

2009 Lusitano Collection Gallops into West Palm Beach



On February 19-20, 2009, members of the equestrian community and South Florida social scene will gather at the 111-acre Jim Brandon Equestrian Center in West Palm Beach, Florida, for the second annual Lusitano Collection Auction. The prestigious event will indulge guests with lavish cocktails and a sit-down dinner, courtesy of The Lusitano Collection. A portion of the proceeds from the auction will benefit the American Cancer Society and the Jim Brandon Equestrian Center.

Guests may view and examine over two dozen horses during the week prior to the auction as well as shop at various sponsors' tents. The Lusitano Collection made its United States debut in Wellington, FL during the world-renowned Winter Equestrian Festival in March, 2008, when buyers came to the Sunshine State from as far as California, Texas Connecticut, Mexico, Colombia, Belgium, Denmark and

Guatemala. It was the first time that such a collection of Lusitanos had been sold on US soil and gave clients the advantage of acquiring horses that are not available elsewhere in the world without the necessity of importing them either from Portugal or Brazil. While the Lusitano Collection is a trademark created by five premier world breeders of the Lusitano horse, this year's collection will only include horses from Interagro Farms, the largest Lusitano breeder and exporter in the world and Coudelaria Rocas do Vouga of Brazil.

Dr. Paulo Gavião Gonzaga, who founded Interagro in 1975, oversees the breeding and training of 700 horses on his historic coffee plantation outside Sao Paulo. He is assisted by his daughter, Cecilia Gonzaga, who heads the stud farm which consists of 20 stallions, many of whom are actively competing successfully in dressage.

Prior to the auction, the horses' rigorous training is initiated under the expert guidance of Director Mauricio Delucchi Borrelli and Swedish-born Pia Aragão, Brazilian Dressage Champion. "The objective of our work in the Picadeiro is to have all of our animals achieve international standards of dressage," said Borelli. "We seek to produce a horse capable of performing whatever activity his owner wants him to. I want people to see our horses and dream of riding them. I want the horses we sell in auction to be ridden safely and trouble-free by anyone anywhere in the world."

Aragão adds, "Before a horse is chosen for the auction, it must be disease-free, have its legs x-rayed, pass a pre-purchase exam and be evaluated for ride-ability and quality."

She noted that the four- and five-year old horses that travel to the US for auction have lovely ground manners, load well and could easily compete in dressage at the novice level.

The breed is well known for its exceptional performance in all equestrian disciplines so it is no surprise that Lusitanos from Interagro have been exported to nine countries and trained in jumping, dressage, driving, and even as cutting horses. The Collection presents horses under saddle and includes a selection of geldings and a limited number of mares.

Dr. Gonzaga noted, "Recently rediscovered, the Lusitano horse has re-acquired the prestige it enjoyed in the past centuries as one of the best saddle horses in the world."

