devoted themselves to reproducing horses for the social and military needs of the Spanish settlements. For the tenacious Mapuches, it was just a matter of capturing one of the numerous representatives of the species that were dramatically increasing their numbers in the feral herds south of the city of Concepción. During these three and a half centuries of engagement, the Mapuches became determined and skilled horsemen who gained the respect of their opponents.

\*- Chinas is the term used to describe the innocent country girl that is the counterpart of the young huaso. Typically, they are thought of having two braids in their thick black hair and using a knee length can-can type dress with several slips below along with medium-heeled white shoes

Still, the audacity to incorporate the horse into their plans for warfare did not come about automatically. In fact, it was 23 years after Spaniards on horseback first confronted the panic-stricken Indians of Maule in the winter of 1536 that Mapuches would take up the use of the horse in battle. Incorporating the horse into the Native American cultures did not only offer advantages in creating a more level playing field with their enemies. The added mobility also made significant changes in communications, expanded their areas of influence and potentiated their hunting grounds.

The resilient Mapuches understood well the equating factor of the horse as a war tool. For this reason, they encompassed large numbers of horses to which they devoted a lot of time to train and select for their explicit purpose of being a useful weapon in battle. There are battles recorded by historians where 5,000 Mapuches congregated in making a front and 3,000 of them were mounted warriors. The Spanish required three or four helpers per mounted soldier to tend to the two to three horses needed to deal with the heavy tack, armor, weapons and provisions that made up their requirements for battle. The Mapuche warrior, on the other hand, used but one horse, which he rode bareback with a rope looped through the lower jaw. His weapons were lightweight, and in a small shoulder sack that accompanied him wherever he went, he carried a kilo (2.2 lbs.) of corn or barley that provided an eight-day supply of nourishment and a gourd for drinking his “mate” (*Ilex paraguariensis*).



**Figure II.67**

Close up of Mapuche horsemen in F. Lehnert's "Juego de Chueca". Notice the toe hold used instead of a stirrup.

Arguably, the Mapuches were some of the greatest combatants in history. It suffices to say that the Spaniards lost more men trying to conquer the Mapuches than all the other Native American tribes of the Western Hemisphere put together. There is a saying in Chile that the Mapuches really never lost the war with the Spaniards, but instead, simply chose to stop fighting. The truth be told, it was the lack of Chilean confrontations that eventually did them in. This took away the tremendous incentive to unify in defending themselves, while the European diseases and vices took their toll, more so during the years when the unpredictability of nature brought them debilitating famines.

Part of the reason for the admirable number of Mapuche victories was the demands of conditioning they placed on themselves. They were no less stringent with their horses. Continually, the Mapuche's horses would be conditioned in long-distance races, trained in exercises that evaluated their coordination and athleticism, as well as challenged in long jumps over ditches and high jumps over obstacles. Their horses were not permitted to carry excess body weight, and through intense training they assured that they had the leanness of fine-tuned racehorses. Any individuals that did not meet their expectations were slaughtered and consumed, as horsemeat had become an esteemed source of nutrients.

The fact that the Native Americans ate horsemeat is not to say they had a lack of affection and appreciation for their horses. Horses were treated with the same medicinal procedures that were administered to the most important members of the tribe. Time was taken to perform the same chants that were used on acutely ill people, in an effort to remove any misfortune from the future of their favorite steeds. Likewise, the horse owner went to the trouble of rubbing their horses with a variety of hooves, skins and feathers that were associated with wild animals of admirable speed. The horses were often fed supplements of grains that were the preferred food

of an exceptionally fast bird. In a whisper, they would tell their favorite horse that he was not going to just run, but “fly like the wind”. These preferential treatments were used on any good horse of either sex, as the Native Americans did not have the sexual bias shown by Spaniards that only found it dignified to ride intact males.

Horses became an obsessive part of the Mapuche lifestyle during the years of dispute with the Spaniards. To be on horseback meant to always be ready to fight or flee. Soon, there was little the Mapuches did not do on horseback. The blanket and sheepskins used to sit upon their mounts became a makeshift bed on which to rest during the few hours they were not on horseback. The meager supplies to meet their nutritional needs hung off their sides, where they could be made available while riding. Even the two small sticks that were used to start a fire were often rubbed over the horse’s withers to light the first campfires. Few cultures have introduced the horse so intensively into their lives as the Mapuches of Chile.

The reason I probe into the Mapuche society and their association with the horse is because it is an undeniable fact that the Native American genes and cultures are an integral part of the background of the Chilean huaso. Although the Native American tribes of Chile were not exposed to horses until the white man first set foot in their lands, it is interesting to see how well they incorporated this domestic animal into their day-to-day needs. The natural affinity they had for the horse was evidenced best by the fact that they surpassed the Spaniards, criollos and mestizos of their day in horsemanship. Some of their innovative methods of training horses worked their way into the criollo culture that gave rise to the Chilean huaso. However, the most important thing that has been passed down to the present day huaso is the innate desire to live intensely, associated with this loyal, yet spirited, equine partner known as the **Chilean Horse**.

It has already been established that the Native American tribes of central Chile have played a role in the make up of the developing Chilean populace, which was made up of varying proportions of indigenous genes. In defining the population of Latin America in the colonial days, there are terms used that changed meaning over time and this merits some explanation, as not doing so could lead the reader into confusion. Originally, new Spanish territories were comprised only of Spaniards and Native Americans. As new generations were born in America, an infant of pure Spanish descent was classified as a “criollo”, since it was not born in Spain but was still 100 percent Spanish in its genealogy.

This original use of the word merits our understanding because when speaking of the “**Criollo**” breed of horse, it is also assumed that they were American-born but of pure Iberian source. In countries like Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay the word “**Criollo**” describes a singular breed distributed over these four countries that they proudly maintain as being of pure Spanish origin and common in type and function. In much of the rest of Latin America, however, the word “criollo” came to be a way of describing a native grade horse of unknown origins. Obviously, early on in history, these horses were also probably totally of Iberian background, but once importations of other breeds became a reality, the “criollo” could be any obscure combination of genes with no particular selection criteria.

Similarly, the word “criollo” made a transition in human terminology, as American-born pure Spaniards became a progressively smaller proportion of the population. Generally speaking, the first generation cross of a Spaniard and a Native American was considered a “mestizo”. Thereafter, all crosses to another “mestizo” defined the offspring as “criollo”. In essence, a mixed race “criollo” would have the European forefather (or, occasionally a mother) two or more generations back in his or her genealogical tree. This citizen of uncertain mixed genealogy is the usage for the human description of the word “criollo” that will prevail in the rest of the text.

Some anthropologists, like Donald P. Brand, considered anything above three-quarter blood as a pure representative of an ethnic group. As a result, a mestizo crossed back with either a purebred Native American or Spaniard would be considered a pure representative of the respective ethnicity. By animal breeding practices, this would be stretching the definition by a good margin, as four generations of crosses back to purebreds of a breed would be required to obtain the 96 percent purity that could reproduce true to a defined genetic pool. Still, even by this very loose definition of “purity” which attributes many more criollos to purebred categories, Dr. Brand found that, in 1941, 65 percent of the Chilean human population was

criollo. He determined that Chile was next to Nicaragua, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela in being the one of the countries with the highest percentage of mixed Spanish and Native American blood.



**Figure II.68**  
The “Jinete Maulino” painted by Rugendas could represent an ascending mestizo in Chilean society.

In concurrence with the discrimination that was typical of the time, Chileans further classified mestizos and criollos as ascending or descending. “Ascending” referred to individuals that found greater personal desire, parental motivation and social acceptance to identify with the Spanish origins of the colonial culture. “Descending”, on the other hand, denoted individuals that, for the same reasons, identified themselves with the Native American cultures. The obvious factor that influenced “ascending” and “descending” status was the change in the proportion of genes that brought the resulting offspring closer to one or the other extreme. The unfortunate undertone that you move up in society as you become a higher percentage of Spaniard and you move down in society if you acquire a larger percentage of Native American blood, is a clear indication of what kind of society concocted the terms. Obviously the Chilean society represented the bias of the mother country (conquerors) more

than the respect for the original inhabitants of this land (the conquered).

However, in Colonial Chile there were even more subtle influences, such as what race the father was, how active a role the father took in rearing his children, in which culture the child was reared, the physical and intellectual attributes of the individual, and the culture the individual showed preference for in his dress and appearance, etc. It is regrettable that there was such strong social pressure to make identifying with the Spanish culture so desirable, while identification with the Native American culture was seen as shameful, or inconvenient, at the very least.

This is substantiated by the positive implication of an ascending criollo being termed a huaso, while the descending criollo was called a “roto”. The latter word means “torn”, but what it implies here is an impoverished, worthless individual. Needless to say, identifying with the Spanish culture was to desire to be accepted by the free citizens of the colony that dominated the land that had once been solely occupied by the Native Americans. Should one’s preferences be with the Native American values, it meant being associated with the suffrage of a downtrodden people struggling to maintain their dignity while losing many rights given only to free citizens of the colony.

The other part of the formula in the make up of the Chilean huasos was a result of the European population that courageously sought to settle these lands so far from their native Spain. Yet incredibly, between 1540 and 1810, only about 5,000 Spaniards were reported to have entered the country. More than half of these were reported to have come from the areas of León, Extremadura and Castile. The generalization is often made that the Spanish influence is in great part a result of the citizens of Andalusia, but in Chile these only made up 25 percent of the Spanish immigrants. Still, it can also be said that, by far, the Andalusian immigrants were most apt to live polygamous lifestyles that fathered a larger number of mestizos. As a result, the impact that Andalusians had on the criollo population, by far, outweighed the proportion of their numbers within the Chilean populace.

In fact, the effect this Spanish contingent had on the population was significant. In 1540, there were only 10,000 criollos in the country, but this figure quadrupled in the next 80 years. In this same time period, the fatalities of war and diseases brought in by Europeans reduced the

Native American population to one-fourth of what it originally had been. By 1810, the criollo population made up 96 percent of the more than 830,000 free citizens, a census that did not include the Native Americans unwilling to succumb to the laws of the new republic. Still, it is important to note that foreigners and first-generation Chileans made up less than two percent of the populace. This figure was about equal to the black population, which was rapidly dwindling after it peaked in about 1680.

In truth, the geographical isolation of Chile made the influx of foreigners very limited. What resulted was a demographic composition of a strong middle class of genetically homogeneous criollos. Since any half-breed son of a Spaniard automatically obtained the status of a free citizen, there was an imposing temptation to use this as a means of incorporating into a society that was not only permanent in nature, but also distinctly discriminate against Native Americans. The Spanish paternal last names were used to define the ancestry of this country of largely Spanish-Native American mix. However, the influence of the maternal native bloodlines lingered on in the customs and traditions that were to become authentic to Chile. The overwhelming majority of criollo citizens made this the mainstream genotype of Chile. Within this makeup, a large array of workers of all social levels and capacities came about. By the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term criollo was synonymous with Chileno, and the prior term was dropped all together.

This combination of the tenacity of Spaniards that confronted incredible trials and tribulations to settle the New World and the Native American cultures of Chile that were known for their incredible sense of pride and fighting spirit forms the backbone of the Chilean huaso. The virtue that is often generalized about the huaso image is a proud self-assurance that is coupled with the courage to tackle any challenge on horseback.

### **A Multifaceted Ranch Hand that Prefers the Work in the Saddle**

To this day, huasos are known to be preferential in the type of work they do. Much like the conquistadors who started the Chilean society, they show a declared dislike for manual labor. However, unlike the gaucho that will barely contemplate stepping off his horse to do anything, the huaso has had a more varied trajectory, being of use on foot, as well as on horseback. However, he generally meets the more menial “on ground” tasks with less enthusiasm and a slower pace. It is when the huaso is challenged to put his horsemanship skills to use that one realizes his cunning and valor. Providing these services offer the greatest opportunities to proudly demonstrate he is a first-rate horse-and cattleman.

Nowhere is this evidenced more than the roundups that are held in the rugged mountain terrains so widely distributed throughout Chile. These sectors are often the breeding and growing grounds for cattle left to fend for themselves until the yearly call for branding and sorting. It is here that the huaso puts all his skills to use in searching and driving the rowdy cattle that need to reach the communal pens of the hacienda. It is in the distress of the unpredictable, steep, rocky terrain that both the **Chilean Horse** and huaso show the self-confidence that comes from their dependence on each other.

For three to seven days a week, the huaso will live an atypical life. Sleeping on his saddle blankets and saddle leathers in the open air, the huaso shifts to a drover’s (arriero) lifestyle. Living on little but a mix of toasted ground wheat, sugar and water and an occasional bite of smoked jerky (charqui), for these days his diet is reminiscent of his Mapuche ancestors at war. A hollowed-out gourd container may be among his essential utensils. This he fills with a cut, dry, grass called yerba mate before adding hot water. When it has simmered he sips through the metal straw known as a bombilla that has a metal bulb on the end that is perforated with holes. This ingenious invention strains out the native tea directly into shallow swallows of bitter tonic. They may have assured the omnipresence of Spanish names, but clearly the Native American influence is woven into the huaso culture!!

Occasionally, a cup of instant coffee can be prepared in an old coffee can that has a make-shift wire handle to place and remove it between the stones on the edge of the campfire. This “choca” container is a common implement that hangs off the sides of packhorses or saddles of riders that find joy in its rhythmic melody when traveling through the mountains. This is not

the normal life of the huaso, who relishes going to his adobe-wall house at the end of every day, with its clay tile roof and a yard full of children. However, when duty calls to display his talents as a horseman and cattle driver, nothing will stimulate him more than proving his worth in front of his peers.

Not all huaso chores were as exciting as the roundups. Others were monotonous by definition. In the days when gentlemen would only consider riding stallions, mares were selected for a good turn of foot so that they could implement the wheat thrashing process. The wheat was distributed on a compressed floor of a circular ring. These “trilla” mares, as they were called, energetically went around and around until their continual pounding separated the grain from the hull. Later, shovelfuls of the processed wheat were thrown into the air. This rudimentary sifting process could sort out the desired grain granule that fell close by from the fibrous by-products that were blown farther downwind.

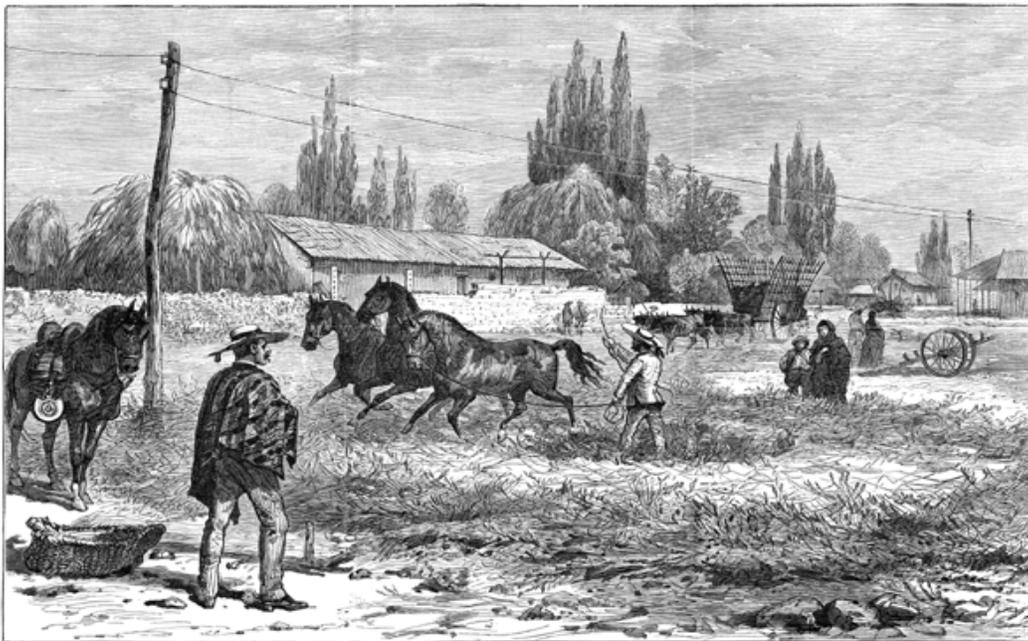


Figure II.69

Etching of wheat thrashing in the open with a controlled “cobra” of Chilean mares

The production of trilla mares had existed in Chile since 1610. Good groups of homogenous looking mares were bred and selected for this purpose. Not only were they able to get the job done quickly for the hacienda, but also in doing so, offered the opportunity to lease out their services to other farmers who did not benefit from horses trained for this function. The need for this job assured the **Chilean Horse** breeders that the future broodmares would have some sort of selection as well. After all, these were the broodmares of their cowhorses. Breeding a good mare for wheat processing offered an opportunity to select for spirit, sound body and limbs, and good temperament -- all qualities that would serve the huaso in stock horse competitions as well.

Nowadays, the combine has substituted the labor of the horse hoof, but most small town celebrations invariably honor this custom with “reality” examples of how the huasos made the trilla work. It is a reminder that, in Chile, the hacienda was never far from some agrarian activity that also made up part of the responsibilities of the versatile and cooperative huaso.

## Great Ones that Made the Transition from the Ranch to the Sport Arena

Although huasos can have a diversity of functions on the farm or rural community, more and more, the word is beginning to define the man that drives and pins cattle in the rodeos. In this context, the huaso may not even have a rural background or profession, but if he has devoted himself wholeheartedly to the sport of the rodeo, respects its traditions, partakes in the camaraderie, and is good at “running the cattle”, he will be respected as a huaso in most circles. The sport has always had interesting combinations of huaso farm owners and huaso employees that team up for these formal competitions. Sometimes father-son combinations can also be seen. Brothers have also ridden together. Lately, however, there is a new era in the sport whereby salaried riders are being remunerated excellent salaries in order to assure the results for top-notch breeding farms. This has brought about teams of two well-respected professionals that have joined forces under the incentive of a more formal job description.



**Figure II.70** As the Chilean Rodeo became a sport the huasos took on a more uniform identity.

It would be unfair to mention the rodeo huaso and not talk about some of the great names in this sport. There are many ways in which huasos can be classified as all-time greats. The traditional method has been by the total number of lifetime points accumulated in the list of nationally ranked riders. This undoubtedly values consistency in the top 10 and longevity in the sport. Originally, a designated committee was chosen to vote on the top-ranked riders, but now the representatives of all the rodeo clubs in the country send in their votes that are tallied for a pronounced outcome at the end of the season. There is no denying that the personalities of popular or unpopular riders can in some way influence this method of appraisal. Hopefully, some day there will be a more objective formula for choosing these standings on performance related data.

Another manner that perhaps gives more merit to excellence is the number of times a rider has obtained the top spot in the national ranking.

This might be akin to comparing players with the most number of years in the All-Star game with a player that has had the most number of MVP's (Most Valuable Player) in this privileged game. Then again, the manner in which many people judge superiority is by National Championships. It doesn't matter if what you collect are NBA rings, World Title Boxing Belts, Grand Slam tennis trophies or Olympic Gold Medals, the “proof is in the pudding”!

So what determines the best huasos in the Chilean Rodeo circuit? Is it the number of National Championships titles he has won in the Champion of Chile? Is it the number of times he has been ranked number one in the end of the season ranking of riders? Is it the number of times he has been part of the Top 10 Riders of the Chilean Rodeo? Each fan will have his own formula that no doubt also takes into account the appeal of the rider, the competitiveness of the paired team and the admiration for the horses that are associated with the riders in question. Here are some candidates that have incredible qualifications for your consideration:

**Ramón Cardemil Moraga** has become a legend in his own time, and a statue of this famed rider and his great horse *Bellaco* has been erected in his hometown of Curicó. By about any parameter used to judge the most successful corralero riders, he comes out among the best. Although at one time he had accumulated more ranking points in the sport of Chilean Rodeo than any other rider, as of 2004 he stands fourth on the list, with a total of 113 ranking points. His main distinction, which is common knowledge to anybody interested in the Chilean Rodeo, is being the first rider to have won seven national titles in the Champion of Chile. In three

different years, he was ranked the best rider in the country. Without a doubt, all riders envied the intelligence he showed as a competitor, and certainly this proved crucial in obtaining the number of Championships he accumulated. On the other hand, his riding style was not considered the most polished, even frustrating some that could not comprehend his amazing accomplishments. As if being a top rider were not sufficient, the chapter on breeders will give proof that he has also done the impossible in that department too.



Fig. II.71 Pinning on Bellaco



Figure II.72 Pinning on Bellaco



Figure II.73 Pinning on Tabacón

**Juan Carlos Loayza MacLeod** holds the top spot in total nationally ranked points. While still in his prime, as of 2004, Juan Carlos has amassed 159 ranking points. Having been chosen the best rider in seven seasons, he tops the sport in that category as well. As if this were not enough, he has been the runner-up in the year-end voting during another four occasions. Many would say that suffices to pronounce Juan Carlos as the best professional huaso of all time. In 2007 he obtained his seventh national title in the Champion of Chile equaling the seemingly unattainable record national title would unify undisputed claim to the throne rightly deserves. Known for posture than most huasos, he partner with mounts he rarely pressure, no one is more point pin when it's needed. great sense of timing, but competitiveness. If anyone will inherit the legendary status of the great Ramón Cardemil, it is this gifted rider with an elegant seat and "hands of silk". As one of the first of a new generation that has learned the modern ways of life while still being highly respectful of the old, Juan Carlos's identity with tradition represents the huaso stereotype well. Nonetheless, this college graduate is well versed in all facets of the **Chilean Horse** industry and he not only states his opinions eloquently, but he can also make a group of friends roll in laughter with a huge repertoire of jokes.



Fig. II.74

**Eduardo Tamayo Órdenes** is second on the list, with a total of 149 accumulated points in the ranking. He holds the honor of having been chosen the best rider in two different years, but his forte, by and far, is his (the little machine) to his fans, which he obtains point after nickname could also apply to 23 years, he has been voted to the record for 14 consecutive Tamayo is a winner of five gentleman of the sport that Tamayo has shown un-notable aspects. Handicapped by



Fig. II.75

consistency. Known as "la maquina" because of the nonchalant manner in point in undramatic pins. The his reliability in the top 10 poll. For the elite all-star team, and he holds years as a top 10 member. Mr. National Championship titles. A true humbly holds a low profile, Mr. recognized brilliance in many less having sight in only one eye, in a sport

with an incredible number of variables that benefit from full vision, “Lalo” (as he is known to his friends and fans) is as reliable as they come when pinning cattle is the task. Still, another overlooked skill is how effectively he drives the steers to set up his teammates’ pins. He is one of the few top names that trains all the horses he rides. The patience and consideration he shows his pupils is also obvious in competition, where he only asks enough to get the job done. From a gifted family of huasos with an uncommon amount of “horse sense”, he has not only held his family name in high esteem, but also that of the entire huaso community.

**Ricardo de la Fuente Riveros** is another one of the greats that have surpassed the milestones set by “On Ramón” in regard to total points in the ranking. “Cacaro”, as he is fondly known for his gift of the gab, has a total of 131 points in his rankings over the years. Like “Mr. Huaso” himself, during three years he was ranked number one in the sport. He also has earned three National Championships at the Champion of Chile, and to his credit, they have been on three different horses and with three different teammates. Incredibly dependable, “Cacaro” has been ranked in the Top 10 riders for 24 out of the last 30 years. Only Eduardo Tamayo has come close to that feat. The man that seemingly has discovered the secret of the Fountain of Youth is still going strong with a hard-hitting style that many horses can’t keep up with. His contagious smile and jovial personality always brighten up the rodeos he competes in.

**José Manuel Aguirre**, who is most often referred to as “Coteco”, not only holds the fifth spot in the number of ranking points accumulated in rodeos with 106 points, but

together with his colleague **Raúl Rey Gamonal** he holds top honors in having won seven National Rienda titles in his lifetime. The caliber of his horsemanship is evidenced by the fact that his seven rienda titles were obtained on five different horses. In 1992, Mr. Aguirre set a goal for all reiners by scoring a record of 61 points. Still unsurpassed, the record has since been equaled by the talented **Alfonso “Chiqui” Navarro**. “Coteco” won a National Championship beside his brother “Memo” and twice has been voted the best-ranked rider of the year. Moreover, he has participated in many international reining competitions and has always represented Chile well. He has won Argentina’s prestigious Felipe Z. Ballester National Reining competition. In Brazil, he participated in their famous “Freio de Ouro” (Golden Bit) and impressed the home crowd taking home the first prize. When representing Chile in the reining competitions of the FICCC in Asunción, Paraguay he also won the coveted first place. Outside of the stock horse arenas he was a well-handicapped polo player and also a successful stadium jumper. The reputation “Coteco” has of being the greatest rienda competitor and one

of the best all-around riders this country has ever known, is well deserved.

**Regalado Bustamante Barahona**, who takes the sixth spot in total ranking points, is also a four-time winner of the top ranking in rodeo competitions. During 10 rodeo seasons he has been voted into the prestigious Top 10 club. Having re-entered the ranks of competitive corraleros, the history books are still not closed on “Don Rega”. The big, powerful man with a ton of experience is working on some young horses for Don Gonzalo Vial that we are likely to hear more about in the not-too-distant future.

**Ruperto Valderrama** was the experienced partner of Ramón Cardemil. He not only accompanied the “King of Rodeo” in winning five Champions of Chile, but he also hand picked some of the horse purchases that took them to the top. He also deserves the credit for the training of both his mounts and those of Don Ramón when they were a paired team. He often stood in shadows of the limelight surrounding Mr. Cardemil, but “On Ramón” publicly acclaimed his talented partner whenever he could.

Figure II.77  
R. Valderrama



**Santiago Urrutia B.** dominated the years between 1963 and 1972 having brought home five number-one rankings, one runner up, two fifths and one sixth. What an incredible decade that was!! As a one-time leader of number-one rankings and also having earned the respect as one of the great reiners of his day by obtaining four consecutive National Champion Rienda titles aboard his memorable *Capuchín*, this is a name that merits more mention than it gets.

Another highly regarded reiner worth mentioning is **Luis Eduardo Cortés**, a six-time national champion, five of which came aboard *Carretero*. “Negro”, as his growing number of fans call him, has a very good chance of becoming the all-time leader in National Rienda titles as he is just midway through his career. An excellent rider in the rodeo as well, his only National Title win in a Champion of Chile broke the record for points earned on four steers. With an aggressive style that always runs full tilt, he is a crowd pleaser. He came by his skills rightfully, as he is the son of **Don Remigio Cortés**. Don “Remi”, the first National Rienda Champion of Chile, is one of the great horse trainers of the breed, who performs his magic in spite of a crippling car accident in midlife. Many equine Champions of Chile have received his didactic touch.

There is a name that most old timers would say should be in a class by himself. I did not have the honor of seeing him ride, but if you were to ask anybody that has seen all the great ones, who they thought was the best huaso aboard a **Chilean Horse**, nine times out of ten the answer will be a very quick **Segundo Zuñiga**. His given name was **Juán Segundo Zuñiga** but “Segundo” alone only means one possible person in the **Chilean Horse** industry. He was around in the early part of the sport so he has only one national championship under his belt and that was in 1960. However, his contribution in having pride of his elegant seat, of being an artist with the use of the spurs, of obtaining good posture on the steer early on in the run, and of being a good sport in the heat of competition, were all ground-breaking changes in their time.

All sports have the unsung heroes. The ones that never got the NBA ring or the Olympic gold medal, or the ones that were born too early, or they were not at the right place at the right time or maybe they were unlucky and entering the record books “simply was not meant to be”. Yet, some of these exceptional athletes are mentioned along with the best that are full of awards because the knowledgeable fans of the sport know that these individuals were the best all around competitors in every facet of the game. Many of those things don’t earn medals but they certainly earn respect. **Segundo Zuñiga** was one such man whose recognition should not go unsaid. Perhaps he deserves to be mentioned last, because he emulates all the qualities that every huaso dreams of having. He was christened “Segundo” which ironically means “second” but in reality there are few informed people in this sport that don’t mention him as Number One!!

It is fitting that we end this chapter talking about the great huasos that participate in the National Finals of the Champion of Chile. These are all great horsemen that identify strongly with the traditions ingrained in the rural settings of the central region of Chile. They are impeccably dressed contestants, riding imposing representatives of the **Chilean Horse** breed, as they constantly give testimony of being honorable competitors, loyal friends, devoted patriots and proud representatives of a class of man that holds steadfast to old values that the huaso has come to represent in the hearts of all Chileans.



**Figure II.78** Juan Segundo Zuñiga receives the most accolades as being the best all around “corralero”.

## Some multiple winners of the Champion of Chile

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Ramón Cardemil       | 7 wins |
| Juan Carlos Loayza   | 7 wins |
| Eduardo Tamayo       | 5 wins |
| Ruperto Valderrama   | 5 wins |
| Hugo Cardemil        | 4 wins |
| José Astaburuaga     | 3 wins |
| Regalado Bustamante  | 3 wins |
| Ricardo de la Fuente | 3 wins |
| René Guzmán          | 3 wins |
| Avelino Mora         | 3 wins |
| René Urzúa           | 3 wins |
| Raúl Cáceres         | 2 wins |
| Manuel Fuentes       | 2 wins |
| Claudio Hernandez    | 2 wins |
| Rufino Hernandez     | 2 wins |
| Miguel Lamoliatte    | 2 wns  |
| Carlos Mondaca       | 2 wins |
| José Manuel Rey      | 2 wins |
| Santiago Urrutia     | 2 wins |
| Vicente Yañez        | 2 wins |



Fig. II.79



Fig. II.80



Fig.II.81

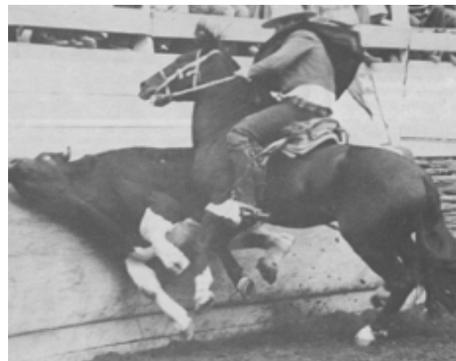


Fig. II 82

**Figure II.79** Hernandez brothers won back to back rodeos including a national record score.  
**Figure II.80** Ramon Cardemil on Manicero who gave him 3 of his 7 Nat'l Championships  
**Figure II.81** R. Cardemil and R. Valderrama account for 12 Nat'l Championships between them.  
**Figure II.82** The great stallion Estribillo won two Nat'l Championships



Fig. II.83



Fig. II.84



Fig. II.85



Fig. II.86



Fig. II.87

**Figure II.83** J.C.Loaiza and E.Tamayo on Talento and Escorpion. These horses and riders total 16 Nat'l Championships.  
**Figure II.84** J.M. Rey and R. Guzman teamed up with Canteado and Pretal for back to back Nat'l Championships.  
**Figure II.85** S. Parot and E. Tamayo have 7 Nat'l Championship between the two of them.  
**Figure II.86** H. Cardemil and J. Astaburuaga on Reservado and Esquinazo. The horses and riders are responsible for 12 Nat'l Championships  
**Figure II.87** J.C. Loaiza (7 wins) and E. Cortes (1 win) tied a national record score in winning the Nat'l Championship on Banquero and Batuco.