



IT'S SHOWTIME!  
**THE INAUGURAL ANDALUSIAN  
WORLD CUP IN LAS VEGAS!**

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

WHAT BETTER PLACE TO LAUNCH THE ANDALUSIAN WORLD CUP THAN IN THE CITY THAT KNOWS HOW TO PUT ON A GREAT SHOW? WE WERE THERE IN LATE SEPTEMBER TO ATTEND THE INAUGURAL WORLD CUP OF THE NOBLE IBERIAN BREED. AND TOGETHER WITH A RANGE OF SERIOUS CLASS-SPECIFIC JUDGED EVENTS, WE WERE TREATED TO OTHER ENTERTAINING RIDDEN AND DRESSED CLASSES, SUCH AS NATIVE TACK, HERITAGE, AND COSTUME, AS WELL AS DRIVING.

The first Andalusian World Cup showcased North American traditions of horse showing, with a variety of performance and halter classes, including a Supreme Halter Championship class. The show featured Andalusian and Lusitano horses from Spain and Portugal, as well as part-breds, shown by exhibitors from the US, Canada, and Mexico. Judges were looking for well turned out, quality horses, ridden or handled by well-trained, appropriately dressed professionals and amateurs. Manners, presentation, breed type, and quality of the gaits were all taken into account in the judges' decisions.

#### THE ANDALUSIAN OR PRE:

"...The noblest horse in the world, the most beautiful that can be. He is of great spirit and of great courage and docile; hath the proudest trot and the best action in his trot, the loftiest gallop, and is the lovingest and gentlest horse, and fittest of all for a king in his day of triumph."

—William Cavendish, the Duke of Newcastle, 1667

The Andalusian, also known as the Pure Spanish Horse, Spanish/Portuguese Horse or PRE (Pura Raza Española), is a breed which evolved in Spain and Portugal over the centuries and developed its unique characteristics there which define it, including its strength, beauty, intelligence, and docility. To be registered as "Andalusian" the bloodline must be proven to trace in a direct line to Spain or Portugal. While cave paintings show that horses have been present on the Iberian Peninsula as far back as 20,000 to 30,000 BCE, the exact origin of the PRE is not known. However, genetic testing on the modern Andalusian provides convincing evidence that the breed crossed the Strait of Gibraltar to the Iberian Peninsula from North Africa, making it, as one commentator notes, Europe's first "warmblood", a blend of the heavy European and the lighter Middle Eastern horses.

In the pre-Roman era there were already references to horses in what is today known as Spain. Roman authors such as Plutarch,



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Pliny the Old and Seneca spoke of the Hispanic horse as a beautiful, obedient, arrogant and brave horse, ideal for war and for the sports that were carried out in the public arenas at that time.

The Andalusian has been recognised as an individual breed since the 15th century, and its conformation has changed very little over the centuries. Throughout its history, it has been known for its prowess as a warhorse, and prized by nobility. The breed was used as a tool of diplomacy by the Spanish government, and kings across Europe rode and owned Spanish horses. In the 1400's, a decree was issued by the Spanish military authority, directing the Spanish breeders to blend their pure Andalusian mares with Neapolitan drafts in order to bear the weight of armour carried into battle. A small group of family breeders refused, selecting their best horses and hiding them away on monastery lands in Cartujana. The Carthusian Andalusian or Cartujano, is generally considered the purest Andalusian strain, and has one of the oldest recorded pedigree lines in the world.

The Carthusian monks were said to have managed a breeding programme based on these horses for almost 400 years after this. Around 1835 the government dissolved the church's ownership of the lands and the horses were passed on to a small handful of families who preserved the original lines for years to come. Exports of Andalusians from Spain were restricted until the 1960s, but the breed has since spread throughout the world, despite still-low population numbers due to the cross-breeding in the 15th and 16th centuries.

During his reign, King Philip II of Spain, a great lover of horses, organised his administration to support and preserve the PRE bloodlines, first by establishing the Royal Stables in Cordoba in 1570, where he gathered together the best stallions and mares from all the provinces bordering the Guadalquivir River, which at that time were the most productive in the breeding of horses. Thus, the Royal Stud Farm was created, which after time became known as the National Stud Farm. A multitude of horses were exported to the American continents; these horses played a decisive role on its exploration, and were the origin and basis for many of the breeds that have subsequently been bred in America.

In Europe, Spain was enjoying its Golden Age. At that time, the most treasured gift from a Spanish monarch was one of the nation's magnificent horses. One can spot many such gift horses under men of military accomplishment all over Europe memorialised in town squares in monumental statues.

In 2010, there were more than 185,000 registered Andalusians worldwide. Strongly built, and compact yet elegant, Andalusians have long, thick manes and tails. Their most common coat colour is gray, although they can be found in many other colours, including buckskin, chestnut and palomino. They are known for their intelligence, sensitivity, docility and versatility. The Andalusian is closely related to the Lusitano of Portugal, and has been used to develop many other breeds, especially in Europe and the Americas.

Breeds with Andalusian ancestry include many of the warmbloods in Europe as well as western hemisphere breeds such as the Azteca. Over its centuries of development, the Andalusian breed has been selected for athleticism and stamina. The horses were originally used for classical dressage, driving, bullfighting, and as stock horses. Modern Andalusians are used for and excel in many different disciplines, including open dressage, driving, pleasure and breed shows. They are very versatile and you will often see them shown in many different disciplines at the same show.

The breed is also employed extensively in movies, especially historical pictures and fantasy epics. The Andalusian must be the horse world equivalent of Hollywood superstars, featuring in too many movies to mention here, but including "Robin Hood", "Gladiator", "The Mummy", "Viva Zapata!", and "Lord of the Rings" playing the majestic Asfaloth ("noro lim, Asfaloth!").

**THE ANDALUSIAN BREED STANDARD:**

While their most marked characteristic is a noble bearing, Andalusians or PREs carry other important and recognisable traits. Around 80 percent of all Andalusians are grey, black or bay. Other colours seen are buckskin palomino, albino, cremello and chestnut, but are rare and were not accepted into the registries until recently. Generally they stand between 15.2hh - 16.2hh when mature. They carry a medium length well-proportioned face that has a straight or slightly convex profile and the jaw is full and lean with a long but discreetly arched jaw line, the nose narrowing gradually from the face, and almond shaped nostrils.

A marked characteristic is the full and deep chest and strong expansive rump, the croup rounded with notably muscular hind. In temperament, Andalusians are considered to be brave, intelligent and sensitive. They are a docile, honest breed and have a gift for learning. They are excellent at adapting to new situations and are naturally a very obedient breed. When treated with respect they are quick to learn and are very responsive and cooperative. Their movements are agile, high, extensive, harmonic and rhythmic. They have a special predisposition for collection and turns on the haunches.

To complement all of these conformational characteristics, the thing most outstanding about this breed is its versatility. This is due to the union of the following factors: mental balance, harmony, intelligence and will to work.

For results, see: [www.horseshowtime.com](http://www.horseshowtime.com)

Sources include: *Andalusian World* and *Asociación Nacional de Criadores de Caballos de Pura Raza Española*



Deliete MA, owned by Xavier Farms, shown by Howard Peet - Supreme Champion Best Movement



DiMaggio TA, owned by Tilley Andalusians, shown by Bill Deeney - Supreme Champion Western Pleasure



Palida, owned by The Pettid Family, shown by Sophia Brown - Reserve Champion Youth Equitation



Fugitivo ROY, owned by David Carrasco, shown by Mario Contreras - Champion Show Hack



Jalisco Dominante, owned by Rancho Andalucia, shown by Katie Berger - Champion Dressage Suitability



Jose's Perfection, owned and shown by Robin Bond - Champion Working Equitation Intermediate & High Score Working Equitation