

Conclusion

What Lies in Store for Chile's Best Kept Secret

In spite of being in a far-flung corner of the world, Chile is a country that has had some very important international marketing accomplishments in its past. It has capitalized natural resources within its borders as well as introduced projects of foreign origin and taken them to new heights of world recognition. Yet, there is a strange irony in the fact that having past and present examples of successful international marketing, this country has chosen to lie dormant with unique marketable items that, for the most part, only Chileans have the privilege of experiencing. As a general rule, they have excelled in meeting the demands of established purchasing fields, while showing much less self assurance and innovation in promoting things they value that are singular to their own society.

If I might take liberty of jumping across different fields and periods of time, I would like to point out many interesting areas that exemplify how Chile has fortified its economy by giving serious consideration to readily marketable products. Certainly, there are many examples that illustrate that Chile has the wherewithal to be an effective international exporter. At that same time, I would like to indicate how timorous Chilean producers have been to open new markets for products that are largely exclusive to their country. In this manner, I intend to explain why most of you have not heard of the **Chilean Horse**. Further, I will point out how successful the limited efforts to export **Chilean Horses** have been. Surely, this should motivate horsemen from around the world to venture to demonstrate the attributes of the **Chilean Horse** breed at the international level of competition, as this will permit them to tap into the latent marketing potential of this marvelous stock horse breed.

Mining Shows the Way for International Marketing

In 1830, a giant was unraveled in the lands of the Atacama Desert that in future years would be annexed to Chile's territory. The nitrate industry initiated a secure foothold on a developing economy that attracted investors and workers from all over Europe. Its potential seemed so great at the time that Chile abandoned its vigilance over much of the Patagonia that was once within its boundaries, in order to concentrate on obtaining the source of this mineral wealth. The War of the Pacific was the end result.

Even before the potential of harvesting minerals from the pampas of the Tamarugal, hordes of so-called "China men", Afro-Americans and Native American slaves were used to shovel and bag the excrement from the guanay ducks, pirqueros and pelicans. Unlike most marine birds that defecate in flight, these species do so while roosting on the rocky islands that lined the northern coasts of Chile and Peru. The massive flocks of millions of guanay ducks (*Phalacrocorax bougainvilli*, a variety of cormorant) are responsible for 85 percent of the guano* production on the coasts of the Tarapacá and Atacama regions. A large colony of these gregarious birds is capable of catching a thousand tons of anchovies per day. For each 14 tons of anchovies the birds eat, they process a ton of avian manure that they indiscriminately deposit anywhere, including in and around their nest. The result is layers of guano that can reach 30 meters (98 ft.) in depth during thousands of years of deposition. The local climate that is totally void of precipitation is ideal for the preservation of the nutrient value of this organic fertilizer.

It is known that as early as 300 years before Christ, the Mochica tribes of northern Peru harvested this natural compost. The Incas did likewise after them. Therefore, it is not surprising that, at the turn of the 19th century, the growing population of Europeans of the region should consider the idea of harvesting this resource for international markets. Under treacherous conditions, the hard guano was broken up with pick axes, crushed with sledge hammers and shoveled into bags that were carried on the shoulders of a huge labor force.

* - Seabird dung in the native *Quechua* was referred to as "huanu" and thus the more correct usage of the word guano should be for seabird excrement. Nevertheless, over time it has also been used to describing bat excrement and in Chile it is even a misnomer used to describe horse feces.

These “slaves” of the guano industry transported the dusty deposits that in some cases had accumulated long enough to become fossilized. The clouds of dust penetrated the lungs and irritated the eyes. The stench was offensive enough that some workers leaped off the rocky cliffs to their death, rather than withstand the repugnant conditions in which they were forced to labor. Down deep, narrow, rocky paths that led to small boats, these suffered souls paid their toll in an unknown number of casualties before they unloaded on the mainland. With this harsh rudimentary beginning, northern Chile initiated a reputation for its sale of the much-needed sources of nitrogen for world agriculture.

This same fertilizer market also served to motivate the harvest of the sodium and potassium nitrate reserves that were found in large patches of land throughout the Atacama Desert. Actually, it was found to be the largest natural reserve of nitrate in the world. The strip of land that is rich in “caliche” (unprocessed nitrate) is 25 to 30 km (15.63 – 18.75 mi.) wide and more than 700 km (438 mi.) long. The “caliche” can be on the surface or beneath a layer of 20-40 cm (8-16 inches) of sand, silt or clay and then another layer of conglomerates of sulfur and sodium chloride (salt) that vary between 50 cm to two meters deep. Beneath the salty crust lies the “caliche” that is rich in sodium nitrate, iodine, sodium sulphate and sodium chloride.

In the 19th century, the product was harvested with pick axes and shovels, and the boulders of crude nitrate were hand loaded in single axle carts that mules carried to the closest port. This rudimentary beginning started the export of Chilean nitrate to Europe and the U.S.A. With time, processing plants were formed in the mines. The mule trains now carried the raw material to the plant, where it was heated in large copper vats that precipitated the salt from the saturated nitrate solution. The decanted nitrate soda was dried and then bagged in order to haul it by horse and mule power to docks 50-75 km (31-47 mi.) away.



Figure II.313
Mules hauling wagon loads of nitrate

In this, the driest desert of the world, at one time a population of 2,000 equids was maintained to transport this resource of great international appeal. The upkeep of the horse and mule population was provided within thousands of hectares of salt-crusted soils. The noxious element was removed by manual labor in long, narrow strips of land (known as “canchones”) to expose unique soils below that permitted growing stands of deep-rooted alfalfa that benefited from the surfacing of the water table by capillary action.

In 1871, an intricate network of trains would start to provide the means to take the harvest from fields to the processing plants and the marketable product from the mines to the port of embarkation. Motorized vehicles would carry the crude nitrate from excavation sites to the railway receiving facilities, and would transport the personnel to and from their work areas. With the advent of dump trucks, these would unload the by-products of the processing plants into large man-made mesas. These huge formations look so much like the natural panorama of the American southwest that it is hard to believe they are not one of Mother Nature’s creations. These “tortas” (cakes), as they are referred to in Spanish, are still evident throughout the deserts of northern Chile.

In its prime, Chile had around 170 nitrate mines and exported as much as 2,919,177 tons of processed material a year that, at times, made up more than 67 percent of the national income. These companies were a source of employment to more than 45,000 workers. Generations of laborers were housed in mining camps that offered all the amenities of a modern town of the day. In the most productive years, the census of all the mining camps in northern Chile surpassed 100,000 people.

Amazingly, herds of Argentine cattle (sometimes with their cloven hooves shod) were periodically driven over the Andes and across the desert to be fattened and maintained until they were progressively butchered to meet the needs of the region’s work forces. The marvelous forests of Tamarugo (*Prosopis tamarugo*) and Algarrobo (*Prosopis chilensis*) dwindled to one-third of their original size. They had long been an energy source for the Spaniards that further exploited the original Inca silver mines in Huantajaya. Now, the timber of these forests was

constantly harvested to meet the needs of the nitrate processing plants. These incredible leguminous trees defied the lack of ambient moisture with a root system that reached a depth of 25-30 meters (81-97.5 ft.), where they tapped into an abundant underground system of streams that belied the completely arid conditions overhead.

As early as the end of the 17th century, the saltpeter extracted in the Atacama Desert was also exploited for its role in the production of gunpowder that was used for the explosives needed in mining. This use has continued ever since and eventually Chilean private investors would export modern military weapons. The region that once processed important quantities of silver in 1866 gave way to the more sophisticated extraction of iodine. Today, two plants harvest enough iodine daily from the nitrate piles to meet the entire needs of the world. The highlands of the north also provided vast yellow fields rich in pure sulfur. As Chile gained fame in mining, experts attracted to the area discovered diverse potentials in the metallurgic industry.

World-renowned copper mines, such as the famed Anaconda Copper Mining Company, initiated large-scale digs in the region of Chuquicamata, where Native Americans had reaped copper 1,500 years before the arrival of the first Spaniards. This mine has turned into the largest man-made hole on the face of the planet, with dimensions of nearly 3 km wide by 5 km long and nearly a half of a kilometer (.31 mi.) in depth. Nationalized under the name of CODELCO in 1967, it is responsible for almost 31 percent of the copper produced in the world. In fact, three of the four largest copper mines in the world are found in Chile.

Not far from "Chuqui", El Salar Grande has now been recognized as one of the largest salt deposit in the world within reasonable proximity of an ocean port. With dimensions of 150 km (93.75 mi.) long and 30 km (18.75 mi.) wide, the 98-percent-pure sodium chloride reserves penetrate as deep as 300 m (325 yards). It is estimated that these salt flats alone can supply the present salt needs of the entire world for nearly 3,500 years (Based on *Salt Institute* figures of 225 million metric tons of salt produced worldwide per year). Already, it is supplying 40 percent of the road salt for the entire U.S.A., and they have just begun to make the first little dent in this convenient mineral reserve. Road construction with salt has shown much promise in northern Chile, and in light of the rising prices for asphalt and cement, this is another potentially viable market for this product abroad.



Figure II.314
The largest man made open pit hole in the world.

As impressive as the Salar Grande is, on the eastern side of Antofagasta lies the largest salt deposit in Chile. With dimensions of up to 100 km in width and 200 km in length (62.5 X 125 miles) and around 400 m (433 yards) in depth, the valley it occupies has an area equivalent to the island of Cyprus. Once covered by ocean water, the geological formation of the Andes Mountains lifted this sector to above 2,000 m (6,500 ft) a.s.l., and the natural depression of this valley retained a lake of ocean water that has constantly mixed with mineral waters that flow down from the bubbling hot springs and melting snows from the various volcanoes that circumscribe the area. Once rich in fauna and flora that were joined by the prehistoric cultures that settled here 4,000 years ago, today the more barren landscape holds a different sort of wealth of a futuristic nature.

It is estimated that about half of the lithium reserves of the world lie in this salt lake. Although it is an obvious source of sodium chloride, potassium chloride, potassium sulphate and boric acid, the real potential lies in its lithium content. When the technology is perfected, lithium batteries will not only be the source of energy for all our modes of transportation, but also through its role in nuclear fusion (much less costly, less dangerous and less contaminating to the environment than the nuclear fission that is the source of nuclear power in the world today) a great part of the energy needs of mankind will be satisfied. It is estimated that the Atacama Salt Flat holds approximately 4.5 million tons of pure lithium. To give an idea of the potential of this yield, we can note that Chile could meet its present energy needs for 300 years with only 1,000 tons of lithium. Scientific research in the United States and Russia, who are

presently the main producers of lithium, is still not advanced enough to market this resource readily. However, you can be sure that Chile is following this progress closely because one of its greatest potential exports is lying dormant like a sleeping giant within the slopes of the Andes.

Wines, Fruits and Salmon Jump on the Bandwagon

To the south, far from the mining fields, the soil fertility, dependable irrigation water sources and stable temperatures have made the central regions of Chile a vineyard paradise. The traditions are as old as Chilean history itself. The earliest vineyard is credited to Francisco Aguirre, who harvested his first grapes in 1551 in the town of Copiapó. Three years later, red wines were being produced around the city of Santiago. The varieties used for practically three centuries were “País” and “Moscatel”, and the wine that was initially produced for religious ceremonies was not especially appealing to the taste buds of connoisseurs on the matter.

A new mentality would promote the idea that wine was an exportable asset. In the 18th century, wineries in the oasis town of Matilla utilized the grapes from the surrounding oasis of Pica and the Valley of Quisma to satisfy an international demand for its famed port wine. Farther south, also during the colonial days, the high sugar content of the grapes grown in the semi-desert surroundings in the Valley of Elqui provided the raw material for the New World’s attempt to replicate European cognac and brandy. The result was “pisco” that was only 30-45 percent alcohol, yet the poor imitation became famous for its own particularly appealing qualities. When combined with limes from the oasis of Pica (similar to Key West limes), egg-whites, clear syrup and a touch of bitter, it becomes the “pisco sour” that is now the standard cocktail appetizer in all of Chile and Peru. The fact that this astonishingly tasty cocktail is not a standard option in all the bars of the world is an example of Chileans feeling less comfortable promoting their own customs abroad.

By the middle of the 19th century, Sylvester Ochagavía hired one of the many enologists that were unemployed in France after the *Phylloxera* (a type of plant lice) nearly ruined grape production in Europe. Such expertise led to the introduction of improved European varieties of grapes. These new grape varieties that were principally suited for red wines later covered the central valleys around Santiago and gave rise to internationally recognized vineyards – the likes of Concha y Toro, Grand Tarapacá, and Cousiño Macul. They, in turn, have motivated countless numbers of high-caliber vineyards from the Valley of Limarí, 1,100 km (688 miles) southwards to the Bío Bío Valley that are well known, principally for their Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Carmenère varieties.

The advent of the establishment of the Miguel Torres winery in Chile brought with it a more modern wine making technique that used stainless steel vats for the fermentation process. Although exports to Europe began in 1887 and the first wines were exported to the USA in 1903, it was the overall acceptance of the changes introduced to the Chilean industry in 1978, as well as the change in government policies that motivated Chile into a more profitable international merchandizing of their wines. Today, 60 percent of the wines produced in Chile are exported, and in the last 15 years exports of bottled and bulk wine have increased tenfold.

In 1982, Pablo Morandé started a vineyard in an area that since the colonial days had been used for extensive cattle farms. Due to the climatic similarities with the region of Carneros (California), Chardonnay, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc varieties were introduced. Today, the valley of Casa Blanca (translates to “white house”, so the colonial name curiously hinted all along to its potential for white wine production) has blossomed into a totally new enological potential for white wine varieties. Although the soil and climate are ideal for Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc vines, a substantial quantity of Pinot Noir grapes are produced as well. Sparkling wines are also making their presence felt in this gifted area.

Since *Phylloxera* has never been a problem in Chile, the grapevines are not grafted onto the resistant but low caliber *Vitis Americana* plant, and thus Chilean grapes are uniquely a product of *Vitis vinifera*. Today, there are approximately 109,000 hectares (269,230 acres) of vineyards between the 30th and 50th parallel with prestigious enologists who supervise countless new wineries that are producing award-winning liquid treasures to the senses. Wines like

Concha y Toro's *Don Melchor*, Almaviva's *Primer Orden*, Casa Lapostolle's *Clos Apalta*, Viña Errázuriz's *Seña*, Monte's *Wine M*, Gran Tarapaca's *Milenium*, San Pedro's *Cabo del Horno*, Viña Valdivieso's *Caballo Loco Number Six*, Undurraga's *Altazor* and Chateau Los Boldos' *Grand Cru* are just some of the wines that are becoming household names of wine connoisseurs the world over.

The international fame of Chilean wines motivated a growing acreage of grapes. The production of table grapes was a logical derivative, since grape harvest in the Southern Hemisphere comes at a time when there is no production in the U.S.A. and Europe. It was not long before Chilean farmers realized this was an advantage they had with all fruits that could be offered as a fresh product out of season in the Northern Hemisphere. As a result, today Chile exports over 1.751 (US) billion dollars (figure is from 2003 statistics provided by ProChile) in fresh fruit per year, including grapes, apples, peaches, pears, plums, apricots, cherries. Even cranberries are being grown for export, in spite of the fact that it is a fruit that has no national consumption.

Chile has always been a haven for a wide variety of fruit, offering large-scale harvests of produce that is well known in their destination countries. Some of these varieties are also known to store and ship well, and this favors their production for export. However, Chileans can talk for hours about the old varieties of fruit that are still only grown for home consumption. In their minds, these varieties are tastier and thus far more appealing to the palate. These indigenous delicacies include the "durazno peludo", the "durazno blanco", the "cereza corazon de paloma", the "pera de agua" and many others that are fast being forgotten. The preserves of "membrillo" (quince), "guayava" (guava) and "alcayota" can be bought in stores or made at home, but outside Chile these products are not seen (these preserves are, however, also made for local consumption in other Latin American countries where these fruits can be found). Even a fruit as international as the mango is shipped into Chile from Mexico, Ecuador and Brazil, but the tastiest mango you can lay your lips on is grown in the oasis of Pica and it is an indulgence that only Chileans have access to.

Just as imported grapevines prospered early in Chile's history, so did cattle. It was not long after the Spanish conquest that the overabundance of beef made it senseless to put any resources into cultivating a fishing industry. As ironic as this may seem with a western coastline that stretches over 4,300 km (2,688 miles), in Chile and most other Latin American countries wherein grassy savannahs extended to the ocean shores, for years the "fruits of the sea" went unappreciated and underutilized to meet the nutritional needs of their citizens.

As Chile matured into a modern republic, so did its citizens' appreciation of salt-water delicacies. The cold waters of the southern Chilean coastline offer a wonderful crustacean (one of 20 crustaceans that are commercialized in Chile) known as "centolla" (*Lithodes antarctica*), which is a giant crab that grows to two feet in diameter. Its tasty white meat gives Alaskan king crab a run for its money. For lack of a better comparison, "locos" (*Concholepas concholepas*) are said to be similar to abalone (*Haliotis sp.*), only much bigger and better. These large univalves surely must be contenders for the title of the "King Neptune's filet mignon". Put a group of Chileans together celebrating any occasion with seafood and an assortment of other marine life will also decorate the table. "Picorocos" (barnacles-*Astromegabalanus psittacus*), "erizos" (sea urchins-*Loxechinus albus*), "lapas" (*Fisurella latimarginata* and *F. cumingi*), "choros zapatos" (*Choromytilus chorus*), "piure" (*Pyura chilensis*), octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), squid (*Loligo vulgaris*) and an assortment of fish (such as the "congrío dorado"- *Genypterus blacodes*, Reineta- *Brama australis* and Róbalo - *Eleginops maclovinus*) rarely seen in other parts of the world are all items Chileans have in their privileged diet that is abundant in variety. Other than a small export market of "locos" to Japan, these products are sold locally to Chileans, who consume them with a passionate delight that is seldom understood by foreigners.

On the other hand, inform a Chilean businessman about a good international market and he will go to all means to supply it. Neither salmon nor trout are native to Chile in spite of having environmental conditions that are very similar to traditional trout and salmon producing areas. Many travelers to southern Chile invariably comment on the similarities between southern Chile and the Pacific Coast of the United States. The resemblances are not only related to the topography of valleys nestled in between a major mountain chain and the coastal

mountain range, but also to the ocean currents that create a likeness in land climate and ocean water temperatures.

As a result, it seemed only logical that progressive entrepreneurs from Chile investigated the possibility of representing American salmon producing companies abroad. The American zeal to monopolize the market and not share their growth in the Third World only motivated Chileans to obtain the technologies on their own. The “could have been” partners turned into competitors, and today Chile is the largest producer of Pacific salmon in the world and second only to Norway in total salmon production.

Political Evolution Lends a Hand to a Thriving Economy

The above are just some of the success stories that have positioned themselves in Chilean history. In some cases, the resource was native, while in others the conditions were present to bring in foreign technology to duplicate production schemes that had proven successful in other parts of the world. What cannot be denied are the work ethic, drive and determination of the Chilean people. After suffering the deepest economical depression imaginable, including a near-disastrous brush with communism and a good measure of little-mentioned injustices to the private sector brought about by conflictive government policies, this historically democratic country tightened its belt.

Temporarily, for two decades, it withstood a military regime that definitely crossed the line regarding the human rights of many of its citizens. In spite of these undeniable atrocities, one cannot negate the well-intended foresight of a dictator that desired to ascertain economic and political stability to the country he served. Yet, the less-acknowledged motor behind this restorative movement was the blind faith of private enterprise, the cooperative determination of its citizens and the incredible capacity of some admirable Chilean economists. In 10 short years, Chile became the strongest and most stable economy in South America, en route towards recuperating the free election status it now proudly boasts.

The three succeeding governments have walked the tightrope of reconciliation masterfully and the once emotionally divided country is finally making amends while boasting the highest markers of growth and the lowest indicators of corruption in Latin America. With the resoluteness often lacking in the previous two presidents in terms that albeit were more transitional, President Ricardo Lagos showed the clear and concise leadership that Chileans of all political parties respect. A new government representing the same coalition is now in power and for the first time in Chilean history a woman, Michelle Bachellet, has been elected president. The significance of this is especially meaningful when we realize women were not granted the right to vote until 1949. This gives further evidence of the progressive, democratic mentality that reigns in this country that is making huge strides toward a fully developed status.

However, in spite of various economically stable governments that have opened doors to promote international exchange through free trade agreements that demonstrated Chile's convincing credibility, Chilean enterprise has for the most part only been bold when markets are readily at hand. Chileans have still been overly cautious about creating new markets for products that are particular to their nation.

Country that is Full of Secrets Unknown to the Outside World

Chile's national flower is the Copihue (*Lapageria rosea*). It is unique to this country and little known elsewhere. An exceptionally beautiful, deep red, shiny, wax-petaled flower, it only grows hanging from vines that creep up trees in the shaded woods of special climates in southern Chile. The Chilean chirimoya (*Annona cherimoya*) is a juicy heart-shaped fruit that surely must compete for the top spot of all fruits when the specimens tasted come from the area of La Serena, Chile. Originally, it was found between 1400m (4,550 ft.) and 2000m (6,500 ft.) a.s.l. in lands between Peru and Ecuador, where it has been a popular fruit since prehistoric times. This South American wonder has



Figure II.315
Succulent chirimoya



Fig. II.316 The copihue is the Chilean national flower

found an ideal microclimate in a part of Chile. It is now grown in a limited number of countries around the world, but in few places does it grow to have the quality that so readily flourishes in the outskirts of the deserts in the “Small North” of Chile. The lúcuma (*Pouterria lucuma*) is another plant that was also valued by the Incas that is also native to Chile and Peru and is rarely found outside its boundaries. It is not very palatable when eaten fresh, but when its starchy consistency is combined with sugar in ice creams, cakes and meringue pies, it is an unforgettable culinary experience. The pepinos (*Solanum muricatum*) are another Andean fruit that have been around for thousands of years. This sweet cucumber-like fruit is well known to Chileans, but unusual for consumers outside of the country. All these are examples of Chilean specialties that are rarely divulged outside its borders, while, year after year, Chileans savor the satisfaction of having them in their midst.

In spite of their novelty status, there are other unique resources they try to promote that are still little known. The lapis lazuli is a beautiful deep blue gem that has original light and dark grey patterns in every sample. Even in ancient times, this stone was highly valued for its rarity, as there are statues from the ancient empires of China and Persia that used this stone. The Irish poet William Butler Yeats wrote a quite famous poem about this rare mineral composite. It is said that Afghanistan and Chile are the only places in the world where this stone exist, yet most people only become aware of its existence in Chile when visiting the airport shops before their departure.

Those that have seen the Towers of Paine in the southern most tip of Chile claim it surely must be one of the natural Wonders of the World (I say natural, because the original “Seven Wonders of the World” were all man-made feats of engineering and not natural works of art). The beauty of these granite and sedimentary rock mountains make the Grand Tetons of Wyoming look ordinary. The chocolate dipped granite peaks are even more



Figure II.317
The “Torres de Paine” is one of the natural wonders of the world

impressive with their eternal snows nestled atop, and the unpredictable climate gives an ever-changing panorama that assures visitors of never seeing the same pattern of colors and distribution of light and darkness twice. Even as their beauty is starting to gain front-page status in the travel agency journals, this 2,400-hectare (5,928 acre) national park that is brimming in native wildlife is still unknown to the great majority of people.

Like all these marvelous unfamiliar details that make Chile such an interesting place, the little-known **Chilean Horse** holds an equally baffling mystique, as it is a horse breed with an exceptional history and a long list of attributes that are difficult to match. Yet, in large part, it is at most a vague name people know little about. This was reason enough to stir me into action. I had my mind set to introduce this horse breed to the majority of the world that knew not of its existence.

Why this Book was more than Three Decades in the Making

So, why have I gone to such lengths to make such a sales pitch for Chile? I suppose it is because I have to think back to a time when Chileans could not imagine the potential of its sources of nitrate, or the magnitude of its copper mines, or the international appeal of its fruits and wines, or the dream of someday out-producing the fisheries of the Pacific Northwest in

salmon. In somewhat the same light I view the **Chilean Horse** that I have come to know during my recent years in this country.

Although I was born in the northern Chilean city of Iquique, where my parents were educational missionaries, I was as far as I could get from the green alfalfa and ryegrass fields that were lined with poplar trees. I was nowhere near colonial homes with thick adobe walls and red tile roofs and equally as far from the medialunas with huasos at play on their little thick-tailed horses with long forelocks. However, as destiny would have it, that little “iquiqueño” donkey we received as a pet one Christmas day and some frightening horseback riding lessons at the military regiment sowed in me a love for horses that I took back to the U.S.A. as a bicultural nine-year-old.

Eventually, I would break stock horses in Iowa, work on Kentucky horse farms, exercise **Thoroughbreds** on racetracks, study animal science in the University of Kentucky and later become a professional animal scientist with a specialization in equine production. For 16 years, I worked for a dynamic entrepreneur in Panama, and together we developed from scratch the best **Thoroughbred** farm in Central America and the Caribbean. I went on to management positions in prestigious horse farms in Virginia and Kentucky. I later worked as a bloodstock agent where my “eye” for a good horse and knowledge of pedigrees was valued. In time, I started a company in which I performed revealing studies in nutritional program analysis in the U.S.A. and all around Latin America. It was in executing this role that I once again put my foot down on the soil of the country in which I had first seen the light of day. After 32 years, I was back in Chile!! What goes around comes around!!

So, I suppose I have a right to be enthused about a country I feel a tremendous affinity and respect for. However, those sorts of ties only make you look harder at what is before you, and as a new arrival they don’t hinder objective appraisal. At any rate, what brought me back to Chile was not the **Chilean Horse**, but rather the **Chilean Thoroughbred**, and that story could justify another book of its own. My contact with the **Chilean Horse** was slow and perhaps somewhat tainted by the degrading opinions of most racehorse owners.

However, the first exposure to the breed in 1995 as a racehorse trainer in Chile’s principal track, El Club Hípico de Santiago, was an important crossroads in my life. The gutsy and dependable performance of my stable pony on the track, as well as the weekend excursions I have previously mentioned, made me take a hard, objective look at the virtues of the hardiness and drive of this breed. However it was that magical day at the National Rodeo Championship, in that beautiful modern arena in the city of Rancagua that made an unconditional believer out of me.

My return to Chile was prompted by my knowledge, experience and contacts in the **Thoroughbred** world. However, once again I have to express how terribly indebted I am to my to my wonderful friend Dr. Manuel Valenzuela who dared to take me away from the prestigious world of racing where exorbitant purses are the norm and show me this incredible equine athlete that put on an amazing demonstration of coordination, power and courage for the men on their backs that only take home an insignificant prize as compensation for their costly enthusiasm for this extraordinary stock horse.

The “Champion”, as this famous competition is known, is a unique social event in the dominion of the Chilean Rodeo, as there are many people who attend this “World Series of Corraleros” that perhaps never see another rodeo in the entire year. As I came to know, Manuel was not one of those only wishing to be seen at this prestigious event. His interest was sincere. His father, whose drive in life was upturned by losing several large farms in the agrarian reform, had later developed a reputation as a first-rate arreglador (trainer). Manuel had ridden in rodeos alongside his younger brother “Pato”, and as a young vet his clientele were mostly rodeo competitors.

This became obvious as we walked through the stables and everybody greeted him warmly by his first name. Huasos never forget a friend! I am certain this part of his past is not well known by most of the “uppity” **Thoroughbred** owners that now confide blindly in his expertise with their costly racehorses. I did not fully understand his great respect for the **Chilean Horse** breed at the time, but it would only take the three intense days in the Champion to realize what an incredibly nimble and bold breed was unfolding before my very eyes.

Now my interest in the breed was attaining new heights. I started to go to sales, visit some breeders, study pedigrees, and read some basic literature. As my interest in training **Thoroughbreds** had been waning after four and a half years of frustrations from trying to play by the rules, while rumors of track mismanagement, underhand dealings and incredibly faulty doping controls were running rampant, my interest in the **Chilean Horse** grew by leaps and bounds. When I finally decided to bid farewell to the many treasured friends I made on the backside; in the jockey's rooms; in the veterinary clinics; in the grandstands; in the press boxes; in the owners' dining rooms and board of directors' halls of the racetracks; my mind was made up to try and inform the rest of the world about this incredible little horse breed with a gigantic heart. Unbelievably, very little literature on the breed was to be found in Spanish, but worse yet, there was nothing written in English on the **Chilean Horse**. I was certain that English-speaking horsemen from around the world would have an interest in learning about this breed that seems as little-known as other Chilean rarities.

Getting to Know this Noble Breed's Desire to Please

In December of 2000, I headed for my birthplace in a used pickup and a custom made three-horse trailer that carried my **Quarter Horse** stallion *Dee Jay* and a new companion. I had left *el Bayo* in the stable that was now being overseen by Dr. Valenzuela and, before leaving Santiago, I searched for a replacement that could serve as a mount for my wife, Romy. The unlikely candidate was found in an open field at the foothills of La Dehesa, on the outskirts of Santiago. He shared the turned-out lifestyle with the other lesser-appreciated members of a riding club. He had been bought as a child's mount, but as often is the case, children don't feel the same enthusiasm to ride that lives in the minds of their more enthusiastic horse-loving parents. As a result, the guide that led club members into the mountains was the only one that used *Cristal*.

The horse's protruding ribs denoted his strenuous profession and the inflamed and sore mound on the top line of his mid back was a concerning sign of abuse. Possessing a long muzzled head, this dark dun showed the prominent dorsal line and zebra stripes that were so common in the **Chilean Horse** breed. "He is easy to approach and dependable", informed the muleskinner. In evaluating him more closely, he showed a solid hindquarter and standing 1.45 meters (14.1 hands); he was good size for a "**Chileno**" and exhibited well-conformed legs and hooves. With a blazed faced and three white stockings, all his chrome gave *Cristal* the potential to look flashy if he put on some weight, overcame the back problem and lost the shaggy, sun-burnt coat of hair. "I'll take him", I said, after my wife admitted an attraction to his good nature.

The 2,000 km (1,250 mile) trip that followed took us through La Serena, up along the coastline to Vallenar and then inland to Copiapó, before crossing the same "desierto despoblado" (unpopulated desert) that Diego Almagro faced in 1536. After 600 km (375 miles) of nothing but sand and rocky hills, we drove down to Antofagasta and then along the coastline to Iquique, another six hours away.

My wife christened her horse with the new name of *Jerez* (sherry), and for three months we did little more than longe him in order to get his back to heal. Worming, feeding and grooming did wonders for his appearance, and soon people were commenting it looked like we had a different horse. He was different in more ways than one, as the easy life and good care brought out a spirit in him that had not been evident upon purchase. I rode him without any intent of doing anything much but get him to be responsive and gentle for my wife, who is an inexperienced rider.

I soon learned that he knew nothing about backing. He rebelled terribly to bit pressure, no doubt as a result of the heavy hands of the muleskinner. The slightest pull on the reins brought his head and muzzle straight up into the air, in spite of the snaffle bit which was much milder than the Chilean beaded O-ring bit that he had been ridden with in the past. The marks on his sides and his constant twitching of



Figure II.318 Romy astride the always willing, *Jerez*

the tail informed me that this eight-year-old gelding had also received abuse with the large-roweled Chilean spurs. Consequently, I purposely rode him without spurs as I began to teach him lateral flexion of the neck, then vertical flexion and eventually backing up and collection.

Once we had the “brakes” working well and some better control of the forequarters, Romy started to go out on trail rides with me. Immediately, I noticed that she was struggling to stay near me, as *Jerez* would flat walk off and leave *Dee Jay* and me in the dust while not missing a beat of his long-striding, flat walk. Although our first outings did little for our marital unity, it was clear that if left at his own pace, *Jerez* was twice the walker that *Dee Jay* was. Thanks to Romy’s light hands and her effort to follow instructions as best possible, little by little *Jerez* started to develop a better head posture.

Romy was sidelined from riding after a near-fatal accident of stumbling backward into our empty swimming pool while spraying her backyard plants. Her doctor felt that it was not a convenient activity for her compressed and herniated sixth vertebrae. As a result, I started riding *Jerez* regularly. What developed in the following months was all I lacked to become an ardent believer in this breed. *Jerez* was the most sensitive horse I had ever been on. As he began to understand the language of pressure in front and behind the girth, the placement of my weight in the saddle, and the twists of my torso, he became incredibly tuned in to my desires.

My slightest intentions to change my weight distribution, or apply the least pressure in my calves were so sensitively understood that I was beginning to believe the proponents of the equine extra-sensory perception might really be on to something. Over the next half-year, *Jerez* learned to pick up his leads, counter-canter, change leads on cue, back up in any desired direction, two-track, side step, and turn on either his forequarters or hindquarters. He was still not a polished rienda horse, but I was also dealing with a good six years of bad habits and abuse. Regardless of how far he progresses, he has made a lasting impression on this horseman with 30-plus years of experience in riding all sorts of horses.

Due to the fact that *Jerez* was ALWAYS desirous to do more than he was asked, I decided that what he needed was more “wet saddle blankets”. I started by going out on long walks in the desert and, although he obviously enjoyed the trips, they did not phase his overeager spirit in the least. I incorporated extended trots while permitting a slack in the reins that previously required close contact with *Jerez*. He covered the three miles of sand between our stables and the beginning of the coastal mountain range in a springy long-striding trot. He reached the foothills soaked and winded but never letting up in the entire trajectory.



Figure II.319
The author climbing dunes with *Jerez*

After a week of the same conditioning, with some interspersed short periods of gallop, one day I decided to just keep going. We found a gorge that went by an old deserted mine and worked its way up the mountains. The walk was tiresome and demanding as it was all uphill. On the other side, we met up with Route 68 that heads from Iquique to the Pan-American Highway. We continued the climb in elevation across the barren desert with the sun nearing its highest point in the sky overhead. The bob-headed walk never let up and the periods of trotting were always extended and energetic. Long stretches of highway lay ahead of us. As we proceeded on one side or the other of the road, passerby drivers waved from their vehicles and truckers honked, giving their encouragement at this

very unusual sight.

Smaller portions of the coastal mountains lay ahead and, like clockwork, *Jerez* went up and over as he continued to get farther away in distance and altitude from the beautiful beaches in Iquique. After several hours, I started to see the tall smoke stack of the classic old nitrate mine of Santa Laura. Its impressive yet dilapidated infrastructure has recently been proclaimed a Heritage of Humanity site. As we closed in on Santa Laura, six hours after starting the improvised journey, the road we were following took us past the mine to the entrance of another, even more famous, symbol from the hay days of the nitrate age, The Offices of

Humberstone. There, I came upon a little store whose owner kindly offered *Jerez* water and asked me to tie the horse in front of her establishment. She was sure our arrival was an omen of good luck (not to mention attracting potential clients curious at wanting to take a look at the horse).

I called Romy to let her know what a capricious outing I had just completed and asked her to bring some hay and a bucket for water. When she arrived, I had already struck up a friendship with the caretaker of Santa Laura, and we had transferred *Jerez* across the road where we shut off an old warehouse where he could spend the night. Aptly, he was within sight of a donkey that had become a pet to the tourists who visit the museum and remaining grounds of what is heralded as the largest nitrate processing plant in the world.

The next day, I expected to find a worn-out four-legged friend. The 42 km (26.25 miles) he had covered, unshod, over both sandy and hard salty ground, was far more than *Jerez* had ever been ridden during the last 10 months that we owned him. I saddled, said my good byes and thank yous for the caretaker's hospitality, and down the road we went. *Jerez* was more anxious than ever. I let him warm up for a mile or so at a brisk walk and then we trotted regularly. On three occasions we galloped, and of course we always had intervals of fast-paced walks. It was obvious that he knew we were heading home, but additionally we were now declining from the 1,000 meters (3,250 ft.) a.s.l. we had reached in the ascending trip. In four short hours we were returning into the stables, and one could have easily thought that I was on a fresh horse that just turned back in search of something I had forgotten.

Certainly, this account is not anything an endurance rider would get excited about. Still, I am certain that most of the horses I have ridden in my life would not have so readily made this increase in riding activity, going over mountains, sandy desert ground and hard nitrate crusts, in a cloudless sky and open desert temperatures. *Jerez* had not been trained for what he had just accomplished, and his fervent effort was simply demonstrative of the incredible heart he has to take on whatever activities he is asked to do. It is this character that makes the **Chilean Horse** such a good trail and stock horse.

The **Chilean Horse** is not the aerobic machine the **Arabian** has been bred to be. Neither is he the distance horse of the related breeds the gauchos use on the other side of the Andes. On the contrary, the selection of the **Chilean Horse** has been for a higher proportion of fast-twitched muscle fibers. But, within the normal physiological effort, he will cover great distances simply because he will be so willing to surge ahead while requiring very little to meet his extremely low metabolic needs. As Frank T. Hopkins (whose accounts were put to film in the movie *Hidalgo*) has proven in the Middle East, these attributes can even outperform the efficient **Arab** in the long haul under trying conditions and no supplementation. Traveling 160 km (100 mi.) in the fastest possible time is one thing. Covering a long distance at a slower pace,

but day after day for prolonged periods of time, is quite another.

Eventually, a pair of huasos would put this theory to test. The **Chilean Horse** breeder Sergio Rodríguez Wallis and Tristán "Tano" Hermosilla set out to prove that the hardiness of the modern **Chilean Horse** was equal to the ancestors of old. Starting on the border with Peru near Arica, the northernmost city of Chile, in 57 days (43 days of actual riding) the



Figure II.320 Lic. Sergio Rodríguez W. initiates his journey on the border between Chile and Peru

adventurous pair whittled away at the 2,263 km (1,414 miles) that separated them from Santiago. Traversing the world's driest desert and semi-arid conditions throughout the rest of the journey, the two riders and six horses arrived in Santiago just in time to celebrate Independence Day amongst all the comrades that compete in a traditional "Rodeo de la Semana de la Chilenidad" (The Chilean Heritage Week Rodeo). This glorious event, held in the 43 ha. (108 acre) fair grounds in the heart of one of the newer boroughs of Santiago, celebrates Chilean rural customs with all sorts of exhibitions and competitions, country cooking, crafts and folklore in verse, music and dance that keeps the urbanites in touch with their legacy.

Some of the trails these audacious huasos followed were etched in the desert sand before the arrival of Columbus to the New World. Their minds fantasized even further back to the caravans of llamas that transported the goods of prehistoric man back and forth from the jungles of the Amazon to the Pacific coast. More importantly, they gave living proof that some 460 years after the arrival of Diego de Almagro, the **Chilean Horse** is still rugged and hardy enough to confront hardships and perils similar to those that were faced by distant relatives.

There is a Lot Behind a Name

So why is it that a breed with these sorts of attributes, is not solicited in all parts the world? Four hundred-plus years of selection has brought about hardiness, easy-keeping, sure-footedness, valor to confront the unknown and an incredible energy level for whatever they are asked to do. Unsurpassable "cow savvy", athleticism, an innate predilection for lateral work, and an incredible threshold to withstand the discomfort of strenuous activity, overwork and the rigors of continual contact in pinning cattle are all combined in an economical little package. Like the Copihue, the chirimoya, the lúcuma, Lapis lazuli stones and the Towers of Paine, the **Chilean Horse** is simply another secret asset of this amazingly interesting country. Yet, surely it must be known to some extent. Let's take a look.

In researching the limited literature that exists about the **Chilean Horse**, I have found this breed referred to in many different ways. In either Spanish or English, one can find references such as: "Pura Raza Chilena" (Chilean Purebred), "Pura Sangre Chilena" (Pure-Blooded Chilean), "raza del país" (the country's breed), "caballo pechero" (chesty horse), "caballo nacional" (national horse), "Corralero" (Chilean Corralero), "Caballo Chileno" (Chilean Horse), or just plain "Chileno" (Chilean). The fact is that the breed has always been officially called the "**Caballo Chileno**" (**Chilean Horse**) until 2002, when the breed was reinstated in the *Federación Interamericana de Criadores de Caballos Criollos* – the Interamerican Federation of Criollo Horse Breeders, which will be henceforth abbreviated as FICCC.

The FICCC demanded the name-change to "Criollo Chileno", which was unbelievably agreed to by a Chilean delegation, emphasized the common "Criollo" origins, whereby the country name is simply descriptive of where it was bred. Actually, this is quite logical reasoning for the other four FICCC countries. All of them have come from gaucho savannah cultures that have historically had very close equine origins and constant genealogical exchanges in the wild as well as through the breeding establishments of the respective countries. Chile doesn't come close to fitting this portrayal.



Figure II.321 The Chilean Horse is a breed that is easily identifiable due to its unique characteristics.

Whether one chooses to agree with the present interpretation of the "Chilean Criollo" being considered part of a common breed or not, these occurrences have shown that some representatives of the Chilean breeders are desirous to look past their own borders in the years to come. Another sector mostly made up of people with long-standing family traditions in the breed zealously wants to protect the individuality of the **Chilean Horse** that they have inherited from their ancestors. Unfortunately, the majority of the breeders that tend to be smaller in magnitude are uninformed about the debate, and in reality take little interest in something so far fetched from their immediate concerns in the national rodeo scene.

There are some who argued that for more than 400 years the Chileans had bred their horses under a much different environment than what was common to other members of the FICCC. Moreover, for more than a century and a half of breed development, selection has been

based on a quite different type of function. Opinions were voiced that this logically gave rise to a significantly different end product.

It is hard not to recognize that the **Chilean Horse** is phenotypically different from its counterparts in other FICCC countries. As a general rule, it has a much different head profile, a slightly shorter average stature, and a proportionally longer body, a straighter hock angle, with a more exaggerated amount of thick and wavy forelock, mane and tail. More importantly, most would agree that the **Chilean Horse** has more athleticism and trainability, an observation that is not only the opinion of Chileans, but substantiated by respected horsemen from other FICCC member countries as well. However subjective that opinion may be, it is hard to debate the **Chilean Horse's** superior predisposition for lateral work.

The gaucho culture has promoted the “paleteada” in which the horses apply lateral pressure on steers by leaning their shoulder blades into the bovines while running forward. The selected **Chilean Horse** function for more than a century has singled out individuals that can run laterally while applying forward and vertical pressure with their chest at the moment of pinning. I am not trying to project these differences as being better or worse; I am simply pointing out that it is difficult to negate that a disparity does exist and that the **Chilean Horse** does not readily fit the same mold that is found on the other side of the Andes.

The last argument of those who opposed the inclusion within the present definition of the FICCC was the fact that all the other FICCC countries have historically imported and incorporated into their registries **Criollos** and **Chilean Horses** from other member countries. Chile, on the other hand, has proudly maintained a national registry that has only included homebreds. Paradoxically, it was this unique accomplishment by the proud Chilean pioneer breeders that weighed heaviest in swaying the balance in favor of complying with the demands of the FICCC. The popular request for Chile's breeding stock by its South American neighbors has always been a small, yet potentially lucrative, source of income for a select few. When the members of the FICCC realized that Chile was not willing to include **Criollos** from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay in their stud book, the oldest and strictest South American registry, they quickly suspended the Chilean huasos from the organization and boycotted potential sales to Chile's traditionally strongest foreign customers.

Unfortunately, all the countries that breed South American **Criollos** have been shortsighted when it comes to exporting these horses. The blame lies with no particular individual or body, as the **Criollo** breed is simply not very well known throughout the world. Ironically, pressure to include the **Criollo** name in describing the **Chilean Horse** may be a serious part of that problem. In many sectors of Latin America, the word “criollo” not only means “native”, but also “of mixed lineage”. As I touched on in the chapter about the huaso origins, the word was most often used to describe people who no longer had a clear definition of racial background. In the human population, one clearly knew what a mestizo was, but with the newer evolution of the word, no one knew what proportion of what races made up a criollo.

So, in some Latin American nations, the word “criollo” can be synonymous with a “grade” horse or an equine “mutt” if you will. The undertone in both English and French for the term “Creole” is also closer to this meaning, and this, in part, may hinder its slow acceptance in countries with these languages. The confusion is even greater if we begin to mention the “**Criollo**” breeds of Central America and the Caribbean. These horse breeds are very dissimilar in both conformation and gait (most being amblers of some sort). So, if we get away from the



Figure II.322 In the gaucho culture a “rodeo” means something totally different.

member countries of the FICCC, it may be surprising what sort of a misconstrued impression potential importing countries could have.

Yet, even if one chooses to row against the current and insist on using this name in Chile, one must also think that this anonymity is indicative of a lack of promotion and education about the South American “**Criollo**” breed. As the bibliography of this book will attest to, there are even more limited publications in Spanish about the **Chilean Horse**, and none that I am aware of in English. Hopefully, this book will in some manner help to fill this void, and as curiosity is raised, there will also be more inquiries to the **Chilean Horse** association that will simultaneously realize the need to diffuse the information about their breed throughout the world.



Figure II.323 The Peruvian Paso shares the same ancestry as the Chilean Horse but 460 years of selection has molded two very different breeds.

If an Iberian origin were the sole justification for horses selected for 450 years under different environments, topography, functions and culture, then there would be more reason for the **Chilean Horse** to unite with the **Peruvian Paso** Registry than with the **Criollos**. I realize that sounds absurd in light of the fact that these two breeds are so different in function. Nevertheless, the fact is that the foundation bloodstock for breeding horses in Chile came exclusively from the Viceroyalty of New Castile (Peru), where the genetic pool came almost entirely from the breeders in the Caribbean Basin. Chile’s unique history and culture molded a very different end product than what was created in Peru or, for that matter, in the FICCC member nations.

The founders of the registered **Chilean Horse** breed were very clear about these differences. Miguel Letelier E., one of the masterminds of Hacienda Aculeo, once wrote,

“Horses were reproduced without special care or selection during the three centuries of colonial domination and under the combined influence of the climate, the characteristics of the territory, the available feedstuffs, the way of life in our rural sectors and especially the peculiar necessities of the central provinces of Chile. The horses adapted their traits and conformation to the requirements of their environment, notably differentiating themselves from the other horse varieties of common origin, which were subjected to different lifestyles. These dissimilarities caused conformational and temperamental variations between the native horses of Chile, Peru and Argentina, just to mention a few that even the least experienced eye is capable of noticing.” *

The requirements of Chile called for a sure-footed mountain horse with sprinting ability and a ton of cow-herding instinct that required lateral dexterity and the valor to repeatedly withstand the collisions incurred in pinning bovines to a standstill. It is a breed that developed isolated in a distinct stock horse culture that, over the years, has proudly boasted a higher degree of horsemanship than the gauchos of southeastern South America. It is beyond my comprehension why all this precious Chilean identity that has the added distinction of having the oldest stock horse breed registry of the Americas is being traded for becoming a little fish in a bigger pond. If marketing beyond the borders of Chile is what is desired, then the abundant and unique attributes of the **Chilean Horse** would offer much more potential to markets the world over if it went under its own identity than pinning on it a name tag that is solidly associated with Argentine gaucho imagery.

* - Letelier E., Miguel, (). “El Caballo Criollo Chileno”, *Revista de la Asociación de Criadores de Caballares*, Santiago, Chile, pp 24.

A Meager Export History, but Results Should Motivate Seeking Broader Horizons

Interestingly, the idea of exporting horses from Chile is not at all new. Very soon after Chileans started horse breeding, town councils imposed the idea of quality. They demanded inspection of all stallions and approval of all crosses, since they promoted efforts to produce horses of good caliber. By the 17th century, their horses were being exported back to the royal courts of the Viceroyalty that provided them with the original breeding stock. By the 18th century, a definite type was present in the horses of various functions bred in Chile. It was said that the best Chilean parade horses were as famous as the horses from the mother country and second to none, even the best **Andalusians**.

Before leaving the 18th century I am compelled to touch on a fascinating influence the **Chilean Horse** has had half way around the world. I wish I had more details to report because I find it fascinating that so early on in Chilean history a commercial bridge was established with South Africa and Australia. The information I have is almost anecdotal but there is a book that deals with the great breeding farms of the world that is titled *Las Grandes Yeguas del Mundo* by Hans Joacim Kohlet and Monique and Hans D. Dossenback that mentions that in 1788 horses arrived from South Africa and soon thereafter there was another incoming shipment of **Chilean Horses**. Evidently the South African horses were referred to as Capers and the **Chilean Horses** by the name they have always been known. However, in Australia the term Caper-Chileans became common place and I assume that was because crossbreds of both sources worked their way into the Australian horse population. What is important to note is that the first horses to arrive in Australia were seven horses that shipped in, in 1788. So, although we have no idea of numbers, and much less specific numbers of **Chilean Horses**, we can proudly state that in part it was Chilean genealogy that started the Australian horse industry.

It is not known if the **Chilean Horses** were sent directly to Australia or via South Africa. It is probable that there is a connection with the Dutch colony since it is known that in 1778 horses from South America were imported to the Cape of Good Hope. The decade of experience in crossing the South American horses with the Capers may have given Australians good reason to import a shipment of **Chilean Horses** directly, as in South Africa their reputation had been one of serviceable horses of good looks and excellent dispositions.

The origins of the Caper go back to ponies that were imported from Java in 1652. These were said to be mainly Mongolian stock that was crossed with some Persian Orientals. In South Africa more Persian blood was introduced to the Capers as early as 1689, thanks to Dutch government importations. The South Africans started exporting Capers to India in 1768 and the commercial venture continued for almost a century. So trade to eastern markets was already clearly in place when the Capers found a new home in Australia and it was most likely the same brokers that sold South American horses to the Dutch that capitalized the new opportunities down under.

So, one must assume that the Australian Waler that developed during the following century in and around New South Wales may have been founded on a genealogy that counted on some Chilean horse genes aside from the credited draft breeds, Timor ponies and English pony breeds. Ironically, at the end of the 19th century 16,000 Australian Walers would be shipped to South Africa during the Boer War and as destiny would have it the odd triangle of fate would once again connect these three continents as horses from Argentina and Chile were also imported to meet the warhorse deficits. So however small the Chilean Horse's role has been in the formation of the Cape Horse, the Australian Waler and the Australian Stock Horse that followed, it does show that in the 18th century the Chilean Horse was already an internationally marketable product.

By the next century, the **Chilean Horses** were clearly considered the best of South America, and buyers came from Colombia, Argentina, Peru, the Caribbean Islands and even Europe. In 1820, General Freire gave King George IV a prime chestnut **Chilean Horse** that was greatly admired in England. In the mid-19th century, Argentine breeders from Neuquén, Caña Colorada and San Rafael were purchasing many stock horses from central Chile. At the time, the widespread fame of the stallion *Bayo León* had peaked and breeders on the eastern side of the Andes purchased many of his sons for extravagant prices.

Whereas the diplomatic market for parade horses curtailed with the coming of coaches and later mechanized luxury vehicles, the value of South American horses as warhorses continued to be appreciated. As early as 1603, 40 horses from La Plata were imported into what is today Angola by Governor Rodríguez Coutiño to aid in the conquest of that African territory. In the mid-1800's, the British took 2,000 native horses from Argentina to India, and subsequent importations of horses from both Argentina and Chile made the long journey to South Africa to partake in the Boer War. In 1921 Russian Cossacks visited Chile where they were hosted by the Letelier family of Hacienda Aculeo. They admired the native horses so much that later in that same year they formalized an export of Chilean Horses to their country.

By the end of the 19th century the stately parade horses of Chile were no longer being produced. The international demands for elegant striding horses no longer existed, as the world leaders were now paraded in motorized vehicles that were the new rage of recent industrial revolution. This same technology greatly reduced the role of horses in war, and by the time World War I rolled around, horses were principally used as pack and draft animals for supply and artillery. Precisely when the **Chilean Horse** breed was formed, it seemed the traditional export markets for Chilean equines were drying up. However, the futuristic idea of creating a formal breed in a secluded country that had a closed sphere of genetic material dating back to the period of conquest, would eventually rekindle markets in the neighboring countries.

The efforts of breeders like the Bamphyde, Correa, de la Cuevas, Encina, Garcia-Huidobro, Labbé, Letelier, Rodríguez, and Vial families over the past century had not only remained faithful to the purity of the breed, but through more rigid selection procedures had also established a breed type that was taking a firm hold in the country. This proved a superb foundation for a new registry that the rest of the southern cone of America would admire as being way ahead of its time.



Figure II.324
African Criollo head profile



Figure II.325
Asian Criollo head profile

It would take some time for serious transandean breeders to abandon the intent to preserve a native horse of an "African type" which dominated the equine numbers of the gaucho cultures going into the 20th century. These horses with coarse heads, long ears, scant tail and excessively sloped croups found themselves being reshaped with different criteria. Some looked to produce a tall horse with a convex

facial profile. Others were convinced that an "Asian type" criollo of smaller stature, more abundant mane and tail and straighter facial profile was more consistent with the untainted genes that existed to the eastern side of the Andes before crossbreeding with European breeds started in 1806. Undoubtedly, there were personal opinions and much politicking between the followers of Enrique C. Crotto and Dr. Emiliano Solanet, but when the latter clearly won the 16 year dispute, an enticing market started to evolve for **Chilean Horse** imports across the Andes mountains. The great admiration Dr. Emilio Solanet openly admitted he held for the **Chilean Horse** breed certainly laid an important foundation of acceptance for the influence of this neighboring breed. However, more important reasons would come about as **Chilean Horse** genes started to make themselves felt in the registered **Criollo** population.

Argentina

Recently, there is much less that can be said about the **Chilean Horse** outside Chile's borders. Modern warfare rarely requires the use of equine participants and, for the most part, the sport of Chilean Rodeo has been exclusively a national option. Still, there has been some growing appreciation of the **Chilean Horse** for other stock horse disciplines.

Argentines are some of the most fervent believers in the **Chilean Horse**. They have long recognized the functional superiority and greater antiquity of the **Chilean Horse** breed. As far back as 1920, the judge for the prestigious Rural Fair of Palermo was the Chilean, Juan de Dios

Correa. Later, in 1938, Don José “Pepe” Besa Díaz was also given the honor of evaluating the best **Criollos** Argentina had to offer. In 1952, the value of Chileans imposing their criteria in the show rings was solidly established and it continued for 12 years in a row. Renowned Chilean judges, including Ernesto “Tato” Cuevas L., “Memo” Aguirre, Alberto Araya G. and José “Pepe” Tagle R., judged the most important Argentine competitions.

The 14 years of input by such Chilean adjudicators, who had a wealth of experience correlating physiological considerations with the objectives of stock horse performance, helped the Argentine breeders determine guidelines for greatly improving their **Criollo** breed. The traditional desire to maintain a national horse that could serve the dual purpose of light draft and saddle functions gave way to more severe selection pressure in the direction of an elite saddle horse. Chilean judges helped define the importance of a lighter forequarter, a thinner neck, more defined withers, longer croups and longer and more angular shoulders.

In time, Argentine judges would take over the posts of interpreting their own preferences that rightfully differ in a noticeable manner from the Chilean objectives. However, these men inherited a much-improved breed. During the years in which they were influenced by Chilean advice, Argentine breeders wisely made the recommended adjustments in their much more numerous inventories of **Criollo** horses.

In the 1950s and 1960s, many **Chilean Horses** were also imported into Argentina. The tempting bait was always related to the extraordinary exhibitions of Chilean rienda, which never ceased to amaze the Argentine public. There is no doubt that the Argentine goals for a stock horse in the pampas differed from those aspired to by Chileans desirous to excel in the medialuna. As a result, many Argentines found the **Chilean Horse** to be too small in stature, slow to mature, weak in the loin, light of bone and heavy-headed when compared to the gaucho ideals of those years. When compared to the Argentine **Criollo**, they were also found to be short-strided for long-distance gallops across the plains.

However, what most Argentines agreed upon was that the **Chilean Horse** offered more muscle definition, stronger gaskins and forearms, a flatter loin, a more defined withers, a wider stance of the hind legs, and a substantially thicker and more abundant mane, tail and forelock. Their excellent aptitude for performance was attributed to a greater agility, a more docile character and a greater aptitude for learning. Many Argentine breeders imported **Chilean Horses** on a trial basis. Two decades later, the verdict was out and it was solidly in favor of the Chilean imports, as long as caution was taken to choose animals that were in accordance with the rustic goals of working cattle on the spacious Argentine plains.

Overall, Argentines wish to have one animal type that can be hardy enough to need no supplementation while covering long distances, agile enough to work cattle and aesthetic enough to meet breed standards. They are not looking for a specialist in endurance, reining or halter. Only a horse solid in all three parameters will be best suited for the demands of the pampa. Nonetheless, a more specialized pursuit of a corralero horse is taking hold in some areas of Argentina.

In 1960, an important catalyst for **Chilean Horse** imports into Argentina occurred when Alberto Araya Gomez gave one of Argentina’s leading **Criollo** breeders, Mr. Gonzalo Torres, a homebred stallion from his well-known Criadero La Invernada. The little stallion named *Paleta* only stood 1.38 m (13.2+ hands) tall, but the success he had at stud when crossed with the mares of La Cabaña San Miguel rekindled the idea that **Chilean Horses** still had much to contribute to the Argentine breeders. The subsequent visits that Don Gonzalo Torres and other influential Argentine breeders made to Chile were motivational in making **Chilean Horse** breeders realize the potential for export.

In the second half of the 1960’s, one of the most exalted **Chilean Horse** exportations to Argentina was made by Alberto Araya G. and Germán Claro L. The duo had gained special recognition when they joined forces in 1967 to purchase the breeding stock of the famed Hacienda Aculeo. Boldly, they took seven horses (the maximum number of entries allotted to any given breeder) to compete in the international recognized Livestock Exposition of the Argentine Rural Society in the fairgrounds of Palermo, Buenos Aires, Argentina. They went to compete in a country that produces thousands of **Criollos** a year, of whom only a select minority, are registered. This was a land where there are breeders with hundreds of broodmares

from which to pick out the best seven progeny for display. This was not the Argentina of old that had disparate breed type and an overabundance of coarseness. Argentina's massive numbers and determined selection standards now surpassed even Chile in providing show horses with an incredibly homogenous breed type.

During the halter competition, the **Chilean Horses** all earned placing, but none came away with the top spots in their respective categories. That was to be expected, not only because the Argentines made such amazing strides in imprinting a neat and balanced phenotype, but also because the desired breed type differs in Chile and Argentina. However, when it came to performance, the Chilean rienda horses marveled the **Criollo** breeders from all the Americas that attended this international event. The squad from Aculeo left no doubt in the minds of the spectators that the Chilean blood had no equal in stock horse talents.

When it came time for the auction, the appreciation for the **Chilean Horses** was notable. The auctioneer observed that breeders from Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil were all bidding on the **Chilean Horses**. However, all seven individuals ended up in the hands of the top breeders from Argentina, and the breeder of the Champion of Palermo purchased the sale-topper. At that time, the sale average obtained by the partnership of Mr. Araya and Mr. Claro was the highest in Argentina's history!

With clear evidence of an Argentine appeal for the **Chilean Horse**, in 1971, Mr. Gonzalo Torres took advantage of the political instability caused by the agrarian reform in Chile and proposed that a partnership be formed between himself and the Chilean breeders Alberto Araya and Carlos Noguera. Incredibly, Mr. Noguera complied with the demands of the agreement by driving the **Chilean Horses** across the Andes Mountains on horseback. During the audacious ordeal, the select group of foundation horses was exposed to the inconveniences of bitter cold temperatures, persistent snowfall and a lack of feedstuffs. This amazing trip gave more evidence that the modern **Chilean Horse** is still as hardy and enduring in mountainous terrain as it had been throughout its development in the colonial days. This fascinating accomplishment gave way to a breeding farm in Argentina that became a source of purebred **Chilean Horse** bloodlines.

Horses taken to Argentina in 1971 to start Purebred Chilean Horse breeding farm:		
La Invernada Aniversario	La Invernada Astronauta	La Invernada Autora
La Invernada Baguala	La Invernada Cabrera	La Invernada Cimarron
La Invernada Cortijo	La Invernada Despachera	La Invernada Doña Barbara
La Invernada Empastada	La Invernada Esperanza	La Invernada Gualtata
La Invernada Llanero	La Invernada Lunática	La Invernada Mitenina
La Invernada Nochera	La Invernada Notia 2	La Invernada Novillero
La Invernada Pampero	La Invernada Sequía	La Invernada Trilladora
La Invernada Vigorosa	Ibacache Almendrita	Ibacache Arisca
Ibacache Bienhaiga	Ibacache Butifarra	Ibacache Gitanilla
Ibacache Quila	Ibacache Quilanto	

Horses taken to Argentina in 1974 to reinforce the Chilean Horse breeding program:			
Aculeo Condorito	Aculeo Drama	Aculeo Dictadura	Aculeo Descatada

The 96 Chilean imports into Argentina have gone to many regions, but nowhere is there a more zealous interest than in the city of Mendoza. Founded by Chilean colonists, this grape-growing region bears many similarities to central Chile. A keen interest in **Chilean Horses** had been vivid here throughout most of the 20th century, but the recent construction of eight medialunas now bears out having attained the fever to "run cattle". If the sport of Chilean Rodeo takes hold in Argentina, the demand for **Chilean Horses** will certainly make a sharp rise. Nothing will demonstrate more dramatically the uniqueness of the Chilean breed than the results in the half-moon arena competitions, where the **Chilean Horse** has no equal for both the required type and character.

Much to the worth of the Argentine breeders, their breed organization has commenced a “Registro de Mérito” (Register of Merit) in performance testing of stallions. It is interesting to note that, among the stallions studied up until 1996, only slightly more than 300 achieved the difficult task of obtaining a Register of Merit status. From the outset, **Chilean Horse** stallions have been among those assigned this prestigious title of success at stud. La Invernada **Llanero** was the 24th stallion to be given this recognition. Aculeo **Condorito** was the 40th; Malal Potro **Oporto**, the 43rd; Santa Isabel **Nidal**, the 48th; Aculeo **Acampado**, the 99th; Trehuaco **Despiporre**, the 196th; Santa Isabel **Choroy**, the 234th, and Aculeo **Nidal**, the 283rd. The Chilean mare Malal Potro **Chirimoya** was also the 197th horse to be assigned a register of merit.



Figure II.326 When Despiporre was sold to Argentina to crossbreed with Criollos the paternal lineage of Rascucho was lost to Chilean breeders.

When one considers that the famous Argentine “marcha” competitions, where horses must cover 750 km in 15 days without supplementation, are part of the points progeny must obtain for a sire to classify as Register of Merit, it is amazing that there are any **Chilean Horses** at all. It is widely recognized that the Argentines have long given endurance importance in their selection criteria, due to the enormous expanse of their cattle grazing areas. During these simultaneous years of development, the Chilean breeders were much more emphatic about incorporating sprinting speed into the formula that they hoped would make a more complete stock horse.

Therefore, their aptitudes for endurance should be substantially less than the Argentine counterparts.

Brazil

The Brazilian interest in **Chilean Horses** started in 1963, when Chilean President Jorge Alessandri gave his counterpart, President João of Brazil, a gift. The stallion, **Oropel**, from the famed Hacienda Aculeo, was the first registered **Chilean Horse** to become available to Brazilian breeders. Still, this single importation with limited use at stud did not cause a great stir in demands for the breed.

Then, in 1972, a well-known Brazilian breeder, Luis Bastos, who had been attending the **Criollo** Exhibitions in Palermo, Argentina for the previous 40 years, ran across one of the most impressive bay horses he had ever seen. What impressed him even more was the fact that the horse was incredibly skilled in performance events. The horse’s name was **Aniversario**, and he was a **Chilean Horse** bred by Alberto Araya Gomez in his Criadero La Invernada. Needless to say, Bastos purchased the horse and took him back to Brazil.

The resulting progeny showed such athleticism that it was clear that more Chilean imports were merited. Mr. Bastos sent an Argentine emissary to Chile, who was asked to pick out another stud prospect for the Brazilian breeder. This led to the 1975 importation of Tren **Arrebol**, whose sons dazzled performance events in Brazil, where he was to become the second best **Chilean Horse** stallion ever at stud in that country. After two such successful stallions, this Brazilian breeder followed up with an importation of six more Chilean stallions to use on his band of 150 broodmares.

The most valuable stallion prospect arrived in Brazil as a participant in the International Exposition of Steio. Mr. Alberto Araya showed up with his stallion **Hornero**, while his son in law Carlos Noguera took over the stallions Pozo Azul **Chacao** and La Invernada **Buitre**. Although all these early imports of **Chilean Horses** into Brazil were influential in reshaping the Brazilian **Crioulo**, it was **Hornero** that had the greatest impact in writing Brazilian **Crioulo** history. In looking back, it now seems logical this should be the case. Not only was **Hornero** by **Arrebol**, but he was also out of the extraordinarily well-bred Aculean mare, **Nutria II**. During the 22 years he stood at stud in Brazil, he clearly became the best **Chilean Horse** stallion in the

history of the Brazilian registry, and one of the best **Crioulo** stallions ever in that large horse-loving country.

These sort of results certainly would cause one to predict that significant numbers of horses with Chilean breeding should have cropped up in the famed “Freio de Ouro” (Golden Bit) competition. This annual contest was conceived as a manner of identifying the most skilled all-around performance stock horse in Brazil, as it is comprised of five different events. That Brazilians were even more impressed with the results is an understatement. Ten of the first 15 winners of the “Freio de Ouro” were progeny of **Hornero**. Additionally, imported **Chilean Horse** stallions also sired three of the remaining five winners.

These results have spurred exports to Brazil that have been successful enough to merit paying six figures in U.S. dollars, and some Chilean breeders have exported as many as 40 broodmares to Brazilian horse farms. Horsemen can express whatever opinions they like about the aesthetic appeal of the **Chilean Horse**, but it’s very hard to argue with their aptitudes in performance. **Hornero** paved the way for many future Brazilian importations of **Chilean Horses**.



Figure II.327

Hornero was imported to Brazil and became that country’s most influential sire of all time. On the other hand, Chile lost forever a much needed representative of the Angamos I foundation line.

In light of the resounding success of both **Arrebol** and **Hornero**, I think they merit closer observation. To modern **Chilean Horse** breeders, Tren Tren **Arrebol** would have a somewhat mundane pedigree. His value would be found in the fact that he is a product of solid Aculeo breeding. Having said this, his sire **Vastago** and grandsire, **Estuco II**, are far from being household names. Even the paternal great grandsire, **Veguero**, has few offspring worth mentioning, so it’s not until we get to the fourth generation back that we can come upon a quality sire the likes of **Madrigal**. What, then, explains **Arrebol’s** success at stud?

The union of **Vastago** and **Noche Buena** that resulted in **Arrebol** was solidly Aculean breeding, top to bottom. The combination united some important bloodlines, as we can see that **Arrebol** had an inbreeding of 4S X 3D to **Madrigal**, 5S X 5S X 3D to **Curanto**, 5S X 5D to the good mare, **Marea** and 5S X 5S to another good mare, **Hojarasca**. This interesting pedigree combined the genes of the half-siblings, **Licorera** and **Gaita**. The sire, **Vastago**, had already united the full-siblings **Noria** and **Jaita**. However, the most important aspect of this pedigree is that it provided a superb line breeding to the foundation sire **Angamos I**. Incredibly, **Arrebol’s** pedigree has no less than 16 crosses of **Angamos I** in the first eight generations!!

If we inspect *Hornero's* pedigree, the trend for greatness is even more fully explained in his genealogy. As the product of crossing *Arrebol* with *Nutria II*, this pedigree greatly reinforced the strength of *Arrebol's* pedigree while adding much it did not previously have. *Nutria II* has reason to garnish any pedigree, since she is a full sibling to two Champions of Chile, namely, the gelding *Matucho* and the fabulous mare *Percala*. The latter is not only one of the greats in the medialuna but is also considered one of the best broodmares of all time, having produced *Bellaco* and four more solid performers.

Aside from *Hornero*, *Nutria II* also produced the stout little mare *Llorona*, who was not only a good corralera but also, went on to produce the well-known son of *Jalea Real*, *Amancay*. Such productivity is easy to understand given *Nutria II* is inbred 2S X 2D to *Guarda*, 3S X 4D to *Alfil II*, 4S X 5S X 5D X 5D to *Angamos I* and 4S X 5S X 5D to yet another foundation sire, *Africano*. The close inbreeding to *Guarda* also gave her a double dose (4S X 4D) of the famous *Cristal I*, from the *Guante I* foundation lineage.

The heavenly union of *Arrebol* and *Nutria II* provided an admirable doubling up of genes from outstanding horses of the past. *Hornero* is inbred 3S X 2D to *Coiron III*, 4S X 5S X 3D to *Madrigal*, 4S X 6S X 6S X 3D to *Curanto*, 4S X 3D X 3D to *Guarda*, 5S X 6S X 5D X 5D to *Bureo* and 5S X 5S 4D X 4D to *Beduino II*. Once again, like his sire, a line breeding pattern is established, however this time to two different horses from the same family. Over seven generations there are 10 crosses to the great horse *Alfil II* and over nine generations, 23 crosses to the foundation sire *Angamos I*!!

It is difficult to conceive that a contemporary pedigree could be more loaded in *Angamos I* genes. It is satisfying to know that the old *Angamos I* lineage is thriving so successfully as a paternal contribution to Brazilian pedigrees. It surely explains the reason for their success when out-crossed on the Brazilian *Crioulo* families. On the other hand, it is disillusioning to think that such a powerful contributor to this dwindling foundation line was permitted to leave its country of origin when there is a dire need for *Angamos I* line stallions.

Chilean Horse imports to Brazil increased as the offspring of **Chilean Horses** continued to dominate the Brazilian show circuits. Between 1988 and 1994, the Chilean breeding farm



Figure II.328 Muchacho is another Chilean Horse stallion whose progeny have done well in Brazil

Criadero Idahue, which had gained a solid reputation as one of the best breeders of halter horses, exported 24 more horses to Brazil. The Criadero Pozo Azul, today known as Pozo Azul Austral, also exported 19 horses during this same period.

To date, Brazil has imported a total of 264 **Chilean Horses**, and, as of 2002, 168 of these were still alive and producing. Solid sires in halter and performance events like Trogol *Pilpilco*, Pozo Azul *Chacao*, El Aromo de Pichidegua *Campero*, La Invernada *Despejado* and Santa Teresa *Papayero* have passed away, along with the unforgettable *Arrebol* and

Hornero. Others, like Santa Elba *Señuelo* and Santa Elba *Comediante* are still actively producing successful progeny in competitions that judge either conformation or function. Overall, there have been 135 **Chilean Horses** that have reached the Register of Merit Status in Brazil.

There are some who have complained that the sons of the Chilean imports have not been nearly as successful at stud in Brazil. They reason that heterosis was responsible for the initial success of foreign introductions. Although undoubtedly the presentation of a totally new gene pool should have been responsible for some benefits from heterosis, the contention is not a totally fair one. Obviously, not all imported **Chilean Horse** stock horses had the same level of success, even though all were contributors of outcrosses. Moreover, if one were to contend that the **Chilean Horses** supplied a degree of performance aptitude not common to the Brazilian **Crioulo** genetic make up, obviously the sons of Chilean breeding stock would contain only half

the number of these attributes, and thus it is logical that they would not be as successful in transmitting them.

However one wants to evaluate the **Chilean Horses** that have been introduced to Brazil, there is no denying their presence made a very strong statement as to the quality of the **Chilean Horse** breed.

Uruguay

Chilean Horses have also had an impact on the breeding programs of Uruguay. This country has a close tie with all the nations that share a gaucho culture, and thus they emphasize both the Argentine “marcha” (750 km ordeal in 15 days with no supplementation) and “paleteada” (“shouldering”, where young steers are pressured between the mounts of two participants that have to guide the bovine over a narrow course defined by two parallel lines 60 m, or 65 yd., in length) as well as the qualifying events for the Brazilian “Freio de Ouro”. Their most important fair is the Exposition in Prado, where they have halter, reining and the “prueba integral” (“integral horse trials” that combine halter, reining and cattle work). Recently, they have also started conventional endurance competitions as well.

When talking about the **Criollo** breed, it is easy to take for granted that Argentina is the main source of this stock horse with great aptitudes for endurance. Still, we must not forget that a comparatively small country like Uruguay is the leading exporter of **Criollo** horses to Brazil. Their 685 exports to their northern neighbors is quite an accomplishment when you consider a much larger country such as Argentina has sent a total of 649 **Criollos** to Brazil. Equally interesting is the fact that Uruguay has exported 11 horses to Argentina, yet over that time period it has not felt the need to import any **Criollos** from Argentina. If we look at the number of **Criollos** registered yearly per capita, Uruguay outproduces Argentina by nearly eight to one (3,232 registered Criollos /3.399 million Uruguayans divided by 4,617 registered Criollos/ 39.145 million Argentines) and total numbers of registries in Uruguay are 70 percent of the number registered by their southern neighbor.

Four breeding farms were responsible for importing the first **Chilean Horses** to Uruguay in 1980. Later, when Uruguay hosted the International FICCC competition in 1985, the 18 **Chilean Horses** that were taken to compete were sold at an international auction. The fact that the **Chilean Horses** had obtained numerous ribbons in halter, competed gamely in their first exposure to barrel racing and received a standing ovation for their rienda exhibitions, all had a positive affect on sale prices. The **Chilean Horses** obtained the highest bids in the horse sale. Brazilians purchased fourteen of these animals, but in some cases the horses remained in Uruguay, leaving progeny before their shipment to Brazil. One horse was purchased and sent to Paraguay. Uruguayan breeders purchased Santa Cruz **Incauto** and Las Hortensias **Huascazo** and a Uruguayan repurchased Las Vertientes **Astuto** after the sale. Only one horse was a buy-back and was returned to Chile due to not having reached its minimum asking price.

In spite of the fact that a very limited number of **Chilean Horses** have found their way to a country that produces more than 3,200 Uruguayan **Criollos** a year, these have been responsible for progeny that have obtained:

- 3 Grand Champions of the national halter competition
- 2 Champions at the national halter competition
- 2 Reserve Grand Champions of the national halter competition
- 4 placings in the national halter competition
- 1 placing in the FICCC international halter competition
- 4 winners of the Expo Prado national reining competition
- 2 placings in the Expo Prado national reining competition
- 1 winner of the national classification for Brazil's “Freio de Ouro”
- 1 winner of the “Prueba Integral”
- 8 finalists in the “Marcha de Resistencia”

Chilean stallions like La Amanecida **Cautil** and Santa Cruz **Incauto** have been such good all-around sires that they have obtained Register of Merit status for the breed. With these results, one could speculate that the Chilean influence in Uruguay is about to gain more popularity. It certainly did not hurt matters much when in 2004 the good sport and well known

Chilean Horse breeder Italo Zunino took his Best Representative of the Breed halter horse Malulo to Uruguay, where he competed in their National Championship at the famed Prado fairgrounds. The dark dun horse was selected Grand Champion and added to the prestige of the **Chilean Horse** in Uruguay.

Burma (Myanmar)

Most recently, in 1987, 729 well-broken **Chilean Horses** were shipped to Burma where mounted police are using them to safeguard the mountainous regions of that country from opium smugglers. The qualities that make the **Chilean Horse** so well suited for surveillance of this type of terrain is the reason that in these modern times Chile still has four active cavalry units in their military that are used for border patrols and emergency displacement along the rugged terrain of the Andes Mountains.

Reintegration of Chile into the FICCC

In summary, it can be said that the **Chilean Horse** has been well received and appreciated in the countries that belong to the FICCC (Federación Interamericana de Criadores de Caballos Criollos). Only during the period between 1996 and 2002, during which time Chile was suspended from the organization for not accepting reciprocal privileges of registering **Criollos** from other FICCC members in the Chilean registry, were exportations to these countries curtailed. Recently, Chile has reintegrated into the FICCC by accepting to register any horses that are officially part of the organization. They have come to an amicable but temporary solution of maintaining their own national registry (it is being referred to as the “historic registry of the **Chilean Horse**”) of all horses that trace back 100 percent to the Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura (SNA) registry that was commenced in 1893. By establishing a parallel Chilean FICCC registry, all **Chilean Horses** will also be registered in the national FICCC registry. This will also include any purebred **Criollos** born in or relocated to Chile, as well as any crossbred progeny born in Chile and produced between **Chilean Horses** and **Criollos** from other FICCC countries. This duality of establishing a double registry for a breed is not common in horse breeds and non-existent in other FICCC countries. The FICCC Board of Directors has seen it only as progress in the right direction, but clearly not what they expect in the future when it is hoped that the **Chilean Horse** will have a single name and registry shared with all the members of the FICCC. It has yet to be seen what course the **Chilean Horse** breeders will choose to take, and this decision will have serious repercussions on the kind of future that lies ahead for the breed.

It is important to realize that the idea behind the FICCC is not a new one, nor has it always had the same criteria in choosing what horse breeds would be encompassed in the federation. In 1942, the first meeting that would become a precursor to the formation of the FICCC was held between Don Guillermo Echenique of Brazil and the American representative Bob Denhardt. As secretary of the newly formed American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), Mr. Denhardt hoped to include the **American Quarter Horse** in the Inter-American Federation of Criollo Horse Breeders, since the **Quarter Horse** also originated in part from the Spanish stock brought by the conquistadors. At the time, other countries (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) that were seeking to preserve the “criollo type” were included in the conversations, and it was determined that the **Quarter Horse’s** strong influence of **Thoroughbred** bloodlines was an important difference when compared to the all-Iberian background of most of the native breeds in Latin America.

In later years, Cuba also had a representative in the FICCC, and their presence would surely have given way to many other countries of Central America and the Caribbean becoming members as well. In this looser designation of an association made up of different American breeds with a common Iberian origin, the **Criollos** presently in the FICCC would no doubt have become better known throughout the Western Hemisphere.

However, with time, the organization would define itself more narrowly with constituents from five countries that had certain country representatives that felt the same breed of horse was

distributed over each of their nations. Admittedly, Chile has had an inconsistent position over years of debating about a common registry in the FICCC. Chile's representatives have been torn between the appeal of the international unity proposed by an organization they were founding members of and the desire to not lose their identity and independent breed status as the oldest horse breed registry in South America. The opinion of the majority of breeders on the Chilean home front that did not always fully comprehend the consequences of the positions taken by their international representatives has shifted 180 degrees from one referendum to another. Much of these illogical "unanimities" of totally contrary opinions have been due to the internal politicking of influential sectors that either sincerely believed in one position or another, or in some cases benefited personally from a policy that opened the door to exporting to FICCC member countries.

Due to the fact that the representatives of each of the regional breeder associations involved in Chile made the decisions in 2002 to reinstate talks with the FICCC about reinstating Chile in the organization, I have respected this pronouncement. Nevertheless, I have strong doubts that many of these same regional representatives were clear about what agreements were signed during the meeting that later took place. Rightly or wrongly, many people thought the idea was to simply start up talks about returning in the FICCC and not to immediately come to a final agreement without truly informing the Chilean breeders of the corresponding conditions in order to obtain a representative consensus. It is my opinion that, four years after that crucial meeting, the majority of the grass roots breeders are still not well informed about the matter.

Regardless of where the facts lie, I did not agree with what was proclaimed in that famous 2002 FICCC meeting. I saw grave danger with the changes that were implemented in printing the new name, "Chilean Criollo", on the SNA certificates of registry after the Chilean committee returned from the meeting with the FICCC. Nor did I think it made sense when an Argentine **Criollo** was awarded a halter championship at **Chilean Horse** breed shows. Worse yet, I found it illogical that an Argentine **Criollo** mare competed and won the **Chilean Horse** National Rienda Championship.

The fact that this later became such a hotly debated subject within the circle of breeders throughout this country served to show there was a lack of knowledge and/or understanding at the mass level of the **Chilean Horse** breeders. Luckily, the registration certificates have been returned to their authentic name without losing the closed registration status of the breed. I think it is safe to say that most Chilean breeders felt that the FICCC organization had little impact on their personal sales or rodeo competition, and thus the topic did not concern them. However, learning that the name of the breed and the **Chilean Horse's** status as the oldest registered breed in South America were at stake, made many breeders sit up and take notice.

This is a topic that still requires an in-depth evaluation so that Chile can maintain a congruent and consistent position with the crucial objectives of the breed: a breed with unique characteristics, a breed with its own specific stock horse culture, a breed with a specificity of function, a breed with the oldest purebred stock horse genealogy in America, a breed that has proudly maintained a close registry since its commencement. Certainly these are strong points worth holding on to.

I think this somewhat touchy subject is important to the objectives of this book for various reasons. The most obvious is that it will have an important impact on the "true breed" status of the **Chilean Horse**. If it is possible that the **Chilean Horse** breeder community can coincide in the direction this breed should head in, there will be much more progress made. Moreover, I think the debate is also important as this breed starts to be known outside its national borders, something this book will help promote. In part through ignorance and in part through convenience, many breeders in other countries will be tempted to include the **Chilean Horse** in a common registry with other South American breeds of Iberian origin. We have already seen this take place in Germany. For the same reasons I have previously pointed out, such solutions are a disservice and lack of respect for the **Chilean Horse** breed and its long-standing tradition as an exclusive breed of incomparable duration. So it is my request that Chilean breeders in Chile, as well as those around the world, make a point of maintaining the identity of a breed that should always be considered a historical gem of the Americas.

Are We to Risk Losing One of the Few Examples of a “True Breed”?

There is no doubt in my mind about the great similarities of origin, development, selection and genealogical exchanges shared by the **Criollos** of Argentina, southern Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Quite frankly, and without belittling the **Criollo** cousins, the trajectory of the **Chilean Horse** differs substantially in all these aspects. The **Criollo** has become more similar to the horses on the western side of the Andes, as **Chilean Horses** have taken on more important roles in the breeding programs on the eastern side of the Andes.

It is true that in the modern and loose sense that has been given to the term “breed”, all these differences can be considered a part of a more universal interpretation of the **Criollo** “breed”. The **American Quarter Horse** “breed” has more dramatic differences in a variety of breed types and functions that are all defined in one registry. Racing breeds, such as the **Thoroughbred**, **Standardbred** and **Arabian**, are strictly guided by the performance of registered individuals and any type that meets the objective of more speed is welcomed.

So, my disillusionment with the 2002 decision is a result of the virtues I find in the classical concept of the term “breed”. I hold a great admiration for the founders and developers of the **Chilean Horse** breed that have so commendably maintained a specific breed type and function in what is the oldest registered stock horse breed of the Americas. I hope 113 years of genealogical purity, an equal or greater number of years of selection for the “corralero function” and the 83 years of clearly defined breed type that lie behind the **Chilean Horse** breed are not put in danger by the new legislation.

I hate to think that all this could be lost in search of more marketability. If this were the objective of the FICCC and FCCC (Federación de Criadores de Caballos Chilenos) then it would have been advantageous to overlook the **English Thoroughbred** and **Irish Cob** influence in the origins of the **Quarter Horse** and have taken in an even more different breed in order to expand the horizons of future sales. The fact that the FICCC turned down what has become the most numerous breed in the world as a potential representative of the “**Criollo** of the Americas” definitely limited the recognition of **Criollos** outside of South America. As a result, it took 30 years after the first FICCC meetings before the **Chilean Horse** would be vaguely introduced to North America, and its presence and numbers are still too weak to be accounted for.



Figure II.329 Malal Potro Lolco was imported to California by George Aladzhadzhyan in 1996.

The Scarce Introduction to the Northern Hemisphere Commenced on its Own



Figure II.330 George Pineo was the first North American to participate in the Champion of Chile.

United States

As is often the case, the first to import the **Chilean Horse** to the United States was an expatriate that came to know, respect and love the breed on its home turf. George Pineo moved to Chile as the company “rep” of Gillette International. He was no stranger to shifting around the world, as in his 24 years of company service he resided in seven different countries.

To this day, Mr. Pineo’s years in Chile have been particularly memorable due to his involvement in the Chilean Rodeo during six years. The sport not only

got under his skin, but it was also part of the formative years of his son Mark. Mr. Pineo was the kind of civilian ambassador that would make all Americans proud. He wore the local attire with great respect, befriended his competitors and valued quality horses. His well-remembered mare *Chicuita* had the privilege of taking the first North American to the “Champion of Chile” in 1972. When this daughter of the famed *Comunista* was not competing, she was putting on exhibitions of running and pinning steers without the guidance of her rider’s reins.

George Pineo not only was an active participant in the sport, but he also did a great deal to spread the enthusiasm he felt to fans all over the nation. His company sponsored the broadcasting of the Champion of Chile on an SNA radio station. This effort flourished into an even greater accomplishment when his persistence and salesmanship gave rise to the first televised coverage of the event. There is no doubt that this jump in public exposure helped the Champion of Chile obtain the present-day recognition it has as one of the most prestigious Chilean sporting events.

When summoned back to the States in 1972, it’s not surprising that the “Gringo Pineo” took his beloved mare *Chicuita* and his gelding *Gavilán* with him. His home base was Boston, and these two purebred stock horses found themselves in an eastern U.S.A. horse culture that had little appreciation for working cowhorses. In a little over a year, George was reassigned to Australia, where “camp drafters” from “down under” would have appreciated his horses’ prowess and “cow savvy” in driving cattle. However, the stringent quarantine regulations to take horses to Australia forced the more practical option of selling the first representatives of the **Chilean Horse** breed to enter the United States. Unfortunately, the whereabouts and the final chapter in the lives of these precious horses are unknown.

Little did Diane Martinovich suspect that accompanying her husband to a new post in a scientific mission in Chile would in some manner permit her to play a part in a little bit of history that was about to be written. Yet, the breeding stock of **Chilean Horses** penetrated the North American scene when, in 1983, Diane imported three mares, a stallion and a young colt from Chile upon her return to the United States. Accompanying her horses was her new spouse and competent huaso trainer, Manuel Retamales, who looked forward to the challenge of establishing new roots far from his beloved Cartagena “fundo” (farm) in the 5th Region of Chile.

With such small numbers, it was difficult that the presence of this unique breed would make any waves in a country of such magnitude. However, in 1986, when Señor Retamales went into the free-style open reining competition at the NRHA Futurity in Oklahoma City, people stood up and took notice. The graceful union of horse and rider that smoothly changed leads upon the slightest shift of weight in the saddle impressed an admiring crowd that had never before seen a representative of the stout little breed or the appealing gentlemanly attire of a Chilean huaso. The agreeable Chilean folk music that offered a rhythmic background for the stallion named Huana *Cascajo* was simply icing on the cake. It was an emotional moment when Mr. Retamales tied with another contender that also scored 23 points while dressing a costume that included the American flag. In the tie breaker the American competitor only scored 19 points, while Manuel had a whopping 27 point run!! Hall of Famer Bob Loomis was the first to stand up and start clapping and soon the entire crowd was giving Manuel an emotional standing ovation. In taking home first place he also entered some of the history books of the sport as the third best Free style



Figure II.331 Manuel Retamales and Condorito placed in the NRHA Derby.

reiner ever and established a precedent that the **Chilean Horse** was certainly capable of being competitive among North American stock horse breeds. *Cascajo* would later have wins in both Non-Pro and Open Reining divisions and he reemphasized how suitable the Chilean Horse breed is for even the more traditional reining events.

For reasons that are not worth going into, Diane and Manuel only bred 3 foals out of their Chilean mares, before the Santa Lori partnership would crumble. However, when the young colt they imported reached his three year old year, Manuel Retamales would be back in the limelight by taking Santa Lori *Condorito* into a second place finish in the Intermediate Non-Pro division of the N.R.H.A. finals. If anybody thought Huana *Cascajo* was a fluke, they now had to contend with a record of two-for-two finalists from the only pair of representatives of a never-heard-of breed that had walked into solid Quarter Horse turf.



Figure II.332 Huana Cascajo was the NRHA National Champion in Free Style Reining

After receiving very little cooperation from the SNA and Chilean Horse Breeders Federation in order to register **Chilean Horses** born outside of Chile, Diane Retamales established the *Chilean Corralero Registry International*, which publicized yet another confusing breed name. In actuality, the term “corralero” is a description of a horse that participates in Chilean Rodeo, much like we might say a performance horse is a cutter, or a reiner, or a jumper, etc. It has never been the name of the breed, but it once again accentuates how poorly the breed name has been marketed over the years. Although her breeding efforts started and evolved in the state of Wisconsin,

eventually Mrs. Retamales would return to using her maiden name when moving all the **Chilean Horses** (other than one founded broodmare that stayed with her ex-husband Mr. Retamales in Wisconsin) to Glendale, Arizona. While associated with Mr. Retamales, her **Chilean Horses** showed their potential, but unfortunately after parting ways with Manuel, Diane would abandon all her initiatives to demonstrate the usefulness of the **Chilean Horse** breed in North America.

Not until January of 2005 did any other American express interest in the **Chilean Horse**. Dr. John H. Austin had the opportunity to travel to southern Chile, where he and his wife Jacqui went on some adventurous horseback expeditions. The sure-footedness and tractability of the grade **Chilean Horse** they used made them contemplate the possibility of importing some riding horses to use on their ranch in Boulder, Utah. Various searches on the Internet brought up my name, and I was not only able to find John some good mounts for his ranch, but also convinced him of the potential of campaigning a good **Chilean Horse** in the stock horse circuits in the U.S.A. So, along with the two saddle horses, a nice colt was sent along to put in the hands of the internationally renowned reining trainer and competitor, Craig Schmersal. It is unfair that the evaluation of an entire breed be placed on the shoulders of only one individual, but it has been twenty years since the last **Chilean Horses** were in the spotlight of the NRHA. Regardless of the outcome, when *Recuerdo* steps into the American show horse circuit, a little bit more history will be made. Hopefully, at that place and time the **Chilean Horse** will start writing its own chapter in the archives of stock horse events that up until now have been dominated almost exclusively by the **American Quarter Horse**.

The subsequent importation of four **Chilean Horse** gestating mares and a breeding stallion indicates that Dr. Austin has been infected with the excitement and appreciation for this breed that has much to contribute to the national stock horse industry in the U.S.A. The fact that he has taken such well-bred representatives who are in foal to some prime **Chilean Horse** stallions should give the assurance that finally some high-quality **Chilean Horse** production is



Figure II.333
Dr. Austin and Fiesta Linda in Utah

getting started in a country that has more than \$50 million in purse money for stock horse events.

It should be no surprise that **Chilean Horses** can compete with the best stock horses of the United States. Horses such as the mustang *Kiger Cougar* have shown they too have been competitive in stock horse competitions that combine aptitudes in cutting, cattle driving and reining. With a trainer of the caliber of Bobby Ingersoll aboard, *Kiger Cougar* obtained a respected 21st position in the World Championship Snaffle Bit Futurity, where 149 other representatives of purebred stock horse breeds were also competing. With a bit more experience under their belt, the team of Bobby Ingersoll and *Kiger Cougar* later won a working cowhorse competition against a field of 19 registered **Quarter Horse** competitors.

Steen Vaquero is another successful mustang that won the open division of western riding at the world show for the American Buckskin Registry Association. If mustangs (in essence a North American “criollo”) that are the result of 300 years of natural selection in the wild are capable of being competitive, surely there is good reason to be certain that the **Chilean Horse**, which has been thoughtfully selected for 460 years as a premier stock horse, will be capable of such feats and much, much more.



Figure II.334
Four mares in foal shipping out the USA

Germany

Surprisingly, for some reason the exports to Europe have been more numerous than to the United States. Still, they are embarrassingly low numbers comprised mostly of people that have been exposed to the breed in South America and could not bear the thought of leaving their hardy and faithful mounts behind. Germany and Austria have access to a *German Association of Criollo Horse Breeders*.

The Bavarian Association for Special Breeds is one place these exotic equines can be registered in the country. One **Chilean Horse** Stallion and four **Chilean Horse** mares have been imported into Germany and registered in the *Bayerischer Zuchtverband für Spezialrassen*. As of 2002, they have been responsible for around 30 German-born “**Criollos**” with some degree of Chilean lineage. Actually, the Chilean influence is significant, as two Uruguayan stallions also imported into the country were grandsons of a **Chilean Horse** imported into Uruguay. These stallions are responsible for another 20 individuals that can trace back to some **Chilean Horse** bloodlines in their pedigree. Aside from the 50 to 60 “**Criollos**” with some **Chilean Horse** lineage, 15 stallions and 60 broodmares with Argentine **Criollo** registry have also been imported into Germany. I am not aware if any of these individuals have **Chilean Horse** ancestors. Regardless, the Argentine imports are no doubt responsible for hundreds of additional German-born **Criollos** that have incorporated themselves into the German horse population. Due to the lack of Chilean Rodeo competitions, these German representatives of the breed have participated mostly in western stock horse events. Their affinity for reining, working cowhorse and team penning is logical, but interestingly they have also held their own in cutting competitions against **Quarter Horse** counterparts. Since a good number of the **Criollos** registered in Germany are of Argentine origin, there has also been a strong focus on endurance competitions and trail riding activities.

France

Interest has also been growing in France for the native South American stock horse breeds. Mr. Philippe Bergeron devotes himself to the breeding and training of **Criollo** horses in his Haras du Treuscoat. After some years managing a large cattle ranch in Salta, Argentina, Mr. Bergeron became a faithful admirer of the **Criollo** breed. Like German breeders, Mr. Bergeron is focusing on limited numbers of quality South American **Criollo** specimens. As of 2002, he had accumulated some 25 head of **Criollos** which he is registering in the ACCC of Argentina. However, he and his friends are presently promoting the growth of the *Association Française des Chevaux Criollos*, which will hopefully introduce the breed to more French horsemen and women.

In the 1980's, a French citizen with the not-so-French name, Alban Martinotto, went to Chile to work on the Colbun Dam hydroelectric project. Mr. Martinotto was not a horseman, but he was an avid hunter who loved the outdoors. He became fascinated with the sport of Chilean Rodeo, and soon he sponsored a paired team under the name of *Machicura*. In 1989, when it came time for Mr. Martinotto to return to France, he took his two geldings, *Ministro* and *Fantoche*, back with him. To my knowledge, these two geldings were the first two purebred **Chilean Horses** to be taken to France.

I am not aware of any more **Chilean Horses** that have been imported into France, but this should just be a matter of time, as there is a growing interest in reining horses in that country. Moreover, the French horsewoman Dominique Beaumont has relocated to Chile, where her husband is employed, and she is finding out that **Chilean Horses** make excellent candidates for children's mounts. As a representative of the French Federation of Equitation and the UNIC (National Interprofessional Horse Union), she has come to Chile with excellent credentials for starting pony clubs. Dominique is already seeing a potential for sending **Chilean Horses** to France for this market, as her experience has proven that the breed's docile yet courageous character make them very adept jumpers for children. Working with Jean Pierre Boucan, a National Technical Advisor in France, there is hope of getting the breed officially recognized so that it can participate in the famous *Salon du Cheval de Paris*, where more than 180,000 spectators and horse enthusiasts congregate every year.

Another exciting bit of news that is in the making that should surely introduce the breed into France in a big way are the efforts being made by a Chilean by the uncharacteristic name of Daniel Nowodworsky Vergoz, who has been living in France for the last 30 years. In a joint effort with the Chilean Embassy in France, he has the intention of taking over 20 paired teams of corraleros to Montpellier, France. Once there, he hopes to organize and perform a full-fledged Chilean Rodeo, which will surely be an original form of entertainment for the French public. It's an ambitious project, but Mr. Nowodworsky has been chasing this dream for some time and it looks like he is very close to making it a reality. So, although France does not have large numbers of **Chilean Horses** right now, there is good reason to think that this is going to change in the not-too-distant future.

Italy

The experience in Italy is a bit different, since there has been an active broker activity that has had a greater impact than the limited establishment of serious breeders in other countries. Hundreds of mare and gelding Argentine **Criollos** have been imported via ocean freight due to the ties between Italy and Argentina. It is reported that there have been very little selection criteria, thus resulting in individuals with a wide range of quality. Nonetheless, the **Criollo** is consequently penetrating in large numbers a country where there is a heated enthusiasm for stock horses.

Over the past two decades Italy has become one of the more important importers of high quality American Quarter Horses going into Europe and as a result Italian stock horse events mimic those in the USA. In the 2006 Italian Reining Derby a **Brazilian Crioulo Joio do Infinito** tied for second place in the Open Pro event. As so often has been the case with the best reining horses in Brazil, the pedigree of this individual was strong in **Chilean Horse** bloodlines.

Summary

Where we see the actual introduction of the **Chilean Horse**, it has occurred because of the initiative of the foreigners that had personal reason to be enamored of the breed. If Chile were to put forth some effort, there are many possibilities for promoting the breed in these countries, as well as other nations that have only been exposed to the Argentine **Criollo**. I have the utmost respect for the Federation of Chilean Horse Breeders, as they have dynamically implemented many ideas that have contributed to improving the popularity and respect for this once-underrated equine breed in Chile. Nonetheless, it is my humble opinion that this organization could surely do a lot more to make the breed better known throughout the world. I dare say that a public relations post to give the breed international exposure is sorrowfully needed. In most horse breed books, the **Chilean Horse** is not even mentioned, and in a few cases where it does appear, it is mistakenly categorized under the **Criollo** heading.

Moreover, Chilean breeders should be pursuing elite markets for stock horses. With western reining numbering among the seven official disciplines of the World Equestrian Games and a probable future Olympic event, there is a worldwide fever for horses that can compete in this sport that is open to any breed. The open stock horse events of the U.S.A. have the kinds of purses that make investing good money in any good candidate a reality that should not be overlooked. **Chilean Horse** owners should look at their colleagues in the **Chilean Thoroughbred** industry that have cashed in on tremendous sales to international brokers, as well as earned millions of dollars in purses for those who chose to keep ownership of their horses and compete abroad under their own names. If you truly believe in your breed, you put your money where your mouth is. I say the **Chilean Horse** gives us many good reasons to believe!!!

The “Criollo” Foothold is a Chilean Horse Opportunity

The large importations to the “Old World” are also spreading the “**Criollo**” throughout Europe, where hopefully appetites will be whet enough to motivate others to make importations of higher caliber representatives of the breed. Anywhere stock horse enthusiasts consider the importation of “**Criollos**” is fertile territory for marketing the **Chilean Horse**, since overall it is even more adept at the cow working functions. European groups such as the *Pasión Criolla Association* that is being propelled by Gérard Barré and others, is rapidly kindling interest in the South American stock and saddle horse. Mr. Barré also has a very active web page that is titled *Justacriollo.com* that also attests to the growing interest Europeans have for these South American breeds of Iberian origin.

Unfortunately for Chilean breeders, the limited numbers of “**Criollos**” in Europe are mostly of Argentine origin. Certainly, these fit well into the trail and endurance scene, but as Olympic western reining has become the rage in European cowboy wannabes, a tremendous potential exists for promoting **Chilean Horses** in these markets. It can't be denied that if Chileans permit their national horse to be identified as a “Chilean Criollo Horse” it will always be thought of as a “second rate **Criollo**”, since that breed is solidly associated with the gaucho culture. What Chilean breeders need to capitalize on is the fact that their horse is a distinct breed with a much longer history of demanding selection as a stock horse and with a huaso culture that has traditionally been more polished in its horsemanship and more organized in its competitive events. Nonetheless, there are some countries in Europe that received their first exposure to South American stock horses from the Chilean variety.

Emotional Return to the Homeland

In the 500th anniversary celebration of Christopher Columbus' discovery of America, 29 **Chilean Horses** were shipped to Salamanca, Spain, where they accompanied a delegation of 40 Chilean horsemen and artisans. Twenty huasos put on repeat performances that displayed the athletic prowess of the **Chilean Horse**. In this country where the public was accustomed to seeing the steeds of “rejoneadores” (mounted bullfighters) skillfully dodging from the “toros de

lidia” (fighting bulls), the crowds from a total of six shows euphorically cheered the little **Chilean Horses**. In a land where the prevailing mentality emphasizes staying clear of the aggressive bovines, the paired teams of **Chilean Horses** and riders literally pushed cattle out of chutes to the makeshift show ring, and then drove and courageously pinned them to poorly constructed cushions on the surrounding fences. Of all the Salamanca festivities, the demonstration of the aptitudes and character of the **Chilean Horse** and the huaso school of horsemanship received the greatest support from the press and spectators.



Figure II.335
Chilean Horse returns to their origins of 500 years ago

Although this is normally not a breed known for choreographed group performances, the consummate showman, “Coteco” Aguirre improvised a split of the Chilean huasos into two groups that simultaneously sidestepped at a full gallop down the sides of the showground as they waved face-to-face with the crowd of more than 5,000 spectators. The two groups then united tail-to-tail in a side-stepping grand finale down the middle of the arena that gave

rise to the exalted sound of a standing ovation. For months, Spaniards were talking about these representatives of the horse types that were present when the Spanish kingdom first came into existence. Repeatedly, they reminisced about their valiant charges into belligerent steers that were crosses of **Charolais** on the feisty Spanish **Morucho** breed. In a nation where horsemanship and valiant stock horses are the order of the day, the little **Chilean Horse** left a lasting impression on the crowds in their mother country.

It is meaningful that five centuries after Christopher Columbus reintroduced the horse into the Americas, the oldest purebred descendent of the Iberian genealogy in America set foot again in the land that launched its ancestors to the New World in 1492. The **Chilean Horses** were walking on grounds where **Celt** horses had once tended to mountain cattle, where **Celt X Camargue jacas** followed suit with even better stock horse attributes, where crosses with the improved Germanic breeds brought by the conquerors of western Europe instilled more power, hardiness and characteristic coarse hair coats and color patterns, where further crosses with Moorish **Andalusi** and **Barb** provided even more agile **jacas** that were unsurpassed in battle and war games. It was very momentous that in a country that is now best identified with the much taller, more refined, high-stepping, silky-haired **Andalusian**, a living reminder could be made public of what the majority of the grade stock horses and warhorses of the 15th century looked like.

Is There Really a Need to Propagate the Chilean Horse Abroad?

Although we can give testimony to the presence of **Chilean Horses** in faraway lands the world over, it is still a disheartening reality that such a richly endowed breed of horse is so little known beyond its native shores. What is the future of the **Chilean Horse** breed? Is there really any need to see it propagate itself in greater numbers throughout the rest of the world? Are there functions that the **Chilean Horse** can do as well as, or better than, other breeds that presently implement these roles in other countries?

My opinion is an emphatic yes! Whatever traits the **Chilean Horse** offers are the product of an incredibly long period of selection that have been regulated by an American registry that is only outdated by the **American Thoroughbred**, **Standardbred** and **Saddlebred** breeds. No other stock horse breed in the Americas can claim such antiquity of formal existence. The organized **Chilean Horse** breed has strongly prioritized its cattle-working instincts that were cherished over 300 years before the breed was officially structured. The registered **Chilean Horses**, in their great majority, have been selected for one cattle-working event that requires more speed in lateral dexterity, boldness of character and driving strength than any other equine

event in the world. The physical and psychological attributes that have developed with the improvement of this breed are assets that should make positive contributions to stock horse breeds the world over.

Whether they are considered to improve the performance of reining horses, working cowhorses, cutting horses, team penning horses, bull-fighting horses (horses for “rejoneos”), or Australian camp drafting, the **Chilean Horse** offers aptitudes that are well endowed for all these events. Even if one were of the opinion that other breeds are equally as talented for these events, the **Chilean Horse** will contribute: 1) hardiness under inclement conditions; 2) a docile and trainable temperament; 3) a low metabolic rate that requires minimal nutritional needs; 4) an incredible threshold for work, and 5) excellent hoof and bone integrity that can withstand the rigors of working environments. All these traits have been seriously depleted in so many of our modern breeds from the overuse of the **Thoroughbred** in breed formations.

Unfortunately, the usage of the **Chilean Horse** in the neighboring FICCC countries has emphasized the value this breed has as a stock horse breed improver. Nevertheless, it is in the **Chilean Horse** breeder’s best interest to promote their breed as the oldest registered stock horse of the Americas, so that worldwide interest can focus more on the importation of purebred specimens of the breed, which can continue to be bred abroad. Regardless of how many useful traits the **Chilean Horse** can pass on to its crossbreds, the centuries of purebred production should make it clear that their greatest potential will be seen when reproducing the registered representatives throughout the world. This will open up an international market for the **Chilean Horse** that should help develop new branches of the original foundation lineages that can be tested over time in new international homes.

Unlike the crossbreeding objectives of the past that have helped promote the value of other breeds, the international purebred production will give the **Chilean Horse** breed the credit it is due when accomplishments are made. There will always be an interest to reinforce these international breeding programs with the bloodlines that are proving to be the best rodeo horses of Chile, as this is a unique selection criterion that will be very difficult to duplicate elsewhere. Chilean producers should also not overlook the merit of someday obtaining outcrosses from outstanding purebred branches that have evolved abroad while expanding the genetic pool of the breed.

In Every Opportunity to Participate in International Competitions, it Behooves Us to Compete, Compete Compete!

If the **Chilean Horse** is not being used to fill these needs in markets that are distant from its homeland, it is because so few people know anything about the breed. Unlike other FICCC country members that have substantial numbers of other stock horse breeds, **Chilean Horses** have no other breeds to be compared with. Brazil is the country with the second-largest population of **Quarter Horses** in the world, and they have living proof of “**Cavalos Crioulos**” (Brazilian **Criollos**) that have obtained top honors in open reining classes against tough **Quarter Horse** competition. Argentina has recently started an *Asociación de Criadores de Caballos de Rienda* (Breeders Association for Reining Horses) which is motivating open competition of all



Figure II.336

Traditional Chilean stock horse events were oriented for men, however now women are getting opportunities to participate.

breeds with aptitudes in reining. This will be another golden opportunity for the **Criollos** to pit their talents against the best stock horses looking to gain the slots in advent of participation in the World Equestrian Games or the Olympic Reining Team.

The Federation of Chilean Horse Breeders has made an effort to develop a competition that can show the versatility of the **Chilean Horse** in more internationally accepted events. The “Pruebas Ecuestres” (Horse Trials) were started in 1992 and offered a needed competitive stage for youth, women and rienda specialists. Since the Chilean Rodeo is, in great part, limited to adult males, the “Pruebas Ecuestres” provided a training ground for the growing number of youngsters that are no longer exposed to the horse riding skills that previously were an integral part of the rural lifestyle.



Figure II.337 – II.340

The PECH (Chilean Horse Trials) offers a series of stock horse disciplines for both genders of all ages.

With the tireless leadership of an American who has proudly called Chile and its huaso culture her own for more than 20 years, Thérèse Matthews has been a key factor in helping the “Pruebas Equestres” grow into a well-organized and prestigious event. Solid supporters such as Mr. Gonzalo “Chalo” Vial Concha have helped bring in Argentine, Brazilian, Mexican and Uruguayan horsemen that have competed alongside Chilean stars in the “Pruebas Equestres” format. Don Agustín Edwards E. has offered the needed backing in advertising and prizes to assure fame to the participants.

The five-event competition involves a scored conformational evaluation, an appraisal of the walk, trot and canter gaits, a timed four-barrel racing pattern, fence work with cattle, and finally a rienda test. I use the word “test” instead of “pattern” because each maneuver is performed and judged individually.

The 15-year history (as of 2006) of the “Pruebas Equestres” has already provided some very interesting results which should help to open new opportunities for women in the stock horse events. A very gifted young woman named Romané Soto won her first Championship in the “Pruebas Equestres” at the tender age of 14, and has not looked back since. At the moment, she has tallied a total of 9 Championships over a period of 11 years. Interestingly, this sport offers the exact same events to all participants of the five categories of Juvenile, Juniors, Amateur Women, Amateur Men and Professionals. In the 2002 National Championship Horse Trials, Romané not only won her Amateur Women’s division, but also was first-runner-up on another horse. The really amazing thing about her performance was that both her horses’ scores were higher than any of the competitors in the other four divisions!! In part, her accomplishments led to the acceptance of a women’s division in the 2005 National Rienda Championship in Rancagua, and it’s not surprising that Romané was the winner of this historic event that permitted the inclusion of Chilean horsewomen for the first time ever in the Champion of Chile.

Competition of **Chilean Horses** against other stock horse breeds has been slow to take place in Chile, but a recent milestone offers much hope. In 2005 the FEI (International Equestrian Federation) backed the idea of a Reining commission that gave rise to the National Association for Reining Horses (ANCR) in Chile. In 2006 this organization is having various FEI sanctioned open reining events for any horses registered in the FEI. Moreover, the *Federation of Chilean Horse Breeders* has approved a transition that will permit International Reining to eventually replace the Chilean Horse Trials since the former event is now one of the seven disciplines of the World Equestrian Games. An official reining arena is being built in the fair grounds the host the Chilean Heritage Week, so that in September of 2006 an International Reining competition with attractive purses can jumpstart the discipline of reining into high gear.



Figure II.341

The recent introduction of the sport of reining will give the Chilean Horse an international stage on which it can show its stock horse aptitudes.



Figure II.342

Chilean breeders must make an effort to send their better performers to countries where open confrontation can take place with the best reining horses of the world. . In the first year of Chile's re-entry into the FICCC, a group of representatives was sent to Uruguay to participate in the FICCC competitions. The talented "Chiqui" Navarro and his Chilean National Champion Rienda horse *Alaraco* lived up to Chile's regional reputation, as they brought home the coveted first prize. The recently FICCC sponsored International Reining will offer yet another opportunity to take **Chilean Horses** to compete in events that will include all the other FICCC member countries.

It is imperative that we realize that the equine world is moving away from breed-restricted performance events and prospering from multiple sponsors of events that are open to any horse. The National Reining Horse Association and the National Cutting Horse Association are examples of this open competition mentality that rakes in millions of dollars in purse money every year. Although the tendency in South America has been to have restricted breed sponsored events, creating open events that offer additional opportunities to prove the comparative value of the breed seems an important step that is just now being made.

If a particular breed dominates any of these events, it simply lends more credence to the superior aptitudes it possesses, since it is competing against contenders of varied breeds. This takes a degree of confidence by all participating breeds; as the most suitable breed stands a chance of occasionally being upset, and lesser known breeds know they can gain tremendous credibility if they show they are capable of beating the favorites. Restrictive competition only raises doubts and insecurities about breeds that have not faced the top competition in the world. Getting over that hump could prove advantageous by truly believing in your breed of horse, and promoting that confidence in its breeders.

Historically, this has not been the attitude of Chileans in sporting events, where they have been the first to criticize their lack of results or be skeptical about their chance of success. Chileans have been intimidated even more by being neighbors to a larger, quite talented and sports-oriented country such as Argentina, which boasts confidence out of every pore. Fortunately, the tendency is changing as Chile obtains international success in the sports world. Within the past five years, Chile has obtained a No. 1 tennis ranking with Marcelo "Chino" Rios, multiple Olympic Gold medals in the same sport with Nicolas Massu and Fernando González, competitive WPGA performance from Nicole Perot, third place in the World Polo Championships (and best ranking for South America), four consecutive times World Champions in the Military Equestrian Games, World Champions in Marine Snorkel Fishing, as well as being home to internationally respected professional soccer stars like "Bam Bam" Zamorano and Marcelo Salas, and breeders of many multiple Grade-I-winning **Thoroughbred** racehorses in events around the world. Clearly, the idea of successfully competing at the elite levels of any professional sport is becoming a more realistic consideration for Chileans.

If proving their competitiveness in the international horse world creates a demand of any magnitude, the number of horses available in Chile will soon be insufficient to meet the demand. At the moment, only about 7,000 registered horses are being produced per year, but the potential for greater production is a very viable reality. Nonetheless, this makes an interesting proposition for **Chilean Horse** breeders the world over, as when a growing demand is created, an excellent market at premium prices will result for producers everywhere, for years to come.

Remarkably, Chile has unwaveringly held onto the traditional market this breed has had with the other four members of the FICCC. That market is available because, over the past four centuries and more emphatically over the past four decades, the other FICCC members have obtained impressive results when using the Chilean genealogy. I find this incongruous because, unlike other specialized horse breeds, the stock horse breeds have an opportunity to easily prove their worth in very similar events throughout the world. For this reason, I feel that Chile has a tremendous potential to market this national asset well beyond the borders of South America. The fact that it has not done so is demonstrative of just how well the secret of the **Chilean Horse** has been nestled "under the wings of the Andes".

You, My Readers, Chileans or Chileans at Heart, Can Make a Dream Come True

I truly hope this book has piqued your curiosity about this impressive breed of horse. I hope that the literary journey we have taken together has helped you to understand the “bigger picture” that lies in the background of the modern representatives of this tough and agile breed. I trust you have found it interesting to see how much of what we have learned about our modern horses is rooted in millions of years of evolution. I hope that you have found the historical progression of the Iberian Peninsula explicative of not only how contemporary Spanish horses came into being, but also how each of the players in this complex story contributed to the development of the various equine types in different parts of the Iberian Peninsula.

I hope that the account given of events that led to the introduction of the equine to the Americas was informative in pointing out just how far back the heritage of many of our American breeds go. Likewise, I trust that the chronological tale of how horses were distributed throughout South America clearly pointed out how much older the open range ranching was in this part of the Western Hemisphere. I am sure this is a surprising comparison to the much-touted “cowboy days”, romantically depicted in literature and on film screens.

You learned how Chile developed from a new horizon for conquerors to the growth of a productive agrarian colony and eventually to self-government through its cohesive struggle for independence. This offered an informative insight as to why the **Chilean Horse** we know today was the horse type chosen to represent this nation that had a unique topography and whose citizens were forced to mature in the confines of those geographical constraints.

To do justice to the **Chilean Horse** breed, it is important for the whole story to be told. Only with this complete understanding can we welcome what is displayed before us today. Appreciating the progress made en route to becoming an officially registered breed, one can be much more accepting of what makes the **Chilean Horse** both different and unique from much more numerous stereotypical stock horse breeds. Understanding when and why this breed originated and where it came from permits us to observe traits like its small stature, its atypical body length, its ram-like head, its incredibly thick mane and tail, its double-layered hair coat, its hard oval hooves and its bold yet tractable temperament, and be terribly proud of what has assertively been stipulated as the defined type of a “TRUE breed”.

In an era when breeders make great efforts to mold horses into desired functions, it is refreshing that a breed so solidly founded on a genotype specifically suited for cattle-working performance can prosper with minimal human intervention. It is indisputable that the past century of more specific development of corraleros perfected their stock horse skills, but the total package of the **Chilean Horse** offers traits that came about over more than four centuries of unpampered horse breeding. These attributes of “cow savvy”, athleticism and hardiness came across the Atlantic with the Spanish conquerors, but nowhere were these qualities more intensively put to use than in the **Chilean Horse**.

Presently, there is still no better place to see the **Chilean Horse** at work than watching corraleros under the wings of the Andes. For those of you who can consider making a trip to Chile, I would strongly recommend it. Come experience a whole host of secrets that make this country so special, of which the **Chilean Horse** is but one of many. Nevertheless, it is my dream that someday **Chilean Horses** will also be key players in a variety of stock horse events and uses under the “wings” of the Rockies, the Appalachians, the Swiss Alps, Australian Alps, the Pyrenees, the Spanish Sierra Nevadas, the Piedmonts, or wherever else cattle need herding!!

It is you, my friends that will help make this dream come true and I am convinced that once you throw your leg over a **Chilean Horse**, you will never be sorry you played a part in introducing this breed to the far corners of the world. Stay in touch as we take on that challenge together!

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