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## Presentation

# THE CONFORMATION AND MOVEMENTS ARE THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE PRE; AND THE COLOR OF THE COAT AN ADDED VALUE HIGHLY APPRECIATED BY THE MARKET

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*Francisco Marcos*

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First of all, I would like to thank the publishing company of this books collection about the PRE for inviting me to make the presentation, this year, of «Conformation and movements of the Spanish Horse»; a book that I believe summarizes the basic aspirations of every breeder, owner and hobbyist. And I am going to talk about what I know, what we do on my stud farm, Antares and what my experience dictates.

Given that the color of the coat is an integral part of the horse's shapes, it seems appropriate to me to address this aspect first, as a breeder that I am of Spanish horses with diluted coats. I sincerely believe that the prohibition of the chestnut coat in the seventies of the last century was a profound mistake of our authorities; I have said it and will always repeat it, since it represented a stagnation of almost thirty years of many of the expectations of our horse. We must not forget, as I have already stated in other books in this same collection, that several of the mothers of the «refounding fathers» of the breed after the Civil War were chestnut mares. And the historians, who reliably witnessed the presence of the diluted coats at the birth and origin of the Breed, have always manifested themselves against this mistaken regulation. In the book «Spanish Horse, Imperial Horse» I mentioned documents belonging to the 18th century Stud-Book, more specifically from the year 1765, in which there were nine percent of horses with diluted coats (chestnut and buckskin).

But this is not the important thing I want to refer to, because ultimately the color of the coat does not make a horse good or bad. The important thing is conformation and beauty, good elevated gaits with capacity for collection and aptitude or predisposition of the horse for the saddle or for a certain sporting activity. And, for me, conformation and beauty go very hand in hand. That is why ANCCE proposes the so-called conformation contests for the PRE. In these, the chosen judges score the specimens for their shapes and characteristics, according to the stereotype already predefined in the breed pattern: the guide and reference with which we work daily and guide ourselves in the selection of our specimens. These shapes and characteristics are scored in separate sections by the judges, through the different regions of the specimen; and although the head, neck, back, croup, etc., are already beautiful, together they offer as a result a horse with an extraordinary appearance, with a class and harmony like no other equine breed and, ultimately, with an incomparable beauty.

Therefore, aware that well-understood conformation is synonym for beauty, at Antares Stud Farm we are concerned with keeping the breed pattern alive: with preserving the lines that define our PRE, ensuring that the Spanish Horse continues to be the most beautiful horse in the world.

And if beauty is one of the characteristics that differentiates the PRE, movements are its other quality that makes it different, exclusive, admired, and desired. We will hardly find another horse more

harmonious, elegant, and distinguished when it comes to moving than our Spanish Horse.

However, I understand that it is in this section where PRE breeders must work with more vision. Although we should not be dazzled by appearances and we should study the movements based on the selective criteria applied. The movements of great quality and elegance are important, of course, but we must develop the aspects that offer greater endurance power in terms of work, necessary to face the sports disciplines: impulsion, strength, stamina, among other things, besides the development of the gallop, because the elevated gaits and the collection are already assumed.

My concept of the Spanish Horse is aligned with these criteria and with the breed pattern that I started referring to. For this reason, I select the mother mares and stallions seeking to preserve that beauty of our PRE horse. In addition, and as everyone knows, we incorporate what in my opinion is a plus, which are the diluted coats. It is a pleasure for the senses to contemplate specimens in the purest style of the Spanish Horse with coats of color, among others, buckskin, palominos, albinos and, from now on, I hope Isabelline, which is our last bet.

Of course, and as I have already pointed out, we do not forget the functionality either. This is a section in which we work hard to ensure that Antares products are useful for any sporting discipline. And so it will be for many years. One of the goals is to increase the average height at the withers of our horses, through the selection of fathers and mothers who are signposts of this growth, without neglecting the strength, the qualities of the masses and the muscular power. The objective is that, besides having distinguished and elegant movements, the PRE of Antares can make them compatible with those required for the practice of any current sporting discipline and our horses become the ideal complement for professionals and amateurs. And I humbly believe that we are succeeding.

This is in my opinion one of the things that some breeders forget. Good movements..., of course, but oriented so that a rider can mount the horse and develop a certain activity. For the rest, and in my opinion, the ideal PRE should have, among other things, a head proportionate to the body, with very expressive eyes and a sub-convex profile, which is what we commonly call «baroque» and with abundant hair on the forehead. With an arched and muscular neck, well inserted at the ends and with abundant and silky manes. Wide and deep chests and rounded and slightly sloping croups, with a low and very bushy tail.

Fortunately, our endeavors are showing results. On our stud farm we have two stallions that meet these requirements. One of them is the mythical Claudio Vives, about whom a lot has already been written. The other is Islero A, a son of Claudio with a palomino coat and who can be followed through our website, [www.ganaderiaantares.es](http://www.ganaderiaantares.es), or Facebook. Besides, there have been many buckskin specimens that today are enjoyed by their owners and that present the characteristics described, and what is also very important: we are verifying that, in general, the tastes of the North American and European market coincide with mine, presenting the diluted coats an added attraction, provided, of course, that the horse is good in conformation and movements.

Readers can check what I say directly. Since I take advantage of the opportunity given to me in this publication to invite those who wish to visit us at our facilities and witness first-hand the unforgettable experience of breeding (in situ) the Purebred Spanish horse.

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❑ *By Francisco Marcos Ferrer / Antares Stud Farm*