

Caballos de Destino

A Vanishing Breed



Harold and his Knights ride to their place of embarkation at Bosham, Sussex

November, 2012

by Karen Parker, Photographer and Designer
www.rockmultimediasolutions.com

This is a story that is as much about two humble Spanish Mustang breeders and pioneers as it is about **Caballos de Destino**. This is a fitting name for a ranch in the Black Hills of South Dakota that has been raising and preserving "horses of destiny" since the late 1980s. Sharron Scheikofsky and Dave Reynolds have owned and bred over 250 Spanish Mustangs to date. Today, Sharron is one of the few Sorraia-type Spanish Mustang breeders in the country and Dave's accidental contributions to appaloosa Leopard Complex (LP) studies scores a "spot" light in his career.



*"All men dream, but not equally.
Those who dream by night in the
dusty recesses of the minds, wake in
the day to find that it was vanity;
but the dreamers of the day are
dangerous men, for they may act on
their dreams with open eyes,
to make them possible."*

—T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia)



Photo by Karen Parker



Apache Chief, Cochise
Bronze bust by Betty Butts and
Image Courtesy of André Kozimor
from Wikipedia Commons

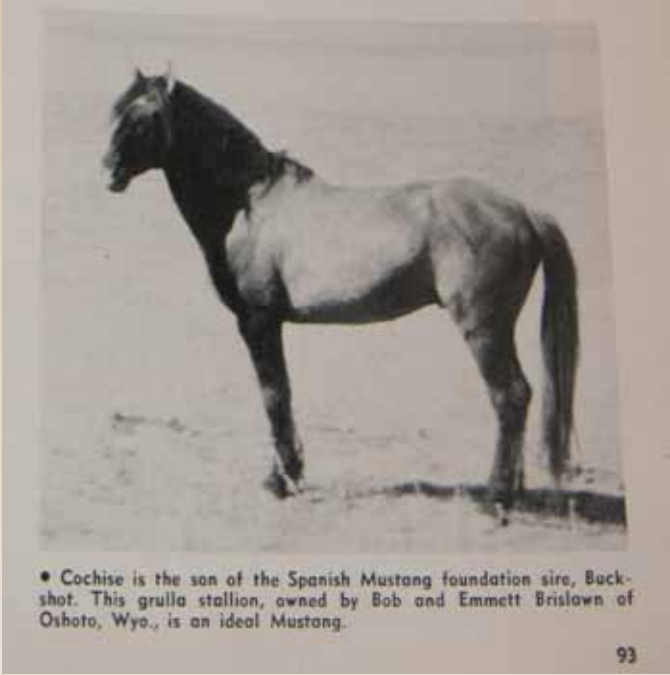
Images below
Courtesy of Western Horseman

This chronicle of "true grit" started with the October, 1968 issue of *Western Horseman* magazine about Medicine Hat horses and Spanish Mustangs. Dave and Sharron didn't know each other then, but they had both admired a striking photograph of a Spanish Mustang named Cochise in this now historical magazine. Dave, having been told as a kid that the original mustang was dead and gone, still dreamed of a horse sound in wind and limb that

could carry an Indian swiftly and sure-footedly across the plains. Now he was reading they hadn't all vanished. Cochise was a grulla stallion foaled in 1952, sired by SMR #1 Buckshot, a founding stallion of the *Spanish Mustang Registry (SMR)*. One can envision Cochise, the Apache Chief, protecting his people from the back of a horse with the same name. This impression of the ideal Spanish Mustang stuck with Dave and Sharron but it would be several years before dreams would be realized.



Cochise SMR #33 - 1952 Grulla Stallion
(Buckshot SMR #1 x Queenie SMR #8)
Image Courtesy of Josie Brislaw



• Cochise is the son of the Spanish Mustang foundation sire, Buckshot. This grulla stallion, owned by Bob and Emmett Brislaw of Oshoto, Wyo., is an ideal Mustang.

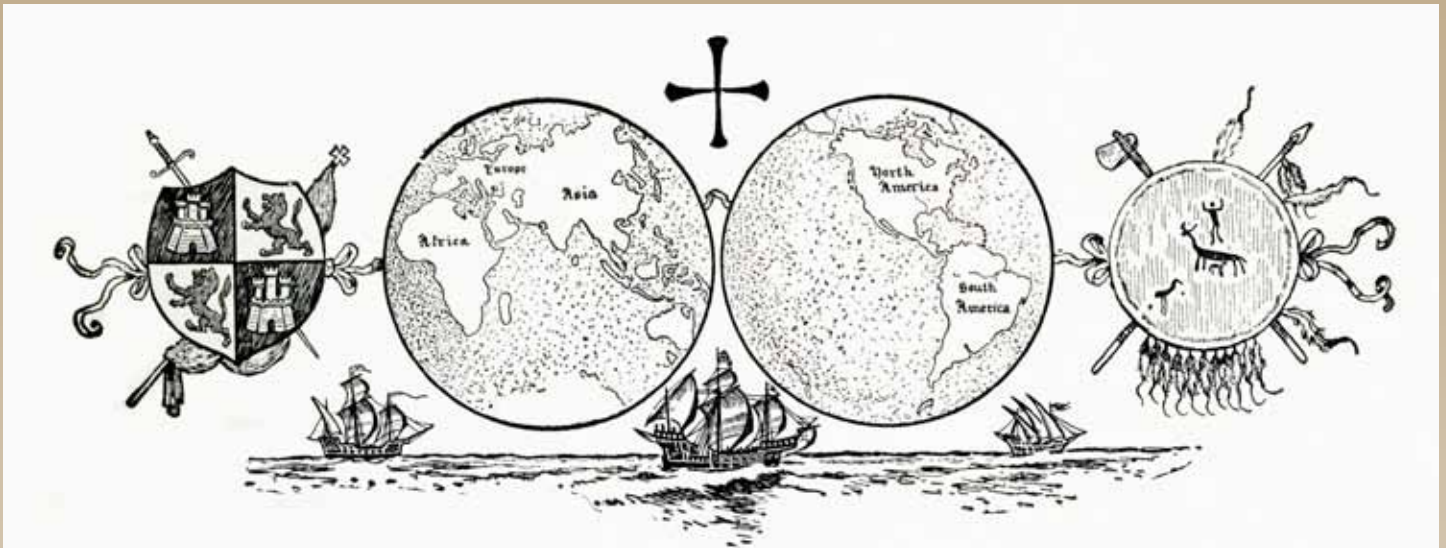
History of the Spanish Mustang

The history of the Spanish Mustang starts with the Spanish and Portuguese horses of the Iberian Peninsula, the same horses thought to have influenced the African Barb (Berber) horse from the Barbary Coast of North Africa in historic times. The circulation of horses between Iberia and North Africa,

their ruthless campaigns against the natives in the well-populated Americas.

The true Spanish Mustang characterized by the SMR is a direct descendant of the Spanish horses brought to the New World by Spanish Explorers and Conquistadors. Columbus, on

a switch and “a lower grade” of horse reached Hispaniola in late November of 1493. But instead of the anticipated drawbacks, the unscrupulous substitution proved most advantageous as these tough horses were much more capable of enduring the hardships ahead.



and neighboring areas, was active for millennia with the sands of time culminating in a superior horse. Following 700 years of conflict in Spain by the Moorish invaders from North Africa, the combined armies of Castile and Aragon conquered the last of the Moors at Granada in 1492. The Spanish soldiers finally freed by the victory were ready for the next great task, the conquest of the New World, discovered that year by Christopher Columbus. Their next successes were accomplished from the backs of their noble steeds resilient enough to cross ocean and desert allowing the Spaniards to pursue

order of the Spanish throne, commenced bringing the first Spanish horses to the New World on his second voyage. Along with some of the typical horses from Spain, historians believe it was the tamed descendants of the wild horse of Iberia, including the “marismeño” now known as the Sorraia, that Christopher Columbus first brought to the Caribbean Islands. Columbus’ own writings state that he intended for only the finest Andalusian stock of the time to accompany him on his second voyage, however, just before setting sail, fraudulent dealers pulled

Thereafter, each ship headed for the New World, carried breeding animals of choice Spanish stock. Breeding farms were set up in the Caribbean and subsequently in Mexico. Breeding farms such as the one operated in Sonora, Mexico by Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino, a Jesuit priest, produced stock including many horses, which were placed with each group of Christianized Indians as Kino expanded his efforts further and further north. He turned 20 cattle into 70,000 on his expeditions, and we can’t even guess at how many thousands of horses he spread throughout the Americas. Over the years

horses escaped, were lost or stolen, and many became feral roaming all over the American west. Environmental conditions certainly played a role in the development of these horses over the many generations in a feral state. They developed according to their environment with Nature culling out those less suited to the locale. The Spanish horse left a legacy in its tough, beautiful, hardy descendants that endures to this day.

A complete description of the SMR Spanish Mustang breed can be found [on their web site](#). But in short and directly from the SMR breed standards, "the Spanish Mustang is a smooth muscled horse with a short back, rounded rump, and low tail set. The girth is deep, with a laid back shoulder and fairly pronounced withers. Consistency in type is important and the Spanish Mustang should be immediately discernible upon sight by anyone familiar with the breed. The typical head has a flat or convex profile. When viewed from the front, the forehead is broad and will give the impression of an inverted triangle. The throat latch is well defined and has plenty of room for air passageways. Viewed from the side, the hindquarters appear smooth and display strength and roundness, without excessive muscle definition. All colors are present in the SMR Spanish Mustang as well as all appaloosa and paint patterns, excluding tobiano. Many horses exhibit primitive markings."



**Emmett Brislawn with Buckshot SMR #1 (Monty x Bally SMR #35)
Image Courtesy of Josie Brislawn**



**Emmett Brislawn riding Chief Pushmataha SMR #47 (Sire: Sorrel Choctaw
from Oklahoma x Dam: Soapy Blue/White Oklahoma Choctaw)
Image Courtesy of Josie Brislawn**

The Appaloosa Color Patterns vs. the Breed

Spotted horses have been known to man for twenty thousand years or more with a substantial pictorial record across many cultures. The “Heavenly Horses” of Ferghana (also known as the “blood-sweating horses” by the Chinese) are believed to have included some spotted horses possibly explaining the “blood-sweating” term used just like “flea-bitten” describes certain gray horses.¹ This is just one example of the spotted horse’s long history in numerous breeds. The Appaloosa breed in the U.S. should not be confused with appaloosa-colored Spanish Mustangs.

Appaloosa colors have several pattern variations (blanket or snowcap, mottled, snowflake, marble or varnish roan, etc.). It is the unique group of spotting patterns, collectively called the “leopard complex,” (or LP for leopard pattern) that has historical significance. *Wikipedia*[®] gives us a great definition of the LP color pattern, edited for brevity: “The leopard complex is a group of genetically-related coat patterns in horses. These patterns range from progressive increases in interspersed white hair similar to graying or roan to distinctive, Dalmatian-like leopard spots on a white coat. Secondary characteristics associated with the leopard complex include a white sclera around the eye, striped hooves

and mottled skin. All horses with at least one copy of the LP gene show leopard characteristics, and that LP acts together with other patterning genes (PATN). The LP patterns are present in breeds from Asia to Western Europe, and they are believed to be due to a very ancient mutation.” In short, LP is the gene that makes the spotted genes available and is separate from but works with the white PATN expressions.² Read the article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* “Genotypes of predomestic horses match phenotypes painted in Paleolithic works of cave art” by M. Pruvost et al. to learn more.



**Crazy Legs SMR #3480 (Troubleshooter x Wyoming Moon)
Black Snowcap appaloosa Stallion
Image by Karen Parker**



**Pech Merle Ancient Cave Painting
Image Courtesy of Wikipedia Commons**



**Anno 1740 by Ridinger
Spotted Horse in the Emperor’s Stable in Vienna
Image Courtesy of Francis Haines
from Wikipedia Commons**

Over the years, we have almost lost LP horses within foundation Spanish Mustangs. We haven't seen a nose to toes leopard Spanish Mustang since the 1950s. The Mexican Joe line and some horses in the Chief Pushmataha line carry the gene that breeders need to bring back more Spanish Mustangs with the complete LP coloring.² Jolie Alongi of *Arrow Rock Spanish Mustangs* in Hominy, Oklahoma is the front runner on LP gene research.

Dave works closely with Jolie to learn from her successes in bringing back more LP Spanish Mustangs. Her newest colt, Tejas Lightning Storm, sired by Storm Chaser and out of Tejas Isa Tai, is a stunning grulla with a large spotted blanket with extreme lightning bolt coloring on his legs.

Storm Chaser came from ***Caballos de Destino*** and was out of Rimfire, sired by Chato's Shadow—Cochise lives on and on!! Dave also bred Rimfire to Crazy Legs and the result was Ghost Horse, a mostly white (few spot) LP stallion. Jolie now owns Ghost Horse who is one of just a handful of homozygous LP Spanish Mustangs that carries not one but two copies of the LP gene.



**Tejas Lightning Storm (Storm Chaser x Tejas Isa Tai)
Grulla LP Colt
Image Courtesy of Jolie Alongi**



**Tejas Lightning Storm (Storm Chaser x Tejas Isa Tai)
Grulla LP Colt
Image Courtesy of Jolie Alongi**



**Ghost Horse (Crazy Legs x Rimfire)
A Mostly White (few spot) LP Stallion
Image Courtesy of Jolie Alongi**



**Tejas Lightning Storm
Image Courtesy of Jolie Alongi**

TRAIL DUST AND SADDLE LEATHER

*Northwestern
Waddie, on Palouse
pony, riding winter
ranges.*



Jo Mora

by Jo Mora from "Trail Dust and Saddle Leather"
Used with permission of the jomora.com

Appaloosa–Apalousey Spotted-Coloring

The Appaloosa name used to describe spotted horses did not come into existence until the 1870s. The name was derived by men who worked with the horses of America's Columbia River Basin from the Palouse River which flows through that area. Local tradition recalls that at the time a Nez Perce Indian living along the lower part of the Palouse owned a large herd of spotted horses. The wheat farmers in the area were soon calling the horses "Palouse" or "Palousey" horses. A newcomer who asked an old-timer the name of the strangely marked horses received the curt answer, "A Palousey." But the stranger, unfamiliar with the term, thought it all one word and passed it along in writing as an "Apalousey." Through the ensuing years the spelling of the name has varied from place to place, but "appaloosa" is now commonly accepted as the preferred variation.¹ Here we use appaloosa in lower case when referring to color and not the Appaloosa breed. Dave fondly uses the "Apalousey" term himself, or is it "A Palousey?!" There is a [short video on YouTube](#) of Dave working Longhorn cattle from his prized "Apalousey," Crazy Legs, one of the rare LP homozygous stallions in the SMR and SSMA.



Peace Pipe - 2001 Blue Roan appaloosa Stallion
(Trouble shooter x Pretty Wind)
Image by Karen Parker



Dave Reynolds riding his "Apalousey" Crazy Legs
in the 2007 Black Hills Endurance Ride
Photographer Unknown



Nez Perce Indians with Palouse Pony around 1895
Image Courtesy of Wikipedia Commons

The Sorraia-Type Spanish Mustang

Another unique color found in Spanish Mustangs is the line-backed dun and grulla, often exhibiting primitive markings—zebra stripes on the legs, bars down the shoulders, cob-webbing on the foreheads, bi-colored mane and tails, and sometimes even fishbone stripes coming down over the back from the spine. The Sorraia horse of Portugal is a remnant of the wild zebro (“zebro” indicating “striped” in Portuguese) that once roamed the marginal regions of southern Iberia.

It was Dr. Ruy d’Andrade that pulled together remaining specimens, gave them the name “Sorraia” in deference to the river where he first encountered them in the 1920s, and founded a preserve for them on his estate in the 1930s effectively

saving one of the original wild horse forms from extinction. Members of the d’Andrade family continue to preserve these Sorraias as well as other private breeders. One preserve, the *Vale de Zebro*, is a refuge in Portugal that provides Sorraia horses a truly wild existence, even excluding public visitations to keep their environment as natural as possible. We will also read later about the efforts of the *Ravenseyrie Sorraia Mustang Preserve* in Canada that combines the Portuguese Sorraia horse with the Sorraia-type Spanish Mustang proving that the Spanish Mustang can diversify the otherwise highly inbred Sorraia horse.

Hardy Oelke, a German hippologist and author, is credited with discovering that the endangered Portuguese Sorraia

was living on in certain strains of both American mustangs and Spanish Mustangs in North America in the late 1980s. With less than 200 Sorraia horses left in the world, the Sorraia-type Spanish Mustangs in the U.S. are genetic treasures and the only obvious difference in Oelke’s eyes is “the Portuguese Sorraia survived in Portugal and the Sorraia Mustang survived in the U.S.” To further quote Oelke, “We cannot take credit for its presence today; but we could take measures, at the eleventh hour, to finally preserve it. It survived in spite of us.” Their ability to survive through many challenges does say a lot about their genetic significance. In Mother Nature’s often harsh environment only the strongest, fittest, and most adaptable survive.



**Sharron Scheikofsky riding Four Winds in the 1990s
Photographer Unknown**



**Chato's Shadow (Chato x Cahuilla)
1989 Grulla Stallion
Image by Karen Parker**

Vale de Zebro

“Valley of the Wild Horses” in Portugal—The Last Wild Sorraia Herd



Vale de Zebro - Portugal
Images Courtesy of Hardy Oelke



“Sorraia horses are treated like a domestic breed by most, although they had no history as one. There is still a Sorraia breeder in Portugal who allows his horses to lead a semi-wild life, but the only place where they can still live completely wild, never being touched, where they maintain a natural social structure, where mares decide on their own

which stallion to be with, and stallions fight out their battles for the mares, is the preserve in the Vale de Zebro, the “valley of the wild horse,” where the zebro was plentiful in former times.”

by Hardy Oelke from his book, *“Valley of the Wild Horses: Vale de Zebro.”*

Recommended Reading About the Sorraia-Type Spanish Mustang

In addition to the mostly pictorial book, *"Valley of the Wild Horses: Vale de Zebro,"* Hardy Oelke's books, *"Born Survivors on the Eve of Extinction: Can Iberia's Wild Horse Survive Among America's Mustangs?"* and *"Wild Horses Then and Now"* are indispensable resources for the study of the Sorraia horse from Portugal and its Sorraia-type Spanish Mustang cousin in the Americas. Mr. Oelke's first book from 1997, *"Born Survivors,"* provides an in-depth understanding of the wild horse forms, and how they relate to the Sorraia-type Spanish Mustang of today.

His most recent 2012 book, *"Wild Horses Then and Now,"* takes readers deep into the ancestral histories of the Tarpan, Konik, Exmoor Pony, and Sorraia. The chapter on wild horse colors and dun markings alone makes the book worth the cost to import from Germany. He makes it clear the Dun Factor markings alone don't confirm wild and primitive ancestry. But "there seems to be a correlation between genetic variability and the expression of dun markings. The more intense the inbreeding, the less dun markings are expressed."

Read more about Hardy's books.



Saloio - Sorraia Stallion from Portugal
Image Courtesy of Hardy Oelke



Konik Horses
Image Courtesy of Hardy Oelke



An unsophisticated illustration of a Tarpan, depicting a five-month-old colt
Image Courtesy of Borisov from Wikipedia Commons



Ancient Cave Painting (Replica at Lascaux II)
Image Courtesy of Xabier Eskisabel from Wikipedia Commons

History of the *Spanish Mustang Registry*

Robert E. Brislawn, while surveying and traversing the west for the *U.S. Geological Survey*, realized the authentic Spanish Mustang was disappearing and he commenced his search for horses of essentially pure Spanish blood, desiring to preserve those few remaining. He embarked upon his preservation project in 1925. Two full brothers, Buckshot (grulla) and Ute (red dun) were his first foundation stallions, sired by a dun stallion from the wild named Monty and crossed with Ute Indian Reservation blood on the dam's side.

For years Bob Brislawn, with the assistance of his brother Ferdie, bred their mares, unaware that others shared their dream of preserving this unique and rare breed. The word spread and in 1957 a group headed up by Bob Brislawn incorporated the

Spanish Mustang Registry. The SMR is not only the first and oldest Spanish Mustang registry in the country, but also the only focused on preserving and perpetuating the last remnants of the true Spanish Mustangs. Visit [the SMR site](#) for a more detailed history and a slideshow of historic images from *the Cayuse Ranch*.



Ka-maw-i SMR #115 - Black Stallion
Image Courtesy of Josie Brislawn



Famous Photo of Syndicate (left) and San Domingo (right) - SMR Foundation Stallions
Image Courtesy of Josie Brislawn

Dave and Sharron's History with the SMR

Dave and Sharron were soon crossing paths at *the Cayuse Ranch*, home of the SMR, but had yet to bump into one another. In 1974, Sharron visited *the Cayuse Ranch* and met Bob Brislawn and his son, Emmett. Sharron soon became close friends with the Brislawn family and out of sheer luck talked Emmett into selling her a grulla colt named Chato, foaled in 1974 out of Gray Mare (yes, that is her uninspired name) sired by the coveted Cochise. Sharron was elated.

When Dave made his visit to *the Cayuse Ranch* in 1980, he was captivated by Chato's presence and smooth, high-action gait. Dave immediately told Emmett he had to buy Chato and wanted to know how much he wanted for him. His dreams seemed shattered when Emmett broke the news that he was owned by Sharron and "she wouldn't sell him for a million dollars." So Dave's first grulla Spanish Mustang was Tornado, a grandson of Buckshot and Chief Pushmataha, foaled in 1978 out of Mora and sired by Chief Half Moon. Dave too had finally found his "horse of destiny" full of generosity and intelligence, with bloodlines that went back to the foundation stock of the Spanish Mustang. But he never stopped asking Emmett about Chato.

Caballos de Destino is Born



2011 Snowcap appaloosa Foal out of Smarty Cat (on left) and sired by Crazy Legs
(Zorra in background is a full sister to Chato's Shadow)
Image by Karen Parker

When the SMR held their annual meeting in 1987, Dave finally met the woman that had the horse he always wanted. We are all familiar with the cowgirl's anecdote, "Cowboy Wanted, Send Picture of Horse." But apparently, it works both ways! In 1990 when Dave and Sharron joined efforts around the Spanish Mustang, the only complication was whose copies of *Western Horseman* magazine to keep.

Together they saw the need to really concentrate on preserving the old Iberian traits by cultivating the best phenotype found in the Spanish Mustang. This passion joined Sharron and Dave at the hip. The unique Spanish hip that is! For it's the springy compact hip conformation of the Spanish Mustang that gives it its outstanding athleticism, soundness, strength, endurance,

and agility. Great looks, long flowing manes, and sane minds, along with that functional conformation, made their preservation campaign an obsession that they share to this very day. There is a video with Dave talking about Spanish hip conformation available on YouTube.

The horses of **Caballos de Destino** enjoy natural lives in large pastures, and whenever possible, with their family bands. These natural conditions allow their horses to generally live long lives, with Cahuilla (out of Blue Monday and sired by Crane), exceeding all expectations at the age of 33 and still doing well as of this writing. These horses are strong in curiosity, intuition, self-preservation, and have a

super "can do" attitude. Spanish Mustangs demand respect from their caretakers. For the human that cannot come to the corral with his or her heart in hand will quickly turn to a more tolerable domestic breed. Dave admired Ray Hunt and he learned that working with horses came down to being honest, with your horse and yourself. One really needs to tap into their better self to work with horses of any breed or strain, but this is particularly true with the Spanish Mustang. As Dave has stated time and again, "never take away their curiosity otherwise undesirable instincts take over." Dave's horse gentling skills are more impressive than he would ever admit. Below are some links to YouTube videos of Dave working with a Spanish Mustang named Dreammaker:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cm0-GlwN1lc>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qz5JxjjZW-Y>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQQRXO49h0Y>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3dPL-y4Low&feature=relmfu>



2011 Grulla Foal (Mountain Mist x Chato's Shadow)
Image by Karen Parker

Caballos de Destino's relationship with the SMR has thrived for decades and they don't live far apart at the opposite ends of the Black Hills region between South Dakota and Wyoming. To quote Josie Brislawn, Director of the SMR and daughter of Emmett Brislawn, "Dave and Sharron are like family and have been with us for a long time...truer friends are hard to find." Josie, recently rejoined by her sister Aileen, carry-on the important work started in the generations before them on *the Cayuse Ranch*. Their mother and tough frontierswoman, Gioja, provides daily inspiration to keep them going.



**2007 appaloosa Filly (Crazy Legs x Frosty Rose)
Image by Karen Parker**



**Waltz of the Wind - 2010 Grulla Roan Filly (Chato's Shadow x Little Wind)
Image by Karen Parker**



**Hot Shot - 2011 Grulla Colt (Drifter x Maybelline)
Image by Karen Parker**



**Jessica - 1998 Bay Roan Mare (Jessie James x Charm)
Image by Karen Parker**



**Little Nugget - 2005 Dun Mare (Peace Pipe x Galena)
Image by Karen Parker**

Caballos de Destino Stallions



Silver Shadow (Chato's Shadow x Mountain Mist) - 1997 Grulla Stallion - Now Deceased
Images by Hardy Oelke



Peace Pipe (Troubleshooter x Pretty Wind)
2001 Blue Roan appaloosa Stallion
Image by Karen Parker



Troubleshooter (Choctaw Sundance x Chocolate)
1995 Black Overo/appaloosa Stallion
Photographer Unknown



Sharron with Chato's Shadow (Chato x Cahuilla)
1989 Grulla Stallion
Photographer Unknown



Gun Runner (Troubleshooter x Something Special)
2000 Black appaloosa Stallion
Image Courtesy of Adam Edwards



Crazy Legs (Troubleshooter x Wyoming Moon)
2002 Black Snowcap appaloosa Stallion
Image by Karen Parker

In Memory of Chato

A fine horse that will never be forgotten at Caballos de Destino



Chato SMR #633 (Cochise SMR #33 x Gray Mare SMR #519) - 1974 Grulla Stallion
Copy of Original Photographs



RIP



Words from *Caballos de Destino* about Chato

Chato had a way of moving so smoothly that he appeared to float. He was a horse many people took for taller than his 13.3 hands because of the presence he had about him. He had a big shoulder and narrow v'ed up chest. He was clean legged and had the convex classic Iberian profile seen less and less these days. He was described as "one in a million" and to us he was.

Sadly, his life was ended way too soon by lightning. When we lost him at age 18 he was in his prime, he neither looked nor acted like an "old" horse. As one friend put it, "the *Spanish Mustang Registry* has lost a great horse."

Chato's legacy lives on through his son Chato's Shadow, his grandson Silvertip, and his daughters.

Caballos de Destino Mares



**Cahuilla - 1979 Grulla Mare - 33 years old now
(Crane x Blue Monday)
Photographer Unknown**



**Wyoming Lightning (Troubleshooter x Wyoming Moon) with 2011 Foal
2006 Black Snowflake appaloosa
Image by Karen Parker**



**Grulla and Dun Mares at Caballos de Destino
Image by Karen Parker**

**Contact Caballos de Destino to Inquiry about the
"Horses of Destiny" They Have For Sale
www.sorraiamustangs.net**

605-745-4883



**Angel Fire, 2007 Blue Roan appaloosa, ignoring the antics of her son
in the background (Crazy Legs x Rimfire)
Image by Karen Parker**



**2011 Foals sired by Chato's Shadow
out of Little Wind (left) and Pretty Foxy (right)
Image by Karen Parker**

Caballos de Destino Mares Con't.



**Grulla Mares - 2001 Lista (Chato's Shadow x Wild Flower) on left and
2005 Charisma (Silver Shadow x Miss Chato) on right
Image by Karen Parker**



**Brindled Hip of Silver Flower
(Silver Shadow x Wild Flower)
Image by Karen Parker**



**Country Girl - 1995 Grulla Mare
(Chato's Shadow x Mountain Mist)
Image by Karen Parker**



**Mountain Mist (Jack Slade x Mexi con Estrella) - 1989 Grulla Mare
Image by Karen Parker**



**Raia (Troubleshooter x Mirage) - 2006 Grulla Mare
Image by Karen Parker**



**Mirage (Chato's Shadow x Mountain Mist)
1998 Grulla Mare
Image by Karen Parker**

mtDNA Validates the Sorraia-type Spanish Mustang

It wasn't until the early 1990s that the efforts of **Caballos de Destino** were validated by science. As mentioned in a previous *Horses in Art* article by the author of this story, "Mitochondrial DNA analyses performed by a German institute for molecular biological research revealed that the amazing similarity of some mustangs and the Sorraia horse isn't incidental, but prove their genetic relatedness." Hardy Oelke initiated this research and found this genetic relatedness so important that he imported a horse from **Caballos de Destino** (Misty Jo out of Mountain Mist and sired by Chato's Shadow) to diversify the small gene pool of the Sorraia horse. He was awestruck by how strong the

Sorraia traits were in certain mustangs, holding true to type over the centuries. Misty Jo has changed hands and names a few times since she was imported to Germany, but Hardy still has one of her offspring, Unica, sired by one of his Sorraia stallions.

Chato sired over 50 Spanish Mustangs before his life was ended in a lightning strike on a stormy night in 1992. But his son, Chato's Shadow foaled in 1989, is still passing on Cochise progeny. Chato's descendants can be found all over the world and have contributed to the survival of the rare Sorraia-type Spanish Mustang in innumerable ways.



Unica in center (Sorraia Stallion x Misty Jo)
Image Courtesy of Hardy Oelke



Misty Jo on right in Germany (Chato's Shadow x Mountain Mist) - 1993 Grulla Mare next to a Sorraia mare on the left - the similarities are striking!
Image Courtesy of Hardy Oelke



Unica (on right) with one of Hardy's Leased Sorraia Stallions in Germany
Image Courtesy of Hardy Oelke



right: Tocara (Altamiro x Belina) - 2010 Filly and Levada (Altamiro x Sovina's Zorita) - 2010 Filly in Austria (see page 28 for more on Altamiro, a purebred Sorraia Stallion in Canada)
Image Courtesy of Claudia Radbauer

More Sorraias x Spanish Mustangs in Europe



Zombeira Margarida (Saloio x Misty Jo)
Image Courtesy of Hardy Oelke



Unica in foreground
Image Courtesy of Hardy Oelke



Unica (Sorraia Stallion x Misty Jo)
Image Courtesy of Hardy Oelke



Xácara (Saloio x Misty Jo)
Image Courtesy of Hardy Oelke

*"The unique thing about the Sorraia horse is that it is not a breed, but a relic;
a horse which largely embodies the indigenous South Iberian wild horse."*

*"The fact is, that we can find individuals among today's mustangs which resemble
the Sorraia to such a degree that one cannot tell them apart."*

by Hardy Oelke, from his book, *Born Survivors on the Eve of Extinction*.

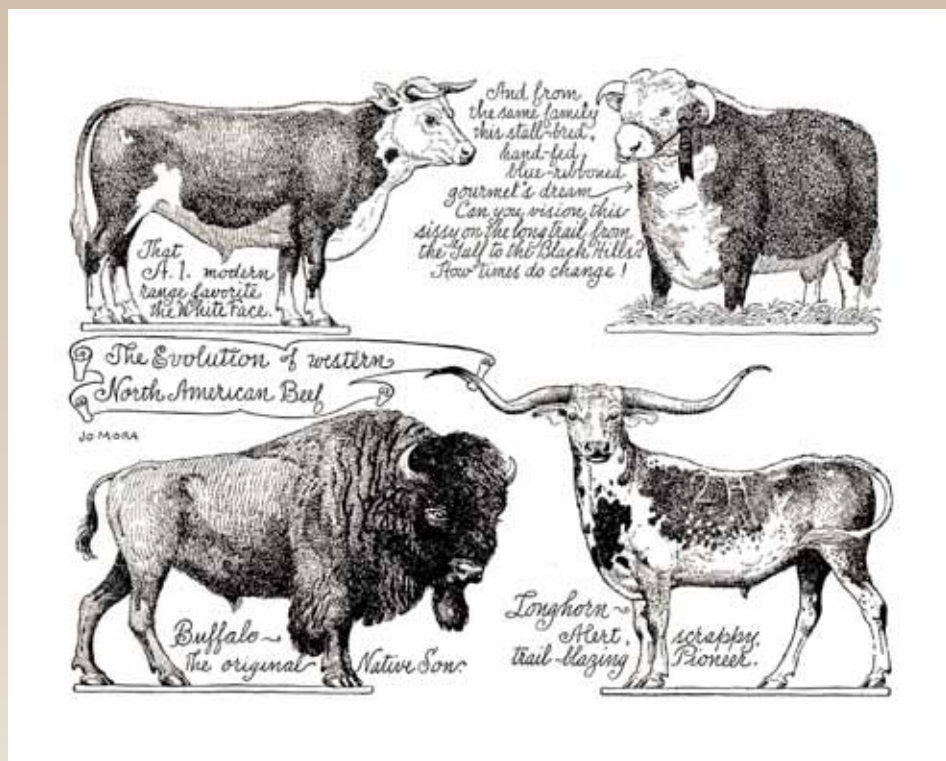
Background Image by Jack Versloot - Reproduction of Lascaux Cave Paintings in Lascaux II - Courtesy of *Wikipedia Commons*

A Shared History With The Texas Longhorns

It's difficult to talk about the history of the Spanish Mustang without mention of the tenacious Texas Longhorns. Along with the Iberian horses, the Spaniards brought over the seed stock that developed in Texas into today's Texas Longhorns. Sharron and Dave may have read one too many Jo Mora books, but the rare breed Texas Longhorns do have a history almost as interesting as the Spanish Mustang. They have bred over 50 Longhorns beside their Spanish Mustangs. Both of these (now rare breeds) came to the New World together surviving epic journeys and proving their mettle. In one of Sharron's and Dave's favorite books, "Trail Dust and Saddle Leather," Jo Mora compared the buffalo and Longhorn to the modern cattle, teasingly asking about the chubby modern beef "can you vision this sissy on the long trail from the Gulf to the Black Hills?" Times were already changing when Jo Mora wrote this great book in 1946, yet **Caballos de Destino** are themselves relics right out of a Jo Mora chronicle of the old west.



by Jo Mora from "Trail Dust and Saddle Leather"
Used with permission of the jomoratrust.com



by Jo Mora from "Trail Dust and Saddle Leather"
Used with permission of the jomoratrust.com

The Southwest Spanish Mustang Association

Gilbert Jones was born in 1906 in the Indian Nation one year before Oklahoma statehood, and raised in the historic Llano Estacado (Staked Plains) of New Mexico. Like his Brislawn friends, he devoted his life to preserving the Spanish Mustang and was one of the original founding fathers of the SMR and served as SMR President until 1977. He founded the *Southwest Spanish Mustang Association (SSMA)* in 1998. [Click here](#) to read the "History of Medicine Springs Mustangs." Over the years, Sharron and Dave worked with Gilbert Jones (and now Bryant Rickman). Sharron was the registrar for the SSMA for nearly half a dozen years.

Gilbert H. Jones
P.O. BOX 48
FINLEY OKLA

PAGE 31 GOOD MEDIUM TYPE MUSTANG
PAGE 42 GOOD SLIM TYPE MUSTANG
PAGE 69 A TRUE MEDIUM TYPE MUSTANG
PAGE 79 A TRUE MEDIUM TYPE MUSTANG
PAGE 1 HEAVY TYPE MUSTANG
PAGE 120 HEAVY TYPE MUSTANG.
PAGE 205 THE TAIN TYPE MUSTANG TO HIGH EARED
PAGE 239 MEXICAN JOE TYPE LEOPARD
PAGE 212 CANADIAN HORSES

IT'S ALLY
IN THE
MUSTANG
BUT WITH
MUSTANG
DESCENDING
FRONT

Gilbert Jones annotated his copy of "Trail Dust and Saddle Leather" by Jo Mora. His comments above about the "Mexican Joe type" leopard appaloosa on page 239 is meaningful since there are no known photographs of Mexican Joe SMR #241 foaled in 1958. The illustration referred to on page 239 of the book can be found on page 7 of this story.



The Famous Gilbert Jones brand
Image by Karen Parker



Alla California Hacendado, circa 1840

by Jo Mora from "Californios"
Used with permission of the jomoratrust.com

Breed Demonstrations at *Kentucky Horse Park* and *Alltech's 2010 World Equestrian Games*



Billy Jack (Dakotah Blue x Miss Chato)
Image by Margaret Odgers

Billy Jack is a gorgeous 2000 grulla gelding from ***Caballos de Destino*** and was owned by Margaret Odgers of *Crazy Horse Farm* in Paris, Kentucky until she sold him in 2010. Billy Jack was exhibited at the *Kentucky Horse Park* in their breed demonstrations in 2009 and he was also the only Spanish Mustang exhibited at the *Alltech's 2010 World Equestrian Games*. Billy Jack is out of Miss Chato and sired by Dakotah Blue. Dakotah Blue is out of Espérance and sired by Jack Slade. The Jack Slade and Espérance pairing have produced numerous outstanding Spanish Mustangs including Rowdy Yates, Cactus Jack, Dakotah Blue, and Sundowner.

Breyer® Spanish Mustang Horse Model of Rowdy Yates



Breyer® Model of Rowdy Yates
Image by Karen Parker

Breyer® collectors may remember the famous grulla Spanish Mustang, Rowdy Yates—retired **Breyer®** horse model #1249 by *Reeves International, Inc.* that ***Caballos de Destino*** bred 25 years ago. As just mentioned, Rowdy Yates is out of Espérance. This mare not only passes on her Sorraia-type mtDNA, but also her “celebrity gene” as Screenwriter John Fusco honored her in the movie *Spirit, Stallion of the Cimarron* by naming Spirit’s dam, “Espérance” after the real Espérance the Cayuse at ***Caballos de Destino*** when they expecting foundation has a wild foaled in



Blue Corn SMR #138 - 1959 Mare
Image Courtesy of Josie Brislaw

Rowdy Yates Con't.

Vickie Ives of *Karma Farms* in Marshall, Texas bought Rowdy Yates when he was two years old and he went on to achieve abundant honors including the American Indian Horse Hall of Fame, the SMR Grande Conquistador award, as well as numerous other awards including Champion Original at Halter and Champion Original Performance at the *American Indian Horse Registry (AIHR)* National Show. He also covered nearly 1,000 miles in *North American Trail Riding Conference (NATRC)* competitions. But after Vickie suffered a serious injury, Rowdy Yates proved himself again as her therapeutic horse, leading her to the road to recovery and helped her to gain the ability to ride again. He is a great representation of the Spanish Mustang breed, as was his older full brother Sundowner at the *Cayuse Ranch*. A separate story could highlight just the horses from the Jack Slade and Espérance lines. Visit *Karma Farm's* web site to learn more about Rowdy's family members.

The Last Sunset for Sundowner— A Tribute to a Great Stallion



Sundowner (Jack Slade x Espérance) - 1988 Grulla Stallion
Image Courtesy of Lourie Zipf

Emmett Brislawn bought Sundowner from ***Caballos de Destino*** and he was a fixture at the *Cayuse Ranch* for two dozen years and was owned by Aileen Brislawn Glonek before he crossed the Rainbow Bridge for greener pastures in June, 2012. There were many great images captured of this flashy grulla stallion, but none quite as memorable as the one above captured by Lourie Zipf, a photographer based out of Tucson, Arizona. Her DVD, "*Oshoto: A Digital Photographic Journey*," is a spectacular work of art.

Caballos de Destino—Looking Ahead

It would take an encyclopedia to document the lives of all of the horses bred by ***Caballos de Destino*** that have found their way around the globe. In addition to those already cited, there are notable torch bearers that continue to nurture the future of the Spanish Mustang and the Sorraia mustang. The SMR has lead the charge, with dozens of other special interest groups, foundations, and breeders that are all trying to make a positive impact on the future of the Spanish Mustang. On the following pages are some additional examples (space limitations allow the inclusion of just a few in this already long story).

The Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary

Spanish Mustang Spirit of the Black Hills

Imagine a place where as far as the eye can see, miles and miles to the horizon you can view America as it was three hundred years ago. Imagine a place long revered by the American Indians, where the Cheyenne River flows in all four directions and eagles' shadows sweep rocky canyon walls, a place where wild horses run free across endless prairies, hooves striking thunder, manes and tails flying in the wind. This is the *Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary (BHWHS)* in Hot Springs, South Dakota, a 13,000-acre paradise, founded in 1988 as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation by Dayton O. Hyde.

In addition to hundreds of unwanted American mustangs that find a forever home at the BHWHS, veteran Program Director Susan Watt created a preservation program for

dozens of Spanish Mustangs as well. Through the *Spanish Mustang Spirit of the Black Hills* preservation project, rare Spanish Mustangs including Choctaw, Sulphur, Kiger, and Sorraia Mustangs, can be seen in one stunning setting. The purpose of this project is to preserve, promote, and educate the public about rare Spanish and Portuguese equine bloodlines still found in today's American mustangs. Safeguarding this shrinking treasure chest of genetic wealth from ancient times is the mission of this project, with a focus on helping to reclaim the Sorraia Mustang.

Several of the horses in the *Spanish Mustang Spirit of the Black Hills* preservation project came from ***Caballos de Destino***. With a shared area of pasturage with ***Caballos de Destino***,

occasionally a horse of theirs makes their own decision to hop the fence and join the wild bands at the BHWHS. When Dave and Sharron came to take a rogue horse back from time to time, it wasn't long before Susan wanted to keep a few. Susan already had a Sulphur/Sorraia Mustang stallion, Don Juan, and he needed more of his own Spanish kind in his band; Don Juan was different than the other American mustangs and he always gravitated towards other Sulphur and Kiger Mustangs with a Spanish heritage. He greeted new grulla mares from ***Caballos de Destino*** with much bliss. [Click here](#) to read a story about Don Juan by the same author of this story.



"The Grulla Sisterhood" at the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary
Image by Karen Parker



Don Juan (Sulphur/Sorraia Mustang Stallion)
Image by Karen Parker



Doll (Chato's Shadow x Mexi Con Estrella)
Image by Karen Parker

Spanish Mustang Spirit of the Black Hills

Providing for the basic needs of nearly 500 wild horses is a constant, ongoing, never-ending challenge for the staff and volunteers at the BHWHS. Donated dollars and sponsorships are necessary to keep this colossal operation running: <http://www.spanishmustangspirit.com/sponsorship.htm>.

Their main web site is found at: <http://www.wildmustangs.com>.

Contact Susan Watt to inquire about Spanish Mustangs she may have available for sale at the sanctuary from time to time, including the two colts shown on the right.



**Spanish Mustang Mares at the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary
Image by Karen Parker**



**2011 Snowcap appaloosa Colt
Crazy Legs x Smarty Cat
Image by Karen Parker**



**2010 Black Colt
Wyoming Lightning X Drifter
Image by Karen Parker**



**Maricruz Kachina (Koche Kolt x Pretty Shadow)
Image by Karen Parker**



**Seminole Wind (Chato's Shadow x Little Wind)
Image by Karen Parker**



**Charm (Punkin Butte x Gala Classique)
Image by Karen Parker**

The Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary (GEMS)

Adam Edwards has a mounting remuda of horses from **Caballos de Destino** and the *Cayuse Ranch* with three bands of horses descended from foundation Spanish Mustang stock. Adam is the Director of Operations and Program Manager of the *Mustangs of Antiquity Program* at the newly formed *Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary (GEMS)* located in Northeastern Colorado. GEMS believes that through horses one can find themselves and through finding one's self, one can find peace. GEMS found its legs to stand and run with the vision and passion of Gerhard K. Sander who passed away too soon. Today, his daughter, Michelle and a team of dedicated individuals are carrying on this vision. They are giving wild horses an opportunity and a voice by providing a safe and nurturing environment to run free and thrive. They foster the connection

between the horses and people to increase awareness and education.

GEMS is an eco-sanctuary where horses maintain their evolutionary integrity and where people can observe their natural behaviors. Utilizing both American and Spanish Mustangs in the programs they are developing, GEMS offerings include natural horsemanship training for people and horses to facilitate successful adoptions, therapeutic and educational experiences for the public through retreats, clinics, tours, volunteer opportunities and promotion of Mustangs in utility and competition. GEMS is committed to supporting the wondrous and insightful work from the past by honoring Robert Brislawn and others regarding the preservation and education of Spanish Mustangs. GEMS believes that it is vitally important to bring awareness

back to the Mustangs, for they have given us so much.

The Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary and the *Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary* are two places that are preserving horses from **Caballos de Destino** and the *Cayuse Ranch*. Both organizations rely on the public to support their efforts so they naturally make their horses available to the public to visit through various types of educational programs. The horses in the sanctuaries are in non-breeding programs that serve to promote awareness; an uncertain future still looms for this vanishing breed of horse and culture. Contact GEMS to inquire about Spanish Mustangs they may have available for sale.



Naja (Jessie James x Dulcinea) - 1997 Roan Mare
Image by Karen Parker



Adam Edwards riding Bratley
Image by Joëlle Cloutier



Adam's newest 2011 Colt
(Chato's Shadow x Little Wind)
Image by Karen Parker



Spanish Mustangs at the Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary
Image Courtesy of Adam Edwards

CJ-8 Ranch

Jim Dildine is the current president of the SMR, and his wife Carol is the secretary. Since 2000, Carol and Jim became very close to Emmett, Josie, and the remainder of the Brislawn family. The Dildine's CJ-8 Ranch in Chilton, Texas is home to several Spanish Mustangs. The first stallion they owned, Dakotah Blue (aka Zebra), was purchased from **Caballos de Destino**. They also leased Troublesooter for a few years. The Dildine's have come to love these special horses, and have bred and produced many offspring over the years. Visit the [Texas Sale Page](#) on the SMR site to learn about the Spanish Mustangs they have available for sale.



Dakotah Blue (Jack Slade x Espérance) - 1990 Grulla Stallion
Image Courtesy of Carol Dildine from 2005

The Little Cayuse Ranch

The Little Cayuse Ranch is a 2,000-acre Spanish Mustang preserve in New Mexico managed by Donna Mitchell, Sierra Perkins, and Jim Sloan. They have been supporting the SMR and the *Spanish Mustang Foundation* for many years. They have a stallion sired by Chato's Shadow and a gelding sired by Chato from **Caballos de Destino**. Their efforts are focused on educating the public by hosting clinics, especially for the youth, putting together presentations for the public and funding a now complete documentary "Return of the Horse" (<http://www.returnofthehorse.com>) depicting the history of the equine in North America. *The "Little" Cayuse Ranch* is certainly doing their part to make big contributions to the future of the Spanish Mustang.

With such common goals, it is no surprise that all of these individuals and organizations work closely with one another to drive successful outcomes. Collaboration is critical and it's important that no one tries to outshine the other; the future of the Spanish Mustang depends on the collective efforts of many.



Chato's Little Ace (Chato x Cahuilla) - 1990 Black Gelding
Image Courtesy of Sierra Perkins

Ravenseyrie Sorraia Mustang Preserve

The *Ravenseyrie Sorraia Mustang Preserve* in Gore Bay, Ontario, Canada was established in 2006 by Lynne Gerard and Kevin Droski as part of a transcontinental effort to continue the conservation of the "Iberian Tarpan" by crossing purebred Sorraias with mustangs of Sorraia type, creating a hybrid vigor that provides the prehistoric genetics opportunity to reconstitute essential variability, lest inbreeding eventually finish the extinction that has continually threatened these horses in modern times.

Altamiro, a purebred Sorraia stallion, born at the *Wisentgehege Zoological Park* in Springe, Germany was imported as a yearling, becoming the first Sorraia to call Canada home. Currently, Altamiro is one of just three purebred Sorraia horses in all of North America. The stallion, Tejo II, lives in Wisconsin and Sovina, a gelding, resides in Oregon. Unlike Tejo and Sovina, who are kept in traditional domestic horse settings, Altamiro and his harem of four Sorraia Spanish Mustang mares have the run of 360 acres on Manitoulin Island in Northern Ontario, living as a family unit all year round.

Bella (out of Miracle and sired by Silver Shadow) is a Spanish Mustang and Belina (sired by Chato's Shadow) is a half Spanish Mustang and half pony-sized BLM appaloosa from **Caballos de Destino**, Ciente is an Oregon Kiger Mustang from a breeder in

southern Ontario, and Zorita is half purebred Sorraia and half Sulphur Springs mustang from Oregon. Each of these mares have proved to be a successful "nick" with Altamiro, producing excellent Sorraia types in just one generation—some of such good Sorraia type that they compare to the best purebred Sorraias! Even Belina who was only brought to Ravenseyrie as a companion for Bella has produced some of their best Sorraia-type horses. Fada, Belina's firstborn is still at *Ravenseyrie*, but Encantara and Tocara are two fillies that were exceptional and sold to new owners in Wyoming and Austria.

Ravenseyrie is a private preserve and is not presently open to the public. This is a place where horses get to be horses just for horse's sake. Lynne Gerard, also an accomplished artist and writer, has been chronicling her journey in the *Journal of Ravenseyrie* since 2008. Her words read like poetry, and the insights and photographs she gathers from around the world to share on the blog are priceless. It is no surprise that her earliest posts on "How it Began" start with the horses she purchased from **Caballos de Destino**. Visit the [sale page](#) on Lynne's blog to see some of the noble steeds she has available for sale.



Fidalgo (Altamiro x Belina) - 2012 Grulla Colt
Image Courtesy of Lynne Gerard



Bella (right) with Purebred Sorraia Stallion Altamiro (left)
Image Courtesy of Lynne Gerard



Enjoying time on the beach in Gore Bay, Ontario, Canada in 2008
 Center: Bella (Silver Shadow x Miracle) - 2004 Grulla Mare
 Far right: Belina and her colt, Fada / Left: Altamiro
 Image Courtesy of Lynne Gerard



Fada (Altamiro x Belina) - 2008 Grulla Colt
 Image Courtesy of Lynne Gerard



Animado (Altamiro x Bella) - 2008 Grulla Colt
 Image Courtesy of Lynne Gerard



Tocara (Altamiro x Belina) - 2010 Grulla Filly
 Image Courtesy of Lynne Gerard



Gosto (Altamiro x Bella) - 2012 Grulla Colt
 Image Courtesy of Lynne Gerard



Encantara (Altamiro x Belina) - 2009 Grulla Filly
 Image Courtesy of Lynne Gerard



Image by Karen Parker

The Future of the Nostalgic Spanish Mustang

We have breeders like ***Caballos de Destino*** and *the Cayuse Ranch*, among many others, to thank for the ancient spots and primitive stripes that still adorn our present day Spanish Mustangs. With the experience of a quarter century of breeding Spanish Mustangs, ***Caballos de Destino*** deserves recognition for their remarkable contributions and selfless dedication to this vanishing breed. But this place of triumph and historical significance has faced recent years of sorrow as the western drought challenges their budget and a changing society doesn't fully appreciate the hardy steeds they have preserved. They have what it takes to get through the drought. They have done it before. But the changing society, one less connected to nature and our glorious past, are obstacles that test their resolve. The modern world is moving so

fast that no one seems to have the time to slow down and exercise the patience it takes to truly bond with a horse, especially a strong-willed horse with an innate self-preservation trait that makes them often times smarter than their human owners.

Caballos de Destino has committed heart and soul to the Spanish Mustang; important work that must not be lost or forgotten. Like the nostalgic breed of horses they work to protect, they are themselves a *vanishing breed*. They live modestly, putting their horses ahead of their own health and needs. But Dave shared an encouraging closing remark: "Despite our challenges, we've never been happier. As was the Indian's way of thinking, the more horses you have, the richer you are. We are living our dream and have no regrets."

Acknowledgements

I extend my sincere gratitude to over a dozen individuals mentioned throughout this story that contributed ideas and images for this project. Special acknowledgements go to Adam Edwards, Jolie Alongi, Lynne Gerard, and Hardy Oelke for their essential editing contributions and guidance.

Visit Karen Parker's [Image Gallery](#). Proceeds from the sale of Karen's photographs from the **Caballos de Destino** galleries support their Spanish Mustang preservation efforts.



Chato's Shadow 2008 Foal Crop with Pretty Foxy in the lead and Little Wind
Image by Karen Parker

Footnotes and Bibliography:

¹*Appaloosa, the Spotted Horse in Art and History* by Francis Haines, 1963

²*Spanish LP Project by Arrow Rock Spanish Mustangs*

Caballos de Destino

The Spanish Mustang Registry

The Cayuse Ranch

Hardy Oelke's Official Website of the Sorraia Mustang Studbook

Born Survivors on the Eve of Extinction: Can Iberia's Wild Horse Survive Among America's Mustangs? by Hardy Oelke

Wild Horses Then and Now by Hardy Oelke

Spanish Barb – Horse Breeds & Information article by Hardy Oelke

Journal of Ravenseyrie by Lynne Gerard

The Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary's Spanish Mustang Spirit of the Black Hills Preservation Program

The Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary's (GEMS) Mustangs of Antiquity Program

A History of the Horse, The Iberian Horse from Ice Age to Antiquity – Volume 1 by Paulo Gavião Gonzaga

Trail Dust and Saddle Leather, by Jo Mora

The official site of the Joseph Jacinto Mora Trust (with special thanks to Peter Hiller for generously extending permission for the use of the Jo Mora illustrations used in this story)

Jo Mora Collectors may also be interested in <http://www.JoMora.com>

The Southwest Spanish Mustang Association



Leg Stripping on a Sorraia Mustang Mare
Image by Karen Parker



Cochise SMR #33 - 1952 Grulla Stallion (Buckshot SMR #1 x Queenie SMR #8)
Historical Image Courtesy of Josie Brislawn

Our door is always open to talk about Spanish Mustangs with you!

Caballos de Destino

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