

Passion and
art of riding
from Andalusia –

Miguel Barrionuevo



At least to European horse enthusiasts Miguel Barrionuevo might be best known for his performances in the equestrian show *Apassionata*. He is known for performances which are full of passion, music and beautiful horses, not to mention the collected riding which, in his hands, becomes art.

text by: Minna Lindström
photos: Miguel Barrionuevos album

At his stable, located in the beautiful heart of Andalusia, he works with both young and more advanced horses on a daily basis. Most of the horses are Iberian, and many of them have performed in shows all across Europe.

Love towards horses is in the blood

"I am the son of a very humble family, and horses have always been an important part of our lives. My parents worked with horse carriages, and I am the only one in the family who dedicated



"Performing is a way to express oneself."

his life to riding. Horse riding has filled my life ever since I was a little boy, and it has always been and stayed a challenge for me to develop both as a horseman and a person, from the bottom of my heart."

"I was born with an interest in horses, it's in my blood. My intention has always been to grow as a rider and a person, and within the art of horse riding I found a way to express my feelings."

”Good horsemanship is a horsemanship that gives and doesn’t take away, that improves and doesn’t break. A horse is like a piece of clay and good horsemanship turns this piece of clay into a beautiful sculpture, decorated with love and respect.”

Performing is a way to express oneself

”I do shows because they are the channel through which to express the art of horse riding. I am a very creative man, and my head is constantly filled with passing images of beautiful horses. Shows are the ideal stage for visualizing everything that we can achieve and feel with our beautiful friend, the horse. My mission, and the purpose of my existence, is to give life to my dreams, and the dreams of everybody else – bring to reality the images, feelings and magical worlds that we all dream about and love.”

”The horse of my dreams is a horse with a heart. If a horse has a heart, you can work with it. With a heart it can be an artist. With a heart it can be your partner. I have had many horses that were physically incredibly well built, but didn’t express anything because they didn’t have a heart. I have also had horses that weren’t physically perfect, but had a great heart. They were the ones who wanted to work, from their heart. That to me is a dream horse. Of course, if heart and physical excellence coincide – even better. But the heart is more important than the body.”



Classical dressage and working in hand are meant for the horse

”Working in hand is designed to put the horse in perfect balance without the weight of the rider. I work many horses in hand to teach them new exercises without disturbing them with the rider’s weight. This is much easier for the horse, because in this way the horse only has to work with his own weight, and balance his own body. At the same time, we have a very different perspective from which to correct and teach the different movements a horse can make.

Classical dressage – the name is self-explanatory for me – goes back to the classical, and for me that is the baroque. What do I mean by baroque? Baroque is full of beauty and art. There is a difference, for me, between classical dressage and athletic dressage. I prefer, for example, the expression and feeling that you get from artistic passage when compared to a passage that is technically perfect. I like to get away from the schemes and the perfection of competitions and instead search for moments of art. And we all know that art doesn’t always fit inside a square.”

Horses are different

”Every horse can transmit love and beauty, but it is obvious that certain breeds adapt better to our needs. If we talk about Iberian breeds, Lusitanos and Pura Raza Españolas, they both have very similar characteristics, are full of good character and are very good to collect. They are very close to what Xenophon saw in his mind – The perfect horse.”


Good rider

”The most important characteristics of a rider are love and the sensitivity he or she feels towards the horse. Secondly comes persistence and discipline in the work, and thirdly talent. If we take all of these qualities, put them in a cocktail shaker and mix them up, we get the perfect rider.

Above all, we need to understand and know our horse well. We need to know what we would like to achieve with our horse, what level we want to reach, and then assess if our horse will be able to reach that level. Don’t ask for useless exercises. Don’t be too hard on your horse, and understand that asking for little and praising a lot is the key to a happy connection between yourself and your horse.”

Teaching is a vocation

”I teach, because the more people know about good riding, the less horses have to suffer. A horse, for me, is not a living vehicle, it is my life. The biggest challenges with riders and students stem from lack of experience, and the craving for rushed results. The more time you give yourself with a horse, the sooner and better you achieve what you aim for.”

”The same can be seen in horses. The challenges are based on the fact that lack of experience and hasty riders can affect the horse. Every horse has a different rhythm in their learning. If the base is built wide, the pyramid will be tall. Most horses that come with problems did not get this wide base, and that’s bad. Rushed results are never good results, and unfortunately the horse is often the one to pay for this.” 

www.artequuscenter.com
susanna.reich@gmx.net
+34 653 782 561



”My dream is to keep enjoying what I have today on a daily basis. And every day to try to improve the ability to understand all the different characters the horses have in order to then find a dialogue much more fluent between my horses and myself.”