

Why to Geld? – An Interview with Mimi Busk-Downey

Q: I'd like to know from some of you what reasons - other than the obvious (post legged, pigeon toed, ewe necked, etc.) why you would choose to geld a really nice colt?

A: In my opinion, the question a breeder must ask is not "why geld" -- it is "what does this horse offer to the breed and future generations that is *totally essential* , a great contribution, and a reason to want him to be the sire and grandsire of future generations?"

The horse does not have to be perfect or without conformation faults - because conformation is in many cases the easiest thing to improve. But he has to be exceptional in some way.

Some considerations -

- Excellent temperament, which includes a very good brio. This should be tested deep down, not just surface energy.
- A sire as well as a dam that are exceptional in some way. Think about the colt's dam - do you really want her to be the grandmother of a whole herd of horses? A great stallion will nearly always have a great dam. I would go further to say that a great *producing* stallion will always have had a great dam.
- A gait that has reach, timing and smoothness.
- Strength and functionality.
- Overall quality as compared to the best of the breed.
- The presence of a stallion.

Q: I am curious about [the] comment about brio - how do you make a judgment about brio in a young horse, not yet under saddle?

A: If a colt comes from a mare that I categorize as a "possible or proven stallion producer" and we are considering him to leave ungelded because his build, carriage, strength, gait and presence are all suitable.....then we would wait --- and wait --- until he is fully trained to make a decision. Our trainer keeps the horses very quiet in bozal and four reins and only in the bit and when the horse is secure in his mental acceptance of the training, do we ask more. I have seen many times horses from our *Soberana de Cayalti line, that acted quiet and reserved ---- have a huge amount of brio waiting to be asked for.

If a colt showed any tendency to bite or sulk or be lazy, or any of the other responses that we consider to be indications of less brio, then they would be gelded. And it goes without saying that a stallion should have two parents with excellent brio.

If anything else along the line is not there, the horse will not get to that stage. We used to leave all colts until 2, but now we geld many colts at a year or less. Raising home - bred champions has been our goal since the 70's, and the list of stallions we have produced includes Soberano ++ and many other Champions --- and currently, two CM - bred champions CM Innovacion and CM Inca Roca ---so a little waiting is par for the course if we have one we think is worth waiting for.

Mimi Busk-Downey

--

Crescent Moon Ranch
Peruvian Horses & Tack
Box 449, Acme, Alberta
Canada T0M 0A0
Phone (403) 546-4331
Email: cresmoon@supergait.com
or soberano31@gmail.com
Website: www.supergait.com