



THE STALLION BARNS REFLECT THE ELEGANT ARCHITECTURE OF THE FARM.

I wasn't looking for "horse heaven." Quite the opposite. I was just hoping to get to my destination over a crumpled ribbon of rain torn, red dirt road, two hours north of Sao Paulo, Brazil. It was now obvious why I had been picked up by a Land Rover at the airport, and it was a thrill to experience this vehicle doing what it was actually designed to do, travel roads like this, instead of negotiating underground parking lots in the city.

After twenty minutes we turned left and confronted a huge gated wall that slowly opened as we pulled up. The world behind this partition began to reveal itself, and the first vision was a herd of beautiful horses standing there looking at me. It was absolutely surreal – as if they had been there, waiting to escort me into their world – a world full of lush, almost neon green grass, with lakes to drink from and people that treated them like royalty, because that is what they are.

THESE ROYAL LUSITANO HORSES HAD COME TO WELCOME ME TO A PLACE THAT WAS THEIR "HORSE HEAVEN," AND WAS CALLED INTERAGRO

These royal Lusitano horses had come to welcome me to a place that was their "horse heaven," and was called Interagro.

The Lusitano derives its name from Lusitania, the name the ancient Romans gave part of the Iberian Peninsula that roughly corresponds to modern Portugal and part of modern Spain. In turn, the name Lusitania owes its origin to the name of the Roman god Bacchus's son Luso. These ancient warhorses have been immortalized by prehistoric cave paintings that depict what was recognized as the Lusitano, the world's purest blooded horse.

It was love at first sight as the mares and foals led me down the tree-lined road leading to the main house. Two riders herded the horses on as I looked out at lush field after field, taking in the herds of Lusitanos languidly having some "family time."

The ancient Iberian and Lusitano horses are extremely famous for their agility in the battlefield during wars and also during leisure activities like bull fighting. However, when the mounted bullfight was prohibited in Spain by royal decree in the 17th century, it lived on without interruption in Portugal. The Lusitanos, therefore, were continuously bred for their bull-fighting ability, which is identical with the ability for high-school dressage, and thusly, the distinct, historic characteristics of the Lusitano



A DRIVING HARNESS HANGS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN-STYLE COURTYARD OFF OF THE MAIN BARN.