

The Spanish-Norman

by Helen Peppi
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Founded in 1991, the Spanish-Norman breed history is still young with much unknown as the breed develops to its full potential in the different equine disciplines. Considered the "war horse of the ages," the Spanish-Norman horse is a combination of the Andalusian of Spain and the Percheron of France, possessing the Andalusian's agility and the Percheron's docile temperament. A rare breed, the Spanish-Norman typically stands 15.3 to 17 hands, often closest to the large end of the height scale. The breed's large size is not intimidating, however, as the Spanish-Norman possesses a gentle and kind nature when either in hand or under saddle. The Spanish-Norman is attracting the attention of equestrians around the world," says Linda Osterman Hamid, co-founder of the breed registry.



The Spanish-Norman's predecessor, the lost Norman horse of medieval France, was strongly influenced by the Spanish horses. Norman horses mixed with Barb created what came to be known as the Percheron. Throughout history, horse bloodlines and pedigrees have been influenced by invasions and conquests, resulting in many breeds containing some of the same ancestors in their genealogies. The theory behind the Spanish-Norman horse is based on this common ancestry, breeding Andalusians to Percherons to produce get similar to the old Norman horse, the horse valued for its ability to face battle courageously.

Linda and her husband Allan, a historian and educator with an interest in genetics, imported their legendary Andalusian stallion, Embajador IX in 1983 to Woodbury, Connecticut. When the Hamids felt that had recreated the breed characteristics of the extinct Norman horse, historically and genetically, they founded the Spanish-Norman breed and the Spanish-Norman Horse Registry, Inc.. Beginning with one foundation sire, Embajador IX, ten years ago, it says a lot for the growth of the Spanish-Norman breeds that there are now 76 Andalusian sires in the registry, located across the United States and Canada.

Romántico H.H.F., also owned by Linda and Allan Hamid and sired by Embajador IX, is an outstanding representative of the Spanish-Norman and an ambassador for the breed. A grey standing 16.1 hands, Romántico H.H.F. exemplifies the breed's best characteristics. Linda describes him as majestic, athletic, and with a wonderful temperament. "Allan and I were thrilled to see Romántico H.H.F. win a sixth place ribbon in the Freestyle Reining at the United States Equestrian Team 'Festival of Champions' last June at the USET Olympic Training Center in Gladstone New Jersey. We were honored that a Spanish-Norman stallion was invited to compete in such a prestigious event. Our main goal in re-creating the medieval war horse and establishing the breed registry, was to produce excellent performance horses for various disciplines," she says.





Romántico H.H.F. creates a dramatic impression in full armor, illustrating beauty, stamina and collected strides at exhibitions throughout the United States. Last fall, two knights presented tournament battle scene on the ground followed by a medieval performance by Romántico at the Greenwich Polo Club in Connecticut and the Fleet Jumper Classic in Massachusetts, delighting spectators at both events.

Romántico H.H.F.'s current exhibition schedule, the "March of the Medieval War Horse", will include a breed demonstration at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, performed to the sound of Baroque music and outfitted in authentic armor. This year, in addition to battle maneuvers, Romántico H.H.F. will perform classical dressage movements, specifically the passage and the levade.



Dressage is a discipline (that) comes naturally the Spanish-Norman horse. Petra Sherman, owner of the Spanish-Norman stallion Soldado H.H.F., trains her horse in classical dressage. A scholar of classical equitation and equine history, Petra lives with Soldado H.H.F. in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Ann Puthoff, a Spanish-Norman breeder

in Fremont, Indiana, focuses on producing dressage mounts and actively competes her Spanish-Norman stallion Zingaro, in dressage. Joanne Fiola of Tiverton, Rhode Island, has her two geldings trained as jumpers. Joanne's Spanish-Norman geldings, Guerrero and Vivaracho, are both sired by Embajador IX.

Spectators are thrilled at the sight of a horse and knight in full armor and shield. "I must say the most exciting part was the audience's overwhelming reaction to the horse and knight in shining armor. Immediately after the competition, spectators went over to see the Spanish-Norman and ask trainer Garry McAllister to sign autographs," Linda Hamid says of the USET exhibition.



Web site developer Susan Gordon of Litchfield, Michigan became so impressed with the Spanish-Norman breed during the development of the Spanish-Norman web site that she bought a Spanish-Norman filly, along with three Percheron mares and became a breeder herself. Spanish-Norman Horse Registry, Inc. President Allan Hamid, says, "The main goal is to produce an outstanding sport horse that retains the presence and physical and mental abilities of the classic European war horse. The Spanish-Norman is destined to make an important contribution to the equestrian world." Exhibitions displaying the Spanish-Norman's sport horse talent and war horse heritage are valuable not only educationally, but in promoting additional breeding, thereby further solidifying the Spanish-Norman's place among the horse breeds.

For more information about the breed, contact the Spanish-Norman Horse Registry, Inc. at 203-266-4048 or visit www.spanish-norman.com.