



EDITORIAL 1/2025

EQUITOUR

The world through horses' ears

Horseback travelling through

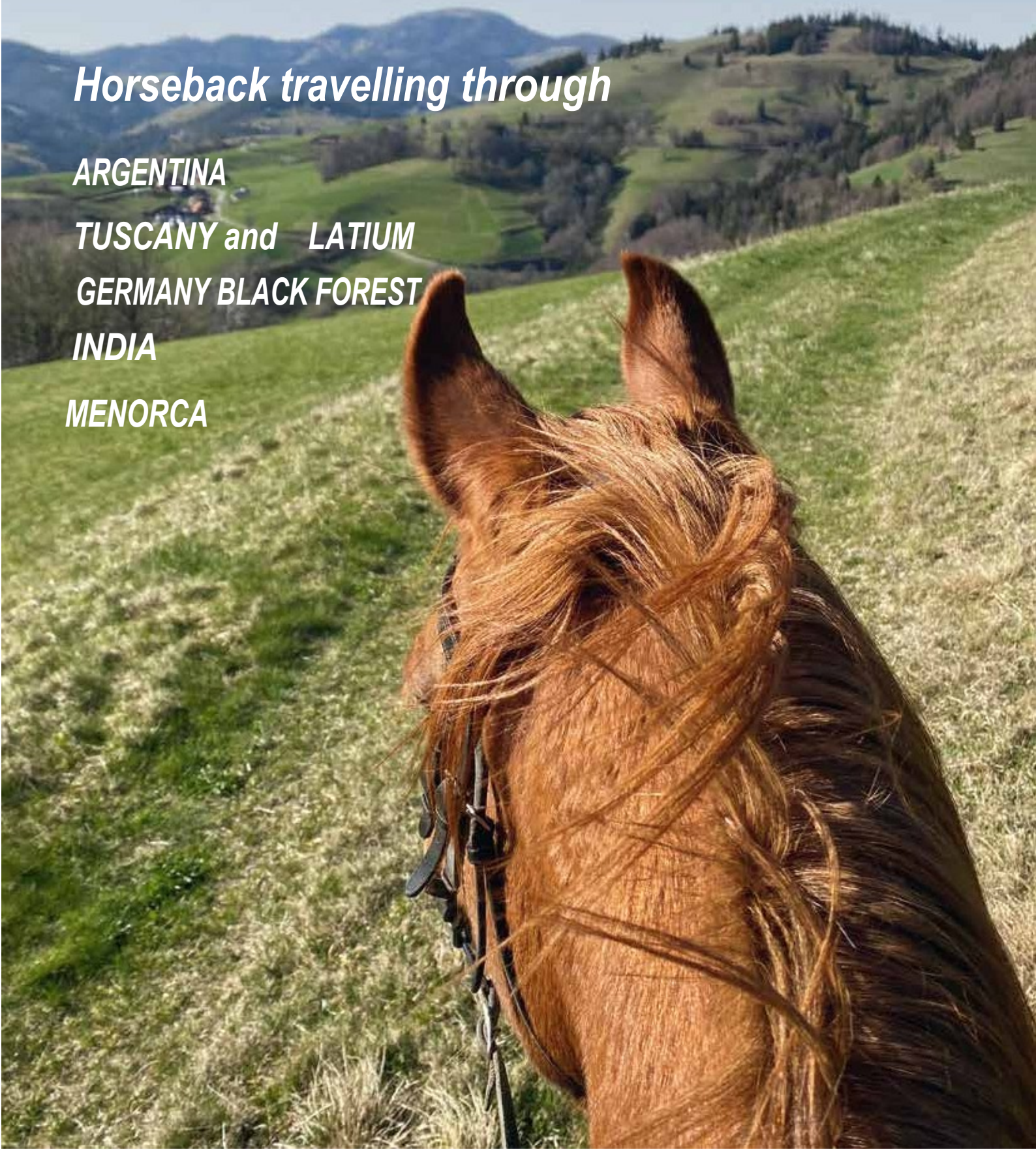
ARGENTINA

TUSCANY and LATIUM

GERMANY BLACK FOREST

INDIA

MENORCA



The traveller sees things he
encounters on the road, the tourist
sees what he has set out to see.

G.K. Chesterton







EQUITOUR

Riding Holidays

Dear riders,

The happy moments of Equitour journeys have a long-lasting effect. In this issue, our product managers and customers talk about their riding adventures in a wide variety of countries. From the Black Forest to the heights of the Andes, from Tuscany to Menorca and fascinating Rajasthan - riders' hearts beat faster everywhere. Let yourself be infected and take these stories and the many other Equitour offers as inspiration for your holiday planning.

The whole world on horseback

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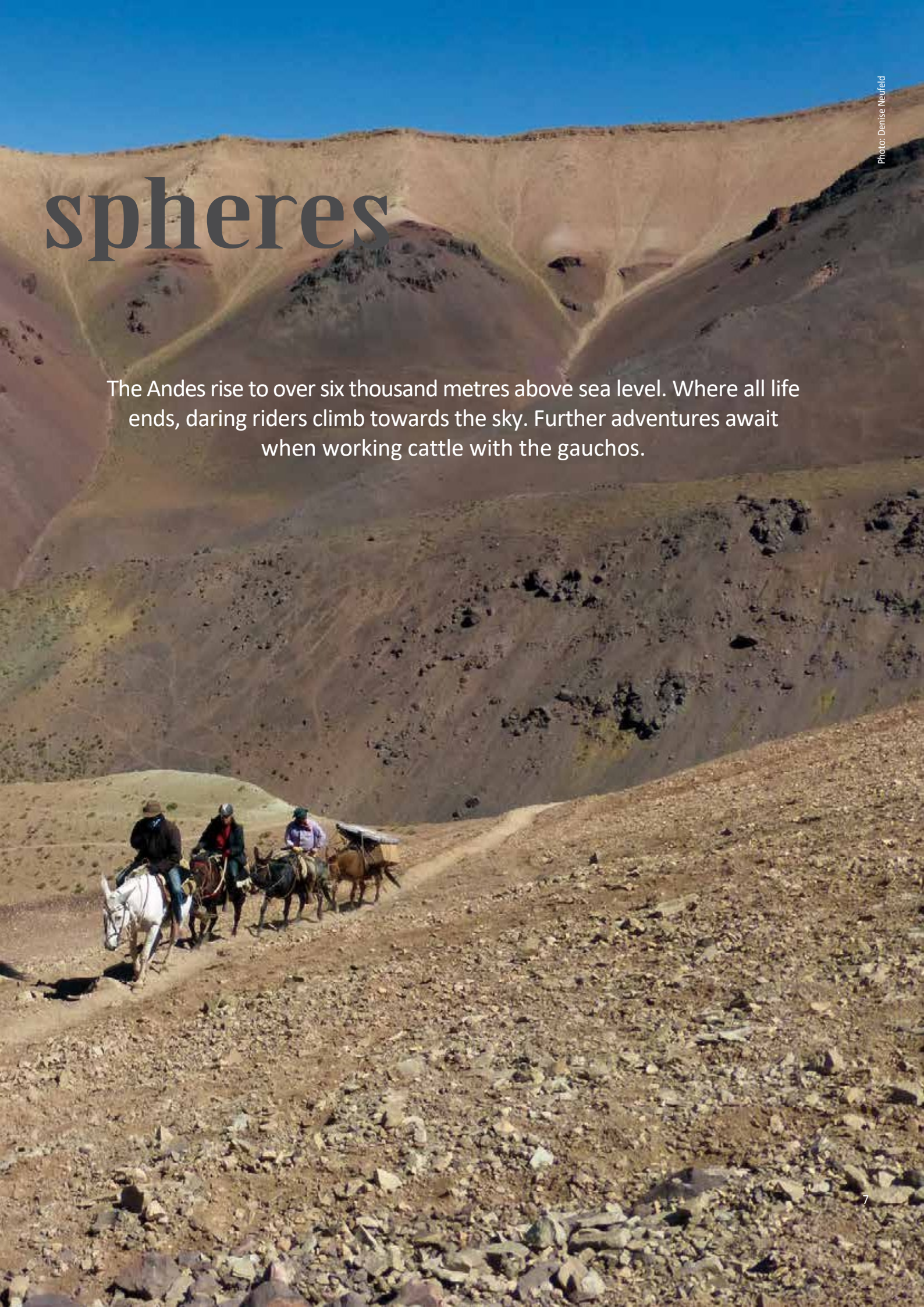




Argentina

In heavenly





spheres

The Andes rise to over six thousand metres above sea level. Where all life ends, daring riders climb towards the sky. Further adventures await when working cattle with the gauchos.

Travelogue Argentina:

With the gauchos from



Guy de Galard knows cowboy work from Wyoming. Now he is trying his hand as a gaucho in the vastness of the Argentinian pampas.



Driven by a gaucho, the herd of horses gallops across the pasture. The thunder of their stamping hooves gets louder as they approach the corral. Once there, they snort through their nostrils, but after a few minutes of snorting and neighing, they quickly calm down again. Another gaucho stretches a rope between two trees. The horses know the drill. They stand with their chest against the rope. One by one, the horses to be ridden that day are bridled before being led out of the corral and saddled.

This is how every day begins on the estancia with its 2000 hectares of land in the province of Corrientes, around 600 kilometres north of Buenos Aires. The region is considered the wetlands of Argentina, where jaguars and caimans roam. It is also known for being home to some of the country's best horsemen and gauchos. This is the place I want to be. Having lived and ridden in Wyoming for many years, my main interest is ranch-style cattle work. With 2000 head of cattle and 130 horses to care for on the property, there is a lot to do.

Corrientes



I arrived the previous evening after an eight-hour bus journey from Buenos Aires. Despite the early hour - 4.30 in the morning - Fernando, the owner of the facility, is already waiting for me at the bus station and greets me warmly with a broad, infectious smile. Half an hour later, we arrive at the estancia and Fernando shows me to my room.

After a short rest, I get to know the rest of the group over breakfast. There are Linda and Andrew, a British couple who are here for the second time, and Nicolas, a teacher from Switzerland. Fernando joins us. Breakfast is served outside on a covered veranda. The

I would describe the Argentinian breakfast as a continental breakfast: European coffee, croissants, toast, jam, ham and cheese, yoghurt, fruit salad and fruit juice. Every morning, Fernando gives us a choice of options for the day.

"Option A", he begins, "is to collect all the cattle that are a few miles away in the woods and drive them to the corrals, where they are sorted and treated for ticks.

Option B," he continues, "is to ride through the herd of cattle in another pasture, identify calves that need to be calves that need to be treated and lasso them on the spot". We opted for option A and saved option B for the afternoon.

After breakfast, we meet at the saddling area, where the horses are already saddled and tied up. Putting on a gaucho saddle is completely different to anything I've ever seen before. Several blankets are placed on the horse's back in a specific order, followed by the saddle itself, which is buckled tightly. A thick sheepskin pad covered with soft, thin pigskin is placed on top. A wide girth over the seat secures the whole thing to the horse's back. I get to know my horse, Capitan. An eight-year-old stallion, very well-behaved and excellently trained. All the horses are born and reared on the estancia and trained by the gauchos.

"It is essential for our work that we know all our horses well," explains Fernando.

We follow a shady path lined with eucalyptus trees. At the end, a gate leads to a large pasture where we can gallop to our hearts' content. I am delighted to realise that the gauchos don't ride head-to-tail. In fact, each rider is given plenty of freedom, depending on their ability. At the other end of the pasture, we reach the forest and split into two groups to work more efficiently. I gallop with two of the gauchos to the opposite edge of the forest, while the rest of the group follows Fernando. We find some cows in the forest and drive them out of the woods. About halfway to the corrals, our cows form a herd with the ones Fernando's group is bringing. The cattle are a cross between Angus, Hereford and Brahman - the latter originate from India and make the estancia's cattle resilient to the heat.

As we approach the corrals, Linda gallops ahead to open the gate. We sort out the cows to be treated and drive them into a neighbouring barn. Then we lead them one by one through a long, narrow pool of water with a chemical solution against ticks. The cows get in at one end, swim the whole distance and come out at the other end by climbing up a few steps. Once all the cows have been treated, we drive them back to the pasture and head back to the estancia for lunch.

The estancia is charming and typical of the region: several low buildings, each surrounded by a red-roofed brick path. There are palm trees in the grounds, swaying in the gentle tropical breeze. The hearty lunch

is also served outside on the veranda. Lunch is followed by a siesta, as is customary in Latin American countries. Some of us retire for an afternoon nap while I relax by the pool. Linda makes herself comfortable in the hammock with a book.

Two hours later, we meet up again in the saddle room. "There's been a slight change of plan," Fernando announces. "A few horses have gone to the wrong pasture. We have to bring them back. Then we'll take care of the calves."

We find the five runaways in a nearby pasture. The horses raise their heads as we approach and gallop off...in the wrong direction. One of the gauchos manages to cut them off and direct them back. Resigned, the horses slow down and we follow at a trot with a rider on each flank to prevent any further escape.

After this interlude, we return to the pasture, where some calves need to be treated. "Some maggots get in through the umbilical cord after the calves are born, and we have to flush them out we have to flush them out, otherwise they can become infected," explains Fernando. A gaucho spots one of the calves, takes up the chase and swings his lasso. At full gallop, the gaucho lets go of his noose, which gently wraps around the calf's neck. Then he dismounts and treats it. Each calf is treated in turn. Finally, I get to try my luck. Although I am much slower than the gauchos, I manage to catch two calves in a row. Maybe this is my lucky day.

The sun casts long shadows and casts the pampas in a golden glow as we return to the estancia. A flock of herons flies across the pink sky. Suddenly Linda discovers a lagoon that had been created by a downpour. We all had the same idea... Without hesitation, the gauchos gallop through, laughing - and we, of course, are delighted to follow them. After our return to the estancia, the horses are hosed down and released into the pasture. Tomorrow we are ready for option A and option B and a long day of riding through the pampas with the gauchos of Corrientes.

Guy de Galard
translated from French by Timea Somogyi

<https://www.equitour.com/it-arsr 10.htm>



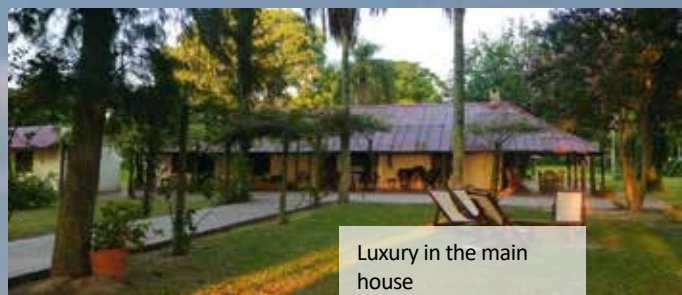
Cooling off for two- and four-legged friends



Transporting calves the gaucho way



Delicious products from the estancia



Luxury in the main house



Argentina

Land of adventurers

The vastness of the Pampas, the ice and fire of Patagonia, thundering waterfalls - Argentina offers wilderness and the forces of nature, attracting one type of person in particular to the country: true adventurers.

Argentina is a country that attracts many nature lovers and adventurers with its diverse nature and has almost all the climate zones in the world. Before colonisation by the Spanish in the 16th century, the country was sparsely populated by various indigenous tribes. The Spaniards brought horses into the country, and today Argentina has a lot to offer in terms of riding. The gauchos characterise the Argentinian riding culture in the endless wilderness of the Pampas.

Buenos Aires

Argentina's capital Buenos Aires offers cultural highlights. The passion of the Argentines unfolds in the Tango Argentino. The expressive dance is celebrated in shows, competitions and restaurants. Buenos Aires also stands out as a green metropolis. The many parks, botanical gardens and green spaces keep the city relatively cool in the tropical zone.

comparatively cool in the tropical zone.

Patagonia

In the south of the country, the Patagonia region stretches from Tierra del Fuego in the far south to the Bariloche National Park, around two thousand kilometres further north. The impressive nature ranges from rugged mountains in an arctic climate to dry pampas and subtropical flora and fauna. On the border with Chile, the many glaciers and mountains stand out. The Los Glaciares National Park and the settlement of El Chaltén with the spectacular Fitz Roy mountain, also known as Cerro Chaltén, are particularly well-known.



Botanical garden in Buenos Aires



You can stroll for hours at the artists' market in San Telmo.



Born in Buenos Aires: the tango.



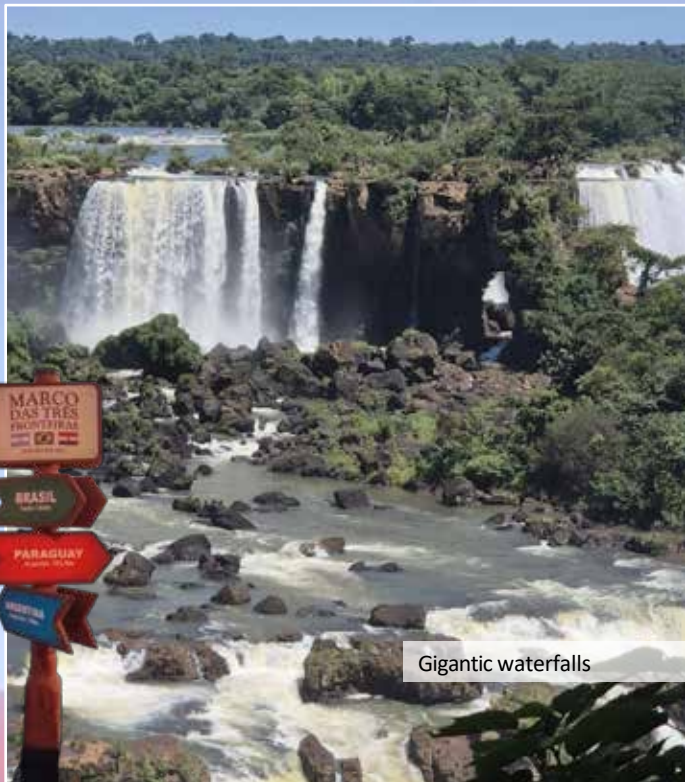
The picture-book mountain Fitz Roy



Icy splendour in Los Glaciares Park

Iguazu Waterfalls

The second largest waterfall in the world is located in the north of the country at the border triangle with Paraguay and Brazil. It is fed by the Rio Iguazu, the second longest river in South America, which plunges into the depths in 20 large and over 255 smaller waterfalls. Embedded in the jungle, you can experience a wide variety of tropical flora and fauna here. The Iguazu National Park is home to many protected animal species.



Gigantic waterfalls

Criollo Argentino

What the quarter horse is to the cowboy, the criollo is to the gaucho: the reliable riding and working horse. As Criollos are uncomplicated, robust and have strong nerves, they are now popular leisure and travelling horses all over the world.



Photos: Franziska Vaas, Gabriele Kärcher

Criollo profile

Size: 142 to 152 cm height
Conformation: Compact, muscular, uniform colour: All colours
Character: Good-natured, strong nerves, uncomplicated
Characteristics: Courageous, willing, versatile, resilient
Suitability: Western riding, cattle work, polo, leisure riding, trail riding
Countries of origin: Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela

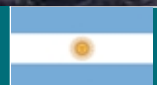


The free life of the gauchos and criollos

EQUITOUR RIDING PROGRAMME

With Equitour, you can discover the breathtaking nature of Argentina with eight riding programmes. Ride with gauchos in the vastness of the province of Corrientes, go on real cattle drives, follow ancient Inca trails in the Andes, climb up to 4,500 metres on an Andean crossing or marvel at the bizarre beauty of Patagonia's mountain and glacier landscape. www.equitour.com/argentinien.htm

Country info Argentina



Size: 2,780,000 km²
Population: 45.54 million
Capital: Buenos Aires
Language: Spanish
Religion: Christian, indigenous
Currency: Argentine peso
Climate: From tropical in the north to subpolar in the extreme south
Best time to visit: All year round

The popular sport of polo

Like the gauchos' working horses, polo horses must also be extremely fast and manoeuvrable. Perhaps this is why polo became a national sport in Argentina. The horse-ball sport was already played in Persia and India in pre-Christian times, came to Great Britain through colonisation and from there to Argentina in 1873.

Argentinian polo clubs were quickly formed and their teams won Olympic gold twice, as polo was even an Olympic discipline at the beginning of the 20th century. Technique, team spirit and tactics are required. The match is divided into seven-minute periods and, for animal welfare reasons, the horses have to be changed after each period.



Travelogue Chile / Argentina:

In the saddle through the Andes



Luxury? Hotel? Restaurants? Denise Neufeld doesn't need any of that. She has adventurer's blood running through her veins. In the heights of the Andes, she explores riding and life to the extreme.

The four-, five- and six-thousand metre peaks loom on the horizon. The thought of spending the next few days somewhere up there still seems surreal.

Eduardo, our host, takes me and the other participants from the turbulent metropolis of Santiago de Chile to Los Andes, the starting point of our adventure. This ride is a real pack trip. We are riding in regions that no vehicle can reach. Our route is based on that of the freedom fighter San Martín, who led Chile to independence in 1817 and liberated it from Spanish rule.

19 February - The adventure begins

We ride through a river valley lined with cacti and bushes. Condors circle in the air, every now and then we come across herds of goats. It is already dark when we reach our first campsite. We take care of the horses, set up campfire. All with real team spirit.





20. February - Moon or Mars

The vegetation decreases and gives way to a rocky landscape with steep slopes and a colour spectrum ranging from white to grey to red. Sometimes you feel like you're on the moon, sometimes on Mars. We set up camp for the night on a slope and turn our eyes upwards to the southern starry sky with a clearly recognisable Milky Way. In the mountains, without any disturbing light, the view is gigantic.

21 February - ¡Hola Argentina!

On the way to the Chilean-Argentinian border, we reach a monument to José de San Martín. At the border, we change horses and team, as the animals are not allowed into neighbouring countries. In Argentina, the sight of the almost 7000 metre high Aconcagua, the highest mountain in America, awaits us. We ride into Valle Hermoso - the "beautiful valley", where we spend two nights.



22 February- Break day

Today we have the choice between a day ride and a break day, rest day. I opt for the latter and spend the day in camp day at camp, exploring the valley on foot and helping the team with the fishing and preparing food.



24. February - Between heaven and earth

Today we fight our way up the steep ascent to the Espinacito Pass, which at 4,500 metres is the highest point of our tour. The wind whips around our ears. We give the horses a break and enjoy the panorama.



23 February - No fear of heights

We ride into the mountains again, impressed by the sure-footedness of the criollos and mules. They march over the scree like mountain goats, climb boulders and balance on narrow ridges. We riders would do well not to look down and simply trust our horses instead.

25. February - Back to civilisation

Our last day of riding. We ride steadily downhill. We pass canyons and bizarre rock formations. The terrain becomes flatter and we can make good progress on our last stage. The vegetation picks up again, the temperature rises and we gradually return to civilisation. Our ride comes to an end. The images of this very special world in the heights of the Andes will remain in our hearts forever.

Denise Neufeld

www.equitour.com/it-chrt05.htm



Family holidays

Riding holidays with your loved ones

Riding every day is the holiday dream of horse people. But what if the family doesn't want to go? It's best to book a riding holiday that is also suitable for non-riders. And who knows, maybe a horse-lover on holiday will become an enthusiastic horse person!



Family riding holidays in Ireland

Equitour offers holiday destinations that are also suitable for children and non-riders. Among the non-riders there are those who don't want to ride at all and those who are open to giving riding a try. For the former, Equitour offers alternative leisure activities.

The latter can get into the saddle on a beginners' riding programme. For families with children and groups with different levels of riding ability, farms with flexible riding programmes are suitable, i.e. with riding lessons and rides for beginners and advanced riders. For non-riding guests, many farms, especially hotels, offer activities such as swimming, wellness, hiking or cycling. The charming surroundings of the riding stables and

-hotels offers numerous excursion possibilities. Family members can enjoy themselves separately in the morning and go on excursions together in the afternoon.

There are opportunities for combined holidays all over the world. Fun, adventure and world discovery are guaranteed. Some examples of unforgettable riding and non-riding holidays:

Adventures in Africa

In Africa, non-riders can take part in bush walks, jeep safaris or boat safaris. In the evening, you can meet up for a sundowner. If you accompany a riding safari as a non-rider, you can enjoy an individual holiday with a personal programme of your choice.

The gift of a ride

A riding weekend is a popular gift for a riding friend. The programmes in Alsace or the Bavarian Forest are ideal for this. There's a good chance that your partner will get a taste for it, so you can both ride in a group.

Cowboy feeling

The guest ranches are suitable for families. In contrast to real working ranches, guest ranches offer leisure activities such as horseshoe pitching, swimming or river rafting.

On tour

There are even riding tours on which non-riders can be taken along. They ride in the support vehicle, which transports lunch and luggage, or accompany the ride in their own car. You meet up for meals and otherwise go on your own excursions.

If you want to go on a riding holiday with children, you should realistically assess what is feasible for the child. There are big differences. Some ten-year-olds can easily go on a ride lasting several days, while for others riding lessons are the right choice.

Many riding centres have specific age limits. Some programmes can only be booked from the age of sixteen. This applies in particular to challenging programmes such as horse drives and gallop tours.

Younger guests usually lack the necessary stamina and experience. If you still want to go on a riding tour with a child, you should only do so if the child has already completed day rides or weekend rides. We recommend rides with a maximum of five riding hours per day and with an accompanying vehicle. The age limit is twelve or fourteen years, and an escort is obligatory.

Alternatively, day rides are possible. In Iceland, you can go on four to five-hour rides where younger children can be led by a guide on a hand horse.

Some riding hotels have programmes for very young children. At the equestrian hotel in Sardinia, they can experience an introduction to the world of horses in the "Miniclub" on and with Shetland ponies. In fact, there are even riding safaris for families with small children. In reserves, the little ones can track down zebras, giraffes and co. on riding ponies. Quite a change from the zoo!

Equitour can recommend specific programmes that meet personal wishes and where the whole family and the non-riding partner can get their money's worth.



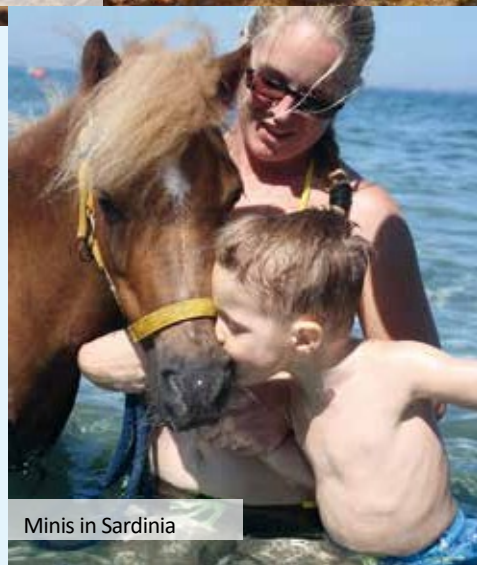
Children welcome: Cabo de Gata Andalusia



Iceland: even the horses are perfect for kids



Wet and happy through Abruzzo



Minis in Sardinia

TIPS for a family holiday with Equitour

Germany, Austria, Switzerland Riding hotel in Müritz with wellness, riding lessons and short rides.
www.equitour.com/ziesta.htm

Country hotel in the Heath: For riding families with their own horses or hire horses.
www.equitour.com/bausta.htm

Reiterparadies Mühlviertel: Lessons in dressage, show jumping and rides
www.equitour.com/stlsta.htm

Trail riding in the Valais Alps: For children aged 12 and over. Alpine rides with overnight stays in mountain huts.
www.equitour.com/alp005.htm

Southern Europe

Alsace: Rides for the whole family
www.equitour.com/elssta.htm

Andalusia: Star rides, beach rides and lessons. Hotel near the beach
www.equitour.com/cabsta.htm

Beach resort Sardinia: Riding hotel with mini club for children aged 6 and over.
www.equitour.com/horsta.htm

Riding centre near Montalcino: Agriturismo in Tuscany
www.equitour.com/monsta.htm

Northern Europe

County Galway Ireland: Lessons, horsemanship and rides in a family atmosphere.
www.equitour.com/srcsta.htm

Atlantic coast of Ireland: Family offer with overnight stay in a flat
www.equitour.com/ivt007.htm

Riding hotel in South Iceland: "Ride around the volcano" and "Natural wonders of Iceland" for children aged 10 and over.
www.equitour.com/kjo004.htm

Thingvellir Ride Iceland: trail ride, available on request from the age of 12.
www.equitour.com/thi007.htm

Eastern Europe

Fairytale castle in Lower Silesia: historic castle complex in the north of Poland
www.equitour.com/klzsta.htm

Africa

Comfort Lodge Uganda - beautiful lodge with safari rides on Lake Mmburo
www.equitour.com/mihsta.htm

Waterberg Riding Safari - luxury lodge with safari rides in its own reserve
www.equitour.com/saasta.htm

Lodge am See South Africa - safari rides, cross country and polocrosse
www.equitour.com/tbtsta.htm

Khomas Lodge Namibia - Family holiday not far from Windhoek
www.equitour.com/duesta.htm

Morocco - Family-friendly farm by the sea, south of Agadir, riding week light from 10 years of age
www.equitour.com/mmesta.htm

America

Saskatchewan River Valley Ranch
www.equitour.com/wrsk01.htm

Cranbrook Guest Ranch
www.equitour.com/grbc03.htm

Drowsy Water Ranch Colorado:
www.equitour.com/grco01.htm

White Stallion Ranch Arizona
www.equitour.com/graz03.htm

Rancho Mexicana:
www.equitour.com/it-mxrlc02.htm

Hacienda Primavera
www.equitour.com/it-ecsr08.htm



Tuscany and Lazio

THE GRANDE

The beauty of Tuscany and Lazio ranges from medieval towns to rural charm, from ancient culture with great art to diverse nature with mountains, sea and sunny expanses.

BELLEZZA ITALY



Travelogue Tuscany

PLEASURE RIDING IN MONTALCINO



Jessica Kiefer experiences the dolce vita briefly but intensively on a farm in Tuscany with horses, swimming, wine and sightseeing.



Typical Tuscany: a mixture of nature and culture

If you don't know where to go: Tuscany always works and offers so many possibilities that it never gets boring. July is the time of blooming sunflowers and mown grain fields. The rolling yellow hills stretch endlessly, interspersed with avenues of cypresses, farmsteads, picturesque villages and castles. Towards Monte Amiata there are extensive wooded areas that provide shade for horses and riders in summer.

After landing in Pisa, I take a cheap and comfortable train journey to Siena. Here I am picked up by friends in their car and we drive through the marvellous summer landscape to the farm. The last two kilometres are on a gravel track through hilly countryside. Passing an idyllic lake, we take the last steep climb to the agriturismo in a beautiful panoramic location. The driveway is planted with giant cacti, then an avenue of cypress trees leads to the buildings. The first thing we notice is the pool, which we would like to try out immediately. There are at least ten sun loungers on the large lawn by the water.

The rooms are located in the main building above the reception, are newly renovated and nicely decorated. There are only three rooms and three flats. In the morning there is a sumptuous breakfast buffet with homemade cakes and jam, juice, fresh fruit, cheese and ham.

The next day is all about the Tuscan mineral springs. We spend the morning in the hot springs of Bagno San Filippo. There are small waterfalls and many small pools by a stream in the forest where you can relax and unwind. Some of these are located in a mighty rock face, which is coloured white by the limestone deposits. A fantastic wellness experience in the middle of nature.

At lunchtime, we visit the village of Bagno San Vignoni, consisting of a few houses, restaurants and shops lined up around a historic Roman spa. In a rustic wine shop, we put together a plate of delicious antipasti and cheeses - a perfect lunch with the regional red wine Brunello.



Inviting: the pool at the agriturismo

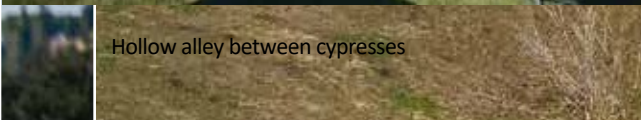


Rural Tuscan charm



Fascinating and relaxing:
Bagno Filippo

Hollow alley between cypresses



Then it's back to the agriturismo, where my friends head for the pool while I get ready for a long ride. The riding stables are ten minutes away on a pleasant footpath. The owner, Gaby, emigrated from Germany to Tuscany around twenty years ago and offers riding lessons and, above all, rides on her twenty or so reliable horses. My three fellow riders have already been on a few rides with her and are delighted. A bay gelding of Spanish descent is waiting for me. Once the horses have been saddled and Gaby has decided on the best order, we can set off. We ride along fields towards the forest. In about three and a half hours we cross a small country road a few times, otherwise we ride through the beautiful countryside. The horses are reliable and motivated in all gaits. So you can enjoy the riding. The ride takes us through vineyards, clover and cereal fields, cypress avenues,

Mediterranean forest, and every now and then we catch a glimpse of a castle or a manor house - Tuscany straight out of a picture book! We end the evening in nearby Buonconvento. With its town walls and mysterious alleyways, the historic town offers an impressive medieval backdrop. Several restaurants and bars offer refreshment stops, and there is even a live band playing that evening. As we return to the courtyard, we gaze up at a stunning starry sky above the towering black cypress trees. The perfect end to a wonderful day.

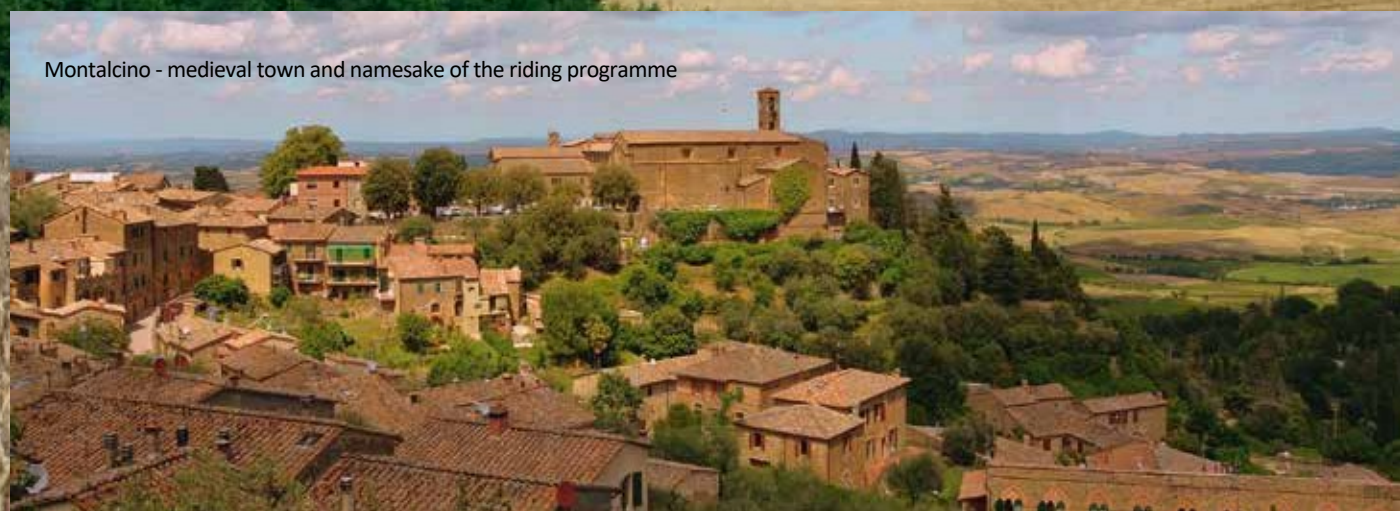
The following day, we want to experience culture and visit the nearby town of Montalcino, which is picturesquely enthroned on a hill. The view is fantastic: on one side there is a large wooded area, on the other a breathtaking panorama over the Val d'Orchia with vineyards, fields, small lakes and farmsteads. The village itself is also impressive:



Tuscany through horse ears



In the alleyways of Montalcino



Montalcino - medieval town and namesake of the riding programme

At the top is a stately medieval castle with town walls, at the other end of the historic centre are two large churches. In between are the historic alleyways and squares. Every second shop is a wine shop with a bar. For lunch, we stock up on *piedine*, *tramezzini*, which is filled flatbread, and other delicacies, which we enjoy in the shade with a magnificent view of Tuscany. We have a delicious ice cream for dessert before we say goodbye.

In the evening, we go for a quiet ride in the surrounding countryside. The route takes us along a wide path between vast fields of grain, past individual farmsteads. The view over the hills and as far as the Crete Senesi is marvellous. The way home leads past fields of sunflowers and clover. As there was a lot of rain this spring, the landscape is beautifully green and the small lakes, which were created for irrigation, are well filled. Back at the farm, we let the horses out to graze.

Afterwards, we visit a restaurant in the countryside and savour regional delicacies once again. On the last day, we decide to visit one of the many wineries around Montalcino for a tasting of the typical Brunello. We sign up for a wine tasting at the Azienda Tornesi, where we are warmly welcomed by the junior manager. The farm is family-owned and is beautifully situated on the slopes of Montalcino. Wine and olive oil of the highest quality have been produced here since the middle of the 19th century. After our wine tasting, the father invites us on a tour of the wine cellar. The Brunello and the Rosso di Montalcino have won us over, so a few bottles are added to our luggage. Then we say our final goodbyes to Tuscany, or rather: see you next time.

Jessica Kiefer <https://www.equitour.com/monsta.htm>



Tuscan culinary delights



Pure riding pleasure

A must-do: a visit to a wine cellar



Luminous floral splendour



Photos: Jessica Kiefer, Heinz Staffebach, ASD Il Destrjero, Pixabay/ pcdazero

Characters of the Maremma

Touring horse Rambo - a leader

Big, strong and absolutely reliable. That's Rambo, a real character horse. Today, beginners and advanced riders feel at home on his back, but that wasn't always the case. Owner and riding guide Gaby Hiepler tells the story of the black Maremmano.



I took Rambo over from a member of our riding club when he was five years old because he couldn't cope with him. As a result, he was only ridden by me for a long time. Maremmans are very person-centred horses and you have to gain their trust first.

As a young horse, he often put us to the test and I don't know who had to show more patience: him or me. But proud and self-confident as he is, he then led our riding groups safely through every difficulty. He fearlessly masters every path and every challenge.

What makes Rambo so special is his deep connection to people. He loves being surrounded by people and seems to understand every word. Whenever the word canter is mentioned in conversation with my fellow riders, he has jumped into a collected canter more than once and everyone is thrilled. It really seems as if he understands our words.

His intelligence and empathy make him an indispensable member of our team.

One particular event that demonstrates his abilities was when a group got lost in the dense forest. It was getting dark and there was no path in sight, but there were wild boars and wolves in the area. Rambo remained calm and led the group home on his own.

As a lead horse, he is safe in every situation, and on our rides at sunrise and sunset through the Sienese hills, he is a unique friend and partner.

Now, in his early 20s, he has earned a quieter life and only accompanies us on shorter rides. His calmness is unshakeable and he gives every rider, even beginners, security and confidence.

Rambo's best and only real friend is Ardor, a Cru-zado, an Andalusian crossbreed. The two are the highest-ranking horses on the farm. Ardor came from Spain ten years ago and refused to co-operate because he had previously been completely overworked. He then became friends with Rambo and, as a result, with me. Today, the two of them are a dream team for beginners in cross-country.

Rambo and the other horses live in groups of five or six horses, each on one or two hectares with shelters and/or woodland for protection. There are also stables on the farm just in case.

Rambo has now been our faithful companion for more than fifteen years and is an absolute character horse!

Gaby Hiepler
Riding centre near Montalcino

Gaby and her reliable friend Rambo (left) safely guide the riding guests



Butteri

The cowboys of the Maremma

The Maremma is a vast swampy area in Tuscany. The soil and the hot and humid climate used to be completely unsuitable for agriculture, with cattle farming being the only option. The area has since been largely drained, but large semi-wild herds still roam the land to this day.

Bold cattle herders are needed to monitor them and drive them onto new grazing land from time to time. These are the butteri, the Italian cowboys. Their reliable horses, the Maremmanos, help with cattle drives, catching the animals for burning, vaccinating and sorting.

The Butteri's riding style is simple and practical. They spend whole days on horseback in a comfortable, thickly padded saddle. Today there are also female butteri, who are in no way inferior to their male colleagues. In addition to their work, the Butteri are wild riders and show off their skills at shows and fairs. Butteri, Maremmano horses and cattle are a living tradition in Italy.



Buttero and Buttera

Really cosy: the saddles are thickly padded with horsehair and look a bit like an armchair.



The large Maremma cattle and Maremmano horses still live semi-wild in the Parco Regionale della Maremma nature park.



Butteri appearance at the Eurocheval trade fair

Travelogue Tuscany and Lazio

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE ETRUSCANS

For Jessica Kiefer, travelling to historical Etruscan sites feels like a journey back in time. Adventure, pleasure and the Italian way of life are by no means neglected.



Instead of a rooster, we are woken up by a donkey at our hotel in Sovana. After an Italian breakfast of cake and cappuccino, our riding guide Duska picks us up and takes us to the horses, which are already saddled and ready. First the horses are divided up, then we set off. I get the little white Andalusian mare Esperia, who doesn't have much trail experience yet. The little mare has trouble keeping up with the bigger horses, so she often has to trot to keep up. But we soon get on well together. Some of the others are old hands, the smallest mare is 18 years old, but runs briskly at the front. Annette from Switzerland has got a young Arabian, a real beauty who can't get enough of cantering. We also enjoy many long gallops. The horses can easily manage up to forty kilometres a day.

On the first day, we ride a lot through the forest. After a long gallop, during which I canter comfortably behind Esperia,

we catch sight of our destination for the day, Proceno. To get there, we take an adventurous path through dense undergrowth, taking care not to get caught on the sharp thorns.

We soon reach the medieval town of Proceno. There are two well-kept paddocks below the town walls where we leave the horses. We ourselves enjoy an overnight stay in a castle. At the Castello di Proceno, we receive a warm welcome from the "lady-in-waiting", who invites us on a guided tour of her private chambers and up the impressive castle tower. We are impressed by the paintings, robes and other treasures, as well as the view of the picturesque little town from the tower. And we even discover our horses in the meadow far below us. In the restaurant, we are personally entertained by the elderly lords of the castle. These days, the aristocracy seems to live off tourism and there are no longer any servants.



A cheerful group of riders in Bella Italia



We have breakfast in the dark enoteca with its tiny windows. We feel a bit like we're in the Middle Ages. The lady of the castle tells us that the Etruscans had a highly developed civilisation. However, not much remains of their carriages, ships, roads and cities. On the one hand, the Romans erected their own buildings over all the Etruscan cities, and on the other, the Etruscans lived mainly in wooden buildings. Only the dead were buried in tufa caves. The Etruscans had a strong belief in life after death, which for them was the beginning of true life. Strengthened and well informed, we set off. We ride along wide paths, which are, however, under water after the night's rain. In the afternoon, we reach the Selva del Lamone, a rustic natural forest. There are huge lava stones everywhere, the result of volcanic eruptions hundreds of thousands of years ago. Lake Bolsena was also formed by volcanic activity back then.



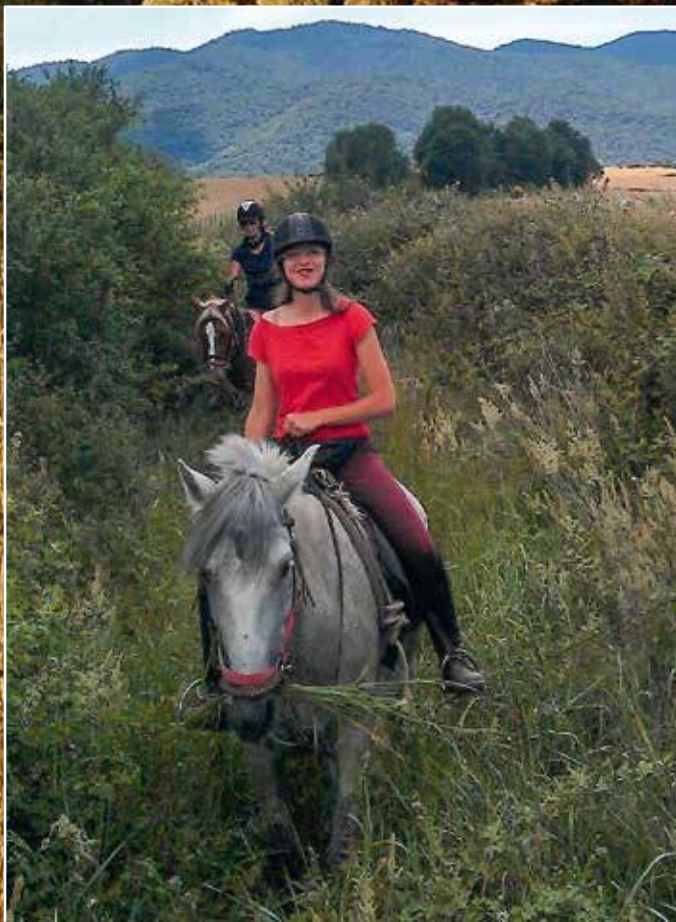
At our destination for the day, we leave the horses in a large paddock at the edge of the forest and drive to the historic town of Farnese, where Napoleon's brother once spent the night. Farnese has an imposing city wall on which numerous swifts nest. The narrow, dark alleyways give us another taste of the Middle Ages. Our centrally located hotel doesn't offer much in the way of comfort, but the chef spoils us heavenly for dinner. The next morning, we continue through the mysterious Selva del Lamone. We follow the notorious "Sentiero dei Briganti", the path of the bandits, and in the dense forest we imagine the highwaymen raiding passing carriages. In fact, we even come across a somewhat wild-looking guy, but he turns out to be a friendly butte-ro. The butteri are the cowboys of the Maremma. He will accompany us today in his typical outfit.

Welcome refreshment

No fear of undergrowth



Riding through vineyards



His saddle, which the Butteri call a "poltrona", or armchair, is particularly impressive - and rightly so. We look enviously at the the large, softly upholstered leather frame and realise that it bears a certain resemblance to a leather armchair. At the end of the forest, a plaque reminds us of two particularly nasty bandits who were photographed before being hanged. The old black and white picture serves as a deterrent. After the dark forest, the bandit trail leads through sunny olive groves and grain fields with views of the Castro mountains. At midday, we reach the ruins of the once important town of Castro, which was completely destroyed in the seventeenth century on the orders of the Pope. The reason for this was the Castrian prince who refused to collect the Pope's taxes. So his city was bombarded from a distant hill and only the remains were left.

During the lunch break, the buttero demonstrates his riding skills and we are all allowed to try out the poltrona. In the afternoon, we enjoy long trotting and cantering stretches and finally arrive at a pretty little castle, the Castel- lo dell' Abbadia. Here we cross the so-called Devil's Bridge, which leads over the idyllic River Fiora. If you are not free of dizziness, you should close your eyes here - it really does go down quite deep, and the cobbled bridge, which curves upwards, is barely more than a metre wide. However, it didn't get its name because riders and their horses fell off here, but because in the Middle Ages it was impossible to understand how the Etruscans could have built such a bridge. Finally, we leave the horses in a large meadow right next to the bridge. After six hours of work, they still have enough energy to gallop wildly across the meadow. We spend the night in a simple guesthouse with a pool. In the restaurant we are spoilt with stone oven pizza and tiramisu.

The next day we ride to the Vulci archaeological park. Vulci was once one of the largest Etruscan cities in Italy and covered an area of around 80 hectares.

covered an area of around 80 hectares. We are accompanied by a guide who rides his Maremmano in appropriate buttero costume. Suddenly, a white goat appears in front of us, which turns out to be a friend of the Maremmano. She accompanies us, or rather the horse, during the three-hour ride through the park. We ride along a road of Roman cobblestones to the ruins of the temple and a huge Roman villa, which we visit. We continue across the river to Etruscan tombs. The largest and most famous is the Tomba Francois, which was rediscovered by a Frenchman in 1857. Wall paintings depict scenes from Greek mythology. After these insights, we continue on to a natural beauty: at one point, the Fiora forms a picturesque lake with a waterfall. The horses splash about exuberantly in the shallow water. After the ride, we look after the horses and decide to take a trip to the sea, twelve kilometres away. We treat ourselves to a delicious ice cream on the long black sandy beach.

The next day, we follow the course of the River Fiora and encounter donkeys, barking hunting dogs and lots of horses, including broodmares with foals. After a few gallops and a picnic in the forest, we continue towards Castro. Tufa walls rise up to the left and right of the path, and it is cool and dark in the gorge. After a long ride through meadows, fields and olive groves, we return to the bandit trail and Farnese.

The last day of riding takes us out of the Selva del Lamone across meadows and fields to Vitozza. We take a break at the castle ruins and look down on around two hundred tufa caves from the Etruscan era. People lived in them until the twentieth century. On this last afternoon, the riding tour lives up to its name - Etruscan Adventure Ride. A steep descent down a slippery, narrow Etruscan path washed out by the rain lies ahead of us. It's a slippery ride, but the horses master this challenge too.

Shady path between tufa walls





Through lush flora



Ancient Etruscan fortress village

challenge. We continue along a muddy path above the River Lente. Compared to the Etruscan path, this is now child's play despite puddles of water, bumps and undergrowth - until suddenly everyone stops. Apparently a thunderstorm has brought down a tree, which is now blocking the narrow path.

Duska is not shaken by this. He uses a machete and handsaw to clear a diversion. After these adventures, a beautiful stretch of road awaits us, along which lies the medieval town of Sorano. The town is enthroned high on the rocks and offers a marvellous view. On another Etruscan road, we ride up into a fragrant forest and through flowering gorse hedges until we reach the stables again. The horses are put out to pasture and we ride to our last accommodation, an idyllic country house where monks used to live. We round off the last evening and our riding adventure in an excellent pizzeria.

My summary of the riding tour: the wild Maremma is something for adventurous riders who don't mind making their way through the undergrowth or riding along narrow Etruscan paths and bumpy Roman roads. However, the majority of the route leads along wide field and forest paths, where long gallops are possible.

Adventure, history and enjoyment await riders on this ride.

Everywhere you go, you are treated to sumptuous meals, as befits a holiday in Italy. The castles and fortresses ride, which leads through the area south of Siena and thus into the typical Tuscan countryside, is somewhat less demanding.

Jessica Kiefer www.equitour.com/etr008.htm

The Etruscans

The mysterious Etruscan people represent the first high civilisation in Italy. Between 1000 BC and 100 BC, they inhabited the regions of today's provinces of Tuscany, Lazio and Umbria.

They were led by noble houses and princely families who built their towns and castles on hills.

The Etruscans reclaimed the land. They drained swamps, cleared forests and built canals. As a result, agriculture and, above all, viticulture flourished, which still symbolises Tuscany today.

The Etruscans are also known for their artefacts such as sculptures, bronze objects and wall paintings.

By trading their treasures, the Etruscans became a rich and powerful people. Their trading partners were the entire Mediterranean region, especially the Greeks and Phoenicians. From the fourth century BC onwards, the Romans increasingly advanced into the Etruscan empire and completely displaced them around 100 BC. However, parts of the Etruscan culture were absorbed into the Roman

Empire.

Most of the Etruscan buildings have been destroyed, but in museums, ancient burial sites and archaeological parks you can still experience the Etruscan culture.

Etruscan culture.



Tuscany and Lazio

Land of the art of living

There are many insider tips in Italy. Not an insider tip, but one of the country's most popular travel destinations is enchanting Tuscany. And this is no coincidence.

People know how to live in Tuscany and neighbouring Lazio. The lovely countryside, the culinary delights, the ancient art treasures, historic towns and villages and the variety of active and relaxing holiday offers attract around fifty million visitors every year. The works of art by Michelangelo, da Vinci, Botticelli and other world-famous historical artists can be found in Florence, Siena and Pisa. The architecture of these cities alone is an excursion through history. Siena offers

twice a year a special equestrian spectacle: the famous Palio, a breakneck horse race
horse race across the Piazza
Piazza del Campo.

The art reflects the historical importance of the region. The region was the heartland of the ancient Etruscan people. The Latin name "Tusci" refers to the current name of the province. The Etruscan land extends as far as Lazio.

In addition to its history, Tuscany offers almost 400 kilometres of coastline with fine sandy beaches and secluded bays. Thermal springs such as those in Bagni San Filippo offer a special bathing experience. The naturally formed rock formations contain pools of water with a temperature of up to 25 degrees, like natural bathtubs.

Tuscany and Lazio are characterised by agriculture. Its first-class wines such as Chianti Classico and Brunello di Montepulciano are world-famous. Huge olive groves produce many varieties of the finest olives. On the coast, fishing dominates with marvellous fish dishes. In the interior, the white Chianina cattle, which are only found in



The Chianinas are the basis for delicious bistecca dishes. Chianinas are the largest cattle in the world and also the oldest breed of cattle in Italy. They have large horns on their foreheads and often live freely on large pastures. They are cared for by butteri, the Italian cowboys who drive the herds in the saddle of their Maremmano horses, sort them

and keep them in check. Thanks to its natural life, the meat of the Chianinas is tasty and of the best quality. If you like, you can watch the work of the Butteri, their horses, the equipment

and wild riding games in special demonstrations in the Maremma.

All the treasures of Tuscany can be found and experienced in the Equitour programmes. In addition to Tuscany, these will take you to other fascinating regions of Italy, insider tips included. tips included.



Maremmano

Maremmans are shepherd horses from the Maremma region in southern Tuscany. They are still used today to herd cattle. In addition to the compact working type, today Maremmans are refined into finer, larger riding and sport horses by crossing with English thoroughbreds. This is why there are two types today: the working horse up to approx. 160 cm and the more elegant riding horse up to 175 cm. Size: 155 to 175 cm at the withers
Conformation: Strong, compact, muscular
Colour: Brown, black
Character: Reliable, willing to perform, patient
Traits: Strong nerves, sure-footed, original
Suitability: Working horse, sport and leisure horse

Photos: Jessica Kiefer, Pixabay/ManualGrafica, John Silver, Gabriele Kärcher



EQUITOUR RIDING PROGRAMME

Equitour offers several programmes in Tuscany: from country estates near Siena with gourmet star rides or optional dressage lessons to riding tours with 3 to 6 riding days through the Maremma and into Lazio. In addition to the beautiful cultural and natural landscape, you will experience the history of the Romans and Etruscans at first hand as you pass castles and ruins. The enjoyment of Italian cuisine is also very important in all programmes. www.equitour.com/italien.htm

Country info Italy



Size: 302,073 km²
Population: 59 million Capital: Rome
Language: Italian
Religion: Predominantly Christian Currency: Euro
Climate: Mediterranean to alpine Best time to visit: All year round, Tuscany: March to November

Germany's



Photo: private

Black Forest



High feelings

Whether in lofty heights, shady gorges, dark pine forests or by glistening lakes - the trails through the Black Forest promote feelings of happiness and health.

Travel report Black Forest Trail

High mountains, deep forests

Jil Dorn saves herself a long journey. She explores her home region on a varied trail ride through the Southern Black Forest Nature Park.



Day 1

After a beautiful ride in bright sunshine, past Black Forest cows and over the Feldberg, I reach the farm, which is idyllically situated in a forest clearing. I receive a friendly welcome from the man of the house and meet my fellow riders. In the evening I have time to look round the farm. Cats run

around the farm. One cat is particularly cuddly and poses to be stroked. The stable is right next to the yard and the paddocks surround the house. The paths for the horses between feed, water troughs and shelter are well thought out. The horses are relaxed and well-trained and enjoy plucking at the hay. The next few days are discussed over dinner with delicious regional cuisine.

Day 2

In the morning, after a hearty breakfast, it's off to the stables to get to know the horses. Today we go for a ride in the surrounding area before setting off on a trail ride lasting several days.

After cleaning and saddling the horses, we ride across fields and through the forest. At a brisk pace, we pass rustic Black Forest huts and a number of wayside crosses. The terrain is hilly, the horses are full of vigour. After the three-hour ride, there is still time in the afternoon to explore the surrounding area, read a book or take a dip in the nearby Kirnbergsee lake. Over a delicious dinner, everyone looks forward to the start of the trail the next morning.



Typical Black Forest farmhouse



Refreshment in the Kirnbergsee





Rest at the Brendturm

Day 3

The first stage takes us through the mountains towards Lenzkirch. We ride at a brisk pace with wonderful gallops across the fields. We are lucky with the weather - the sun shines almost continuously throughout the week. In the forest there are some the horses, which they master skilfully. We feel absolutely safe in the saddle. Our guide, the farm owner, has a story to tell about many places. We stop twice to let the horses graze and also to fortify ourselves. In the evening we reach our destination for the day, a riding centre. As soon as the horses are unsaddled, they roll around happily in the pasture. We riders relax over dinner at the inn opposite our guesthouse. It is located a few hundred metres from the stables and offers more comfort than expected. The rooms are nicely furnished and very clean.

Day 4

On our next ride into the mountains, there are always great panoramic views of the Black Forest and the Feldberg. From the heights, we have a breathtaking view of Lake Titisee, which we now head for. The unspoilt natural landscape awaits us with traditional Black Forest culture awaits us for lunch. From a rustic inn we hear 36

cheerful songs from a men's choir. The singers are true Black Forest originals and we enjoy the musical accompaniment to our lunch. Strengthened, we continue towards Sankt Märgen, where we take the horses to a farm where Black Forest foxes are also kept. After we have looked after the horses, we drive to the inn, in the centre of the village. After a good dinner and a good night's sleep, we look forward to the next ride.

Day 5

Today is a day for mountain fans. From Sankt Märgen we ride towards Furtwangen over the 1150 metre high Brend. At its summit is the Brendturm, a lookout tower, where we take a break. On the rest of the route, we descend again and again to lead the horses up and down the steepest paths.

and downhill. In total, the horses manage around 700 metres in altitude today. A great achievement! We cross slopes and mountain streams at a steady pace. Despite the effort, this day is a lot of fun, as it reveals the unspoilt nature of the Upper Black Forest.

After we have stabled the horses with a farmer, we go to a restaurant where we are spoilt with excellent regional cuisine. Then we fall into bed.

Travelling on six legs



Riding through Titisee-Neustadt



Photos: Jil Dorn, Christine Frel-Häberli

The famous Black Forest foxes



View of the day's destination Titisee



Cosy resting place



Day 6

The last day of our riding tour is already dawning. Despite the fast ride, the horses are as fresh and lively as on the first day. They know, of course, that we are going home. We ride through the valley of the Breg, the longest source river of the Danube. After a lunch break, we follow forest paths framed by wild ferns and finally reach our home farm, where we are greeted with joyful neighing. Somewhat wistfully, we unsaddle, groom and feed the horses the horses one last time. We chat about our riding adventure over a delicious dinner and round off the day with a glass of wine.

Day 7

After breakfast, everyone heads home with fond memories. At some point I am asked what the date is and realise that I have completely lost track of time. That's a sure sign of a successful holiday.

Jil Dorn

www.equitour.com/gircav.htm

Happy riders and horses



Black Forest

Between mysticism and tradition

It's not just the Bollenhut and cuckoo clock that are part of the Black Forest tradition, but also the myths and legends that spring from the dense fir forests. Visitors appreciate the secrets of the Black Forest as much as its natural landscapes.

The darkness of the forests gave the Black Forest its name. But where there is a lot of shadow, there is also a lot of light. With picturesque villages, ancient farms, idyllic lakes and sunny ski resorts, Germany's largest low mountain range is a popular holiday and excursion destination at any time of year.

Excursion destination Hohenschramberg castle ruins



Famous from the Black Forest cuckoo clock

Mystical: the Günterfelsen



38

Visitors are not put off by legends about ghosts, witches and demons - on the contrary. Castle ruins, deserted places and mystical natural phenomena are special attractions. In the Black Forest, you can also embark on a journey through time. Heritage museums familiarise you with old craftsmanship - especially woodworking - historic town centres convey the charm of times gone by, as do castles and fortresses. Experience the lost slowness of travelling in a horse-drawn sleigh or in the saddle.

Of course, you will also find all kinds of active holidays in the Black Forest, from water sports to winter sports. Culinary delicacies such as Black Forest ham, rösti or Black Forest gâteau with plenty of kirsch are world-famous. Along the Rhine, the mountains of the Black Forest from Basel to Baden Baden merge into extensive orchards and vineyards. There is even more culinary and scenic variety here. Hikers can find chilled drinks in schnapps and beer fountains along the way and farm shops offer seasonal fruit, eggs, cheese and much more from their own production. Without the many small farmers, most of whom keep cattle and goats on the side, there would be no flowering meadows, which are just as typical as the deep pine forests.

Whether in the tranquil Northern Black Forest National Park or in the spectacular heights of the Southern Black Forest Nature Park - the unspoilt natural landscapes invite you to go on extended hikes or horse riding tours.

The latter are offered by Equitour. Explore the heights and depths of the southern Black Forest on horseback.



Blondes favoured

The Black Forest chestnut is famous in the region. A very pretty cold-blooded horse that is suitable for riding and driving and is still used for forestry work in many places in the Black Forest. Sleigh rides through the winter forest with the tinkling bells on the harness and the flowing mane of the "Wälder", as the locals affectionately call them, are unforgettable. The home and headquarters of the breeding association is Sankt Märgen.

Every three years, breeders and lovers of the breed celebrate the Rossfest with a breeding show and parades. In winter, when there is enough snow, an open-breed sledge race takes place, where the foxes show that they can also turn on the heat.



Beautiful views

Black Forest Fox profile

Size:	145 to 153 cm height
Conformation:	Stocky, muscular, stocky
Colour:	Dark chestnut with light mane, rarely bay and grey
Character:	Good-natured, strong nerves,
uncomplicated Characteristics:	Lively, hard-working, versatile
Suitability:	Riding, driving, forestry work
Breed brand:	

Centuries-old Black Forest farm



EQUITOUR RIDING PROGRAMME

Equitour has a programme of riding tours lasting three to seven days for experienced riders. The Black Forest heights offer breathtaking panoramas. A short holiday with star rides allows time for further excursions in the Black Forest. You will be spoilt with Black Forest delicacies and stay in cosy guesthouses and inns.
www.equitour.com/deutschland/htm

Country info Baden-Württemberg



Size:	35,751 km²
Population:	11 million
Capital:	Stuttgart
Language:	German
Religion:	Predominantly Christian
Currency:	Euro
Climate:	Temperate with differences depending on altitude
Best time to visit:	All year round

Marbach Stud Farm



A feel-good place for horses

Thoroughbred, warmblood and cold-blooded horses of the greatest beauty and best quality are at home in the idyllic Swabian Alb: at the Marbach Main and State Stud Farm.

The fact that the horses thrive so well in Marbach is due on the one hand to the altitude of the stud farm with its fresh air and extensive herb-rich mountain pastures, and on the other hand to the qualified and loving care. For all members of the stud, work is first and foremost their livelihood and only secondly their livelihood.

The stud was founded in 1573, making it the oldest state stud in Germany. At that time, warmblood and cold-blooded horses were bred for use in agriculture and forestry, for noble houses and for war service. To this day, the entire complex exudes charm and tradition. Historic stables and administration buildings have been complemented by modern breeding and sports facilities. The buildings blend harmoniously into the park-like surroundings with their mature trees.

Marbach is home to four important breeds. As the state stud of Baden-Württemberg, it is the main breeding centre for Württemberg warmbloods. In addition to the modern sport horse, the heavy old Württemberger, which corresponds to the type of the old working horse, is also preserved. Before mechanisation, it was known as the "master and farmer", as it pulled the plough on weekdays and the family carriage on Sundays.

The roots of the Black Forest cold-blooded horse go back centuries to the monasteries of St. Margen, St. Peter and St. Blasien in the Upper Black Forest. Warm-blooded and cold-blooded horses were native, indigenous breeds.

Arabian horses were added much later. King Wilhelm I. (1816-1864) learnt about the loyalty, hardiness and frugality of the Arabian thoroughbred during the Napoleonic campaigns. He founded the first Arabian breed in Weil near Esslingen, which grew by importing the best breed representatives from the Orient.

from the Orient. Due to the economic crisis, the Weil stud had to be closed in 1932 and the noble horses were relocated to Marbach. At the time, nobody could have guessed that the thoroughbred Arabian herd, with its grace and exotic flavour, would become a special attraction.

exoticism would become a special attraction, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors.

Horse lovers travel to Marbach, especially in autumn, because it is the time of the big stallion parades. The original presentation of the breeding stallions has now become a big horse festival for the whole family. The Marbach stallions are still presented under saddle and in teams, as well as shows such as the Hungarian Post and Marbach's world-famous Silver Herd of thoroughbred Arabians.





100 years of the Marbach Stallion Parade

The stallions have been parading for the public at the Main and State Stud Marbach since 1925. In this anniversary year, visitors can look forward to historical and contemporary displays that impressively showcase the different eras of horse breeding and equestrian art. Uncomplicated and robust representatives of the endangered horse breeds Altwürt-temberger and Schwarzwälder Kaltblut are once again enjoying increasing popularity.

Dates:

**28 Sept, 03 and
05 October 2025**

**Advance ticket sales via
EasyTicketService**

Facts and figures about the stud farm

Germany's oldest and largest state stud first mentioned in a document in 1514

Location: Marbach near Gomadingen, Baden-Württemberg, altitude: 700 metres above sea level

Breeding stallions of the breeds Thoroughbred Arabian, Württemberger, Old Württemberger, Black Forest cold blood

Herds of mares: Arabian, Württemberger

Largest training centre for horse farmers Top-class

breeding and sporting events **Info:**

<https://hul.landwirtschaft-bw.de/>

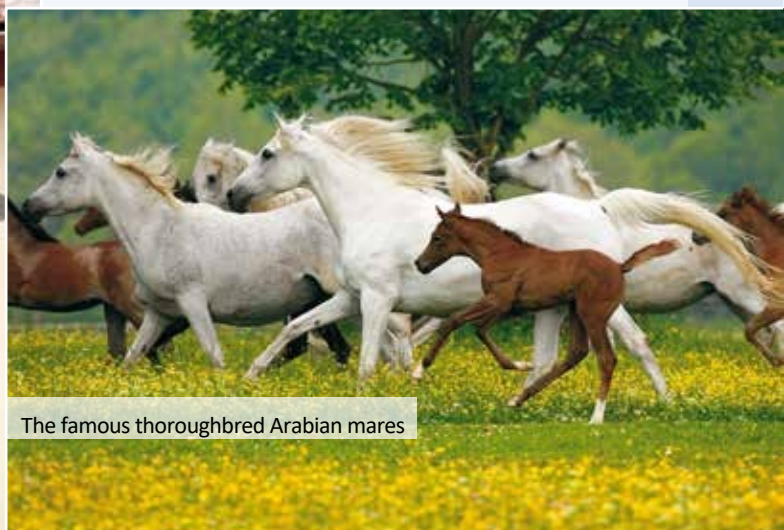
The stars of Marbach



Marbach state stud stallion Lemberger by Locksley II-Gardez



Marbach's landmark: the mare fountain



The famous thoroughbred Arabian mares



On the rise again: the Black Forest cold blood

Interview with Gabriele Boiselle

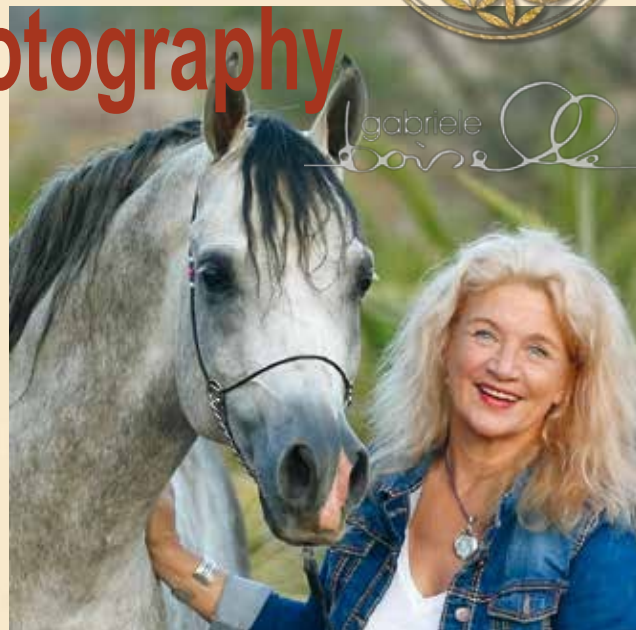


40 years of horse photography

Boiselle calendars are in a class of their own. Everyone involved in the equestrian scene, from pony girls to Olympic champions, knows the unmistakable annual companions of legendary photographer Gabriele Boiselle. This year, Edition Boiselle is celebrating its fortieth anniversary. Time to take a look back at the history of the edition and its famous founder.

Dear Gabriele Boiselle, you are known worldwide for your creative and sensitive equine photography. How did your unique career begin?

With the love of horses that I felt in me as a small child. I probably inherited my 7th sense for them from my grandfather, who lived in Speyer and was always consulted when someone had problems with their working horses. I got my sense for photography from my father, who was an architect. And the energy to assert myself and set up my own publishing house I got from my mother, who was an entrepreneur. All of that, plus my incredible curiosity my incredible curiosity and thirst for adventure, that made me set off the whole world to follow the horses with my camera.



When and how did you come into contact with horses? As I said, my grandfather had working horses and I've always been drawn to animals. I couldn't walk yet when he put me on horseback.

How many horses do you own? And which is your favourite horse? I've had horses of my own for over 50 years, I'm a fifth-generation breeder of Trakehner blood, but horses keep jumping into my pocket that I have to take with me. I sometimes get other wonderful horses as gifts, like Essnabi, my Berber stallion from the King of Morocco. He loves my photography and wanted to make me happy.

My soul horse, however, was the Trakehner stallion Falkenwind, who has accompanied me for 37 years of my life. He was born into my arms and he died in my arms. He was my good spirit and my haven of peace. But he was also challenging, spirited and felt his way into me.

We were connected in a special way that only real horse people understand.

Who works in your team?

Without the people who have actively supported me, I would never have been able to set up Edition Boiselle and produce hundreds of thousands of calendars worldwide. In the heyday of the calendar market, I had more than



Connected forever:
Gabriele and Falkenwind

ten employees and other assistants. Today I've downsized the edition, making fewer calendars but more books. Anette Harenberg is my rock in the edition and Sandra Hoffmann is in charge of the picture archive.

You travelled the world in search of horses and motifs. Do you have a favourite country?

Everywhere I am at the moment, all over the world, that is the centre of my feelings and work. But I feel most at home where the horses are doing well. In Iceland, I breathe freedom with the wind coming over the glaciers, where the horses live outside and are independent. In Argentina, the horses live in large herds and roam the pampas. The young Lipizzaner stallions gallop across the mountain pastures of Styria. I think I was once a horse myself in a previous life, and I still long for freedom and variety today.

Which horses make the best photo models? And which is your personal favourite breed?

Without question, the Arabian horses are the models among the horses. Their "grace & beauty" is unrivalled, which is why my very first Arabian book had this title many years ago. It is not for nothing that I have been publishing the calendar "Fascination of Arabian Horses" for forty years and travelling to the furthest corners of the earth to pay homage to them. But actually, every horse in front of my camera is the best model, and I always find perspectives and vibes to make them look alive and beautiful.

I love cold-blooded horses and of course the Friesians. I love all horses, the old and the wise, the shy and the strong. They are so human together with their people. It's a joy to experience this and to be able to express it in photos.

What is the secret of good horse photography?

SIMPLY, the love that you put into your work, into every shoot, into every horse, into every moment.

Your photos express the soul of the horses. How do you manage that?

I connect my own soul with that of the horse. I ask this being for permission to do it and wait for me to feel its energy. Then I forget everything that is rationally buzzing around in my "professional head" and allow myself to be guided, touched and inspired. Then it becomes completely calm inside me and I forget my environment . . . and I am happy. It is this feeling of happiness that still guides and directs me today and won't let me stop.

You have also taken photos for Equitour Equestrian Travel. Which countries have you travelled to for Equitour?

It started 35 years ago with Iceland, went on to Hungary and America, France, Turkey and South Africa, Australia and South America and so on.

What do your photo seminars and photo trips mean to you?

It is a great need and a great satisfaction for me to take other people and photographers with me into my personal world of horses. These photo seminars take everyone who takes part out of the normal world. We immerse ourselves in the energy of horses, we recharge our inner batteries of happiness and feeling in the company of horses. It's not about riding and it's not about sport. It's about seeing and feeling. It's about opening your heart and finding that silver cord that connects us to the horses. Anyone can find it who really wants to, who can surrender, without photographic ambitions, without rational expectations. Anyone who lets go can get into the flow. The beautiful photos then come naturally.

Do you organise regular photo seminars?

Yes, for example the annual photo trip to the white beauties in Lipica. The photo seminar at the Main and State Stud Marbach is just as firmly planned. I'm always at the state studs in Europe because I can photograph large herds there and follow the young stallions as they play with the camera. In autumn, I will be giving photo seminars at the Friesengestüt Oberurff and the Arabian Stud Ismer. If you sign up for the newsletter on my website, you'll find out all the latest dates.

Are there any new projects we can look forward to?

40 years of horse photography - still unbelievable for me! I've seen so much in this equine universe, and yet I still feel the urge to see and discover much more. I have put my heart and soul into my book: "Pferdefotografie aus Leidenschaft" ("Passionate Horse Photography"), which captures my life, some adventures and profound experiences in words and pictures. There are still many plans, perhaps even projects

with Equitour. It remains exciting and lively, so I feel ready for further adventures in the equestrian universe.

Thank you very much, Mrs Boisselle, and I wish you continued joy and success in your dream job!

The interview
was
conducted by
Gabriele Kärcher

Edition Boisselle
www.boisselle-shop.de



Happy learning: Seminar participants with Gabriele





India

Reality

You can hardly describe India, you have to feel it. The magic of the country lies in beliefs and myths, in the profound eyes of children, in chaos and silence and, last but not least, in unrivalled riding experiences.



and fantasy



On Marwaris through Mewar



It feels like riding through a fairytale land, leading Julia Frey from one moment of wonder to the next.

February in Switzerland. We flee from the long winter to the warmth of Rajasthan. Bright sunshine and a mild breeze greet us in Udaipur. The view from the hotel's roof terrace is stunning: not far away is the magnificent city palace, which is splendidly illuminated in the evening. To accompany the breathtaking panorama, the chef serves us a selection of Indian delicacies including a sugar-sweet dessert.

Our group consists of seven riders: Sandra and Leni, two German girls who are doing a voluntary social year in Delhi, Marianne and Ludwig, a German couple, Jai from Ireland, and Reni and I from Switzerland.

Before heading to the horse farm of our hosts Ute and Virendra the next day, Ute shows us the sights of the region. We take a boat trip on the reservoir Lake Jaisamand and visit the impressive temple complex of Jagat.

At the farm, we are welcomed by the whole team in the Indian way: everyone is given a bindi, a red coloured patch on the forehead that brings good luck, and a fragrant flower necklace.





View from the roof terrace



The farm - a horse paradise

Four comfortable tents in the style of the hunting and safari camps of the Maharajas have been set up and will be our accommodation during the riding tour. A support vehicle transports the camp and luggage from place to place.

Over a buffet lunch, we discuss the tour and the distribution of horses. All the horses are Marwaris, recognisable by the characteristic sickle shape of their ears. I immediately feel at home in the saddle of the dark brown mare Kirti, who moves forward diligently. The name Kirti means glory and recalls the glorious history of the noble Marwari horses.

A dazzling peacock flies majestically over our group of riders. I take this as a good omen, as the peacock is the heraldic animal of Rajasthan. As we continue our ride, we come across a whole herd of camels, driven by a single young boy. We respectfully make way, as camels have the right of way. After the first riding day full of colourful impressions, we sink into our pillows in anticipation of further adventures.

A chai tea, scrambled eggs and toast get me ready for the day in the saddle the next morning. The five-hour ride takes us through rural Rajasthan, past green wheat fields in which the women's colourful saris shine like gemstones.

Palm trees sway in the wind. This is followed by dust-dry earth, then another small green plot - a sign that the soil here is irrigated.

India is a country of contrasts, as we experience again and again in the days that follow. We are the attraction in the small villages. Children come running up, shouting "Dada", which means "Hello", laughing and waving, followed by their mothers, who greet us with a friendly "Namaste", or by the whole family, who marvel at us, because strangers rarely stray into this area.

All the better for us, as we get the chance to experience authentic India.



At every turn, we encounter sacred cows, respectful water buffaloes, colourful goats, sheep, pigs and more. The ride through Indian rural life is like travelling back in time: Ox carts, flails and hand sickles are still in daily use in India. Weeds are plucked by hand, grain is harvested with a sickle and arranged in sheaves. Whole families can often be seen in the fields: the young women at work, the older ones looking after the children in the shade. Even though life in the countryside is hard and arduous

we see contentment and joie de vivre on their faces - something that we often lack in our modern but hectic everyday lives, which makes me think.

In the afternoon, we drive to Bambora Karni Fort, a mighty castle complex that has been converted into a four-star hotel. We take a refreshing dip in the pool, which is lined with four water-spouting marble elephants.

Over the next few days, there are always additional programmes, such as a ride on an oxcart or a performance by musicians and dancers around the campfire. The "show" that nature has to offer is also impressive: We camp by a large lake populated by countless water birds, from great crested grebes, ducks and herons to the elegant Sarus cranes, which grow up to 1.70 metres

- taller than me. But the stars of the animal ensemble are undoubtedly the pink flamingos, which elegantly stalk through the shallow water. As the flock rises into the sky and passes over our camp as a pink cloud, I feel like I'm in a fairy tale from 1001 Nights. The whole thing is crowned by a golden-red sunset on the palm-fringed lake - almost too cheesy to be true.

During the day, we are also surrounded by a wide variety of flora and fauna: emerald green parrots, iridescent blue kingfishers, mongooses and chipmunks scurrying away with their tails up. We even see Nilgai antelopes, the largest antelopes in India, also known as "blue cows".

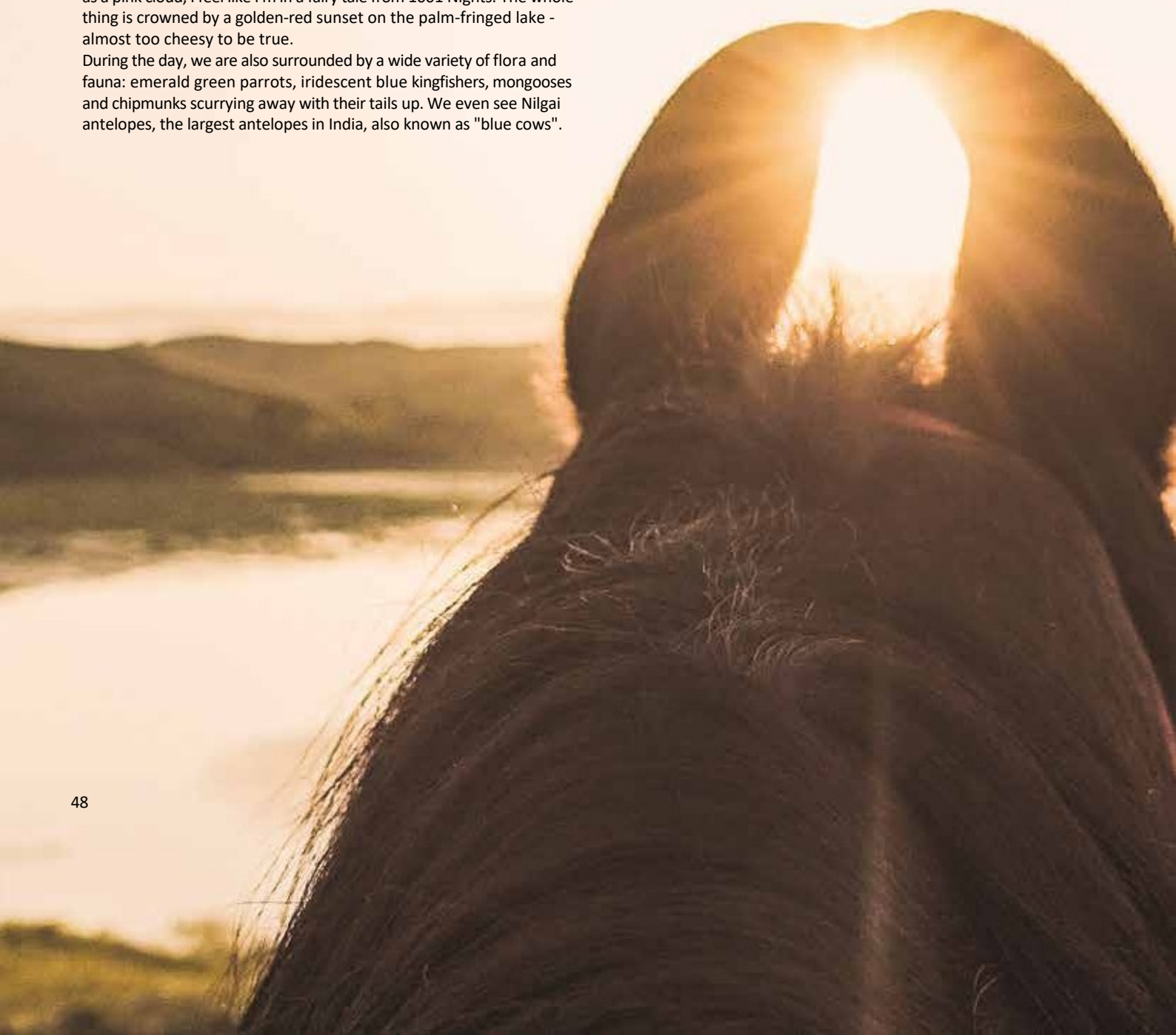
Then there are the orange blossoming flame trees and the delicate blossoms of the mango trees, bright white opium poppy fields for the strictly limited opium production, lush vegetable gardens with aubergines, tomatoes, chilli, cotton and mustard fields.

Bougainvillea, pink oleander and purple hibiscus bloom along the roadside. Our winter-weary eyes greedily soak up the bright summer colours.

The sure-footed horses carry us through the stony foothills of the Aravalli Mountains and across the fertile Malwa Plain to the sandy, savannah-like

sandy, savannah-like landscape, which is ideal for marvellous gallops. One day's ride takes us to the Sita-Mata nature reserve, which is home to leopards, gazelles and antelopes. Unfortunately, we don't see any of these shy animals, but all the more Hanuman monkeys, who are delighted with the remains of our lunch picnic. Hardly any spot in India is deserted, even on dirt roads we come across motorbikes - with at least four people on them, all without helmets, but with waving saris, the driver on his mobile phone.

We come across tractors decorated more colourfully than any Christmas tree, with dazzling tinsel, strings of flowers, bells, bows, ribbons and pom-poms, accompanied by booming Hindi techno music.



At one point, an old man with a red turban approaches on a rickety bicycle. He dismounts, folds his hands, bows and greets us with "Namaste". Small children at the side of the road wave to us with bright eyes, naked children being soaped by their mothers at the village well, women carrying jugs of water or bundles of green fodder on their heads. It is encounters and moments like these that make this trip so appealing to me, apart from the overwhelming cultural and religious heritage of this country.

We gain an insight into the world of the Hindu gods. The elephant-headed Ganesha, who brings good luck, the monkey god Hanuman, Krishna, Shiva, Vishnu and his consort Laksmi, the goddess of wealth, look down on us as temple sculptures or stick to the dashboard of taxis as miniature figurines. Practised religiosity is an integral part of everyday life in India. I was struck by a scene in the city,

where a woman gives a cow something to eat and bows to it briefly before continuing on her way.

On the penultimate day of riding, I change horses as Kirti is brought back to the farm early due to a slight swelling in the girth area. I get Kajal, a pretty grey mare and a real life insurance policy.

She is

completely fright-proof - the ride through the bustling little town

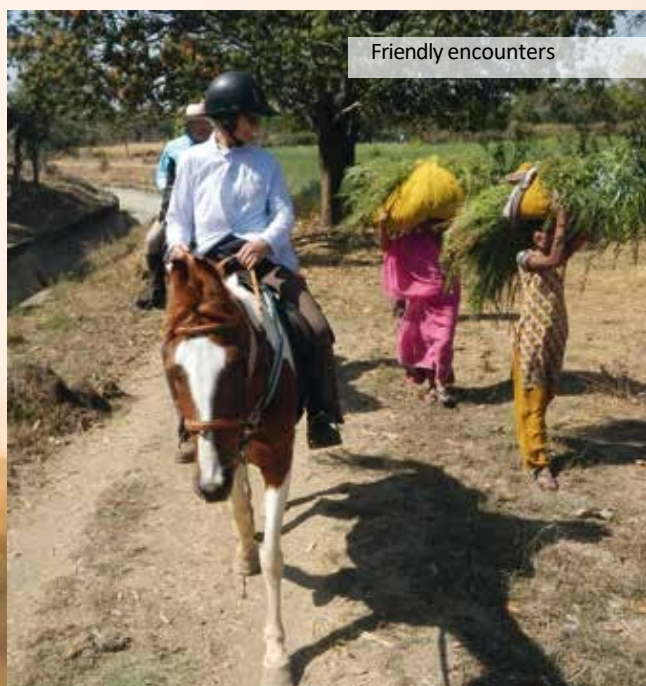
Barisadri, across the crowded market square and through the chaotic, noisy traffic leaves her completely cold. Even a wild cow - chased by a barking dog - coming straight at me and running just past my horse doesn't upset Kajal. What luck!

Our last ride ends at the camp on the banks of a pond. In the evening, we sit around the campfire under a full moon and feel a very special atmosphere.

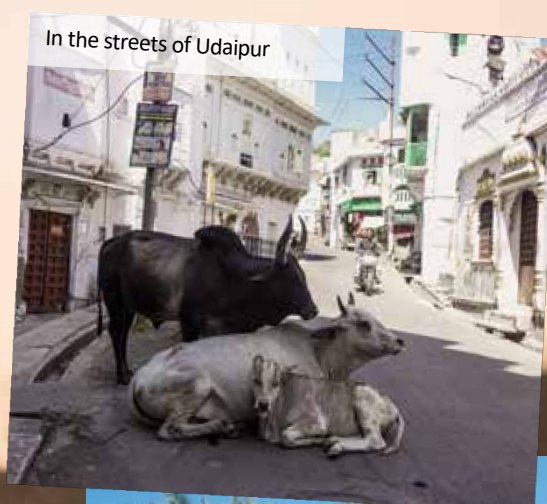
The horses are allowed to go home, and on the last day we visit one of India's most beautiful fortresses in Chittorgarh. Enthroned on a huge rocky plateau, the city is home to numerous palaces, over 120 temples and shrines as well as fascinating myths and legends.

In the evening, we review the experiences of the last nine days over a farewell dinner at the hotel in Udaipur. Reni and I spend a few more days in India before flying back to the cold, grey Swiss winter. But our suitcases are full of Indian souvenirs and our hearts are filled with the colours, sun and joie de vivre of India.

Julia Frey www.equitour.com/inm010.htm



Friendly encounters



In the streets of Udaipur

Riding through the palm grove



Flamingo show over the camp



India



Land of magic

India is a country, a subcontinent and a world of its own that stimulates all the senses. Those who find access to this universe will be enchanted for life.

In the north, the mightiest mountain massif towers into the sky; in the centre, mountains, deserts, jungles and steppes alternate, with forests, fields, villages and cities in between, bursting with life and creating animated hidden object images in the mind. The south is subtropically hot, palm trees, beaches and sultry air slow down activities and offer relaxation and meditation. Rajasthan is the state of the Rajputs, the knights and princes, and thus also the land of the most magnificent forts and palaces. Every city claims to have the most beautiful palace in India. Richly decorated temples are adorned with delicately carved sculptures of Hindu gods, flowers and sacred animals.

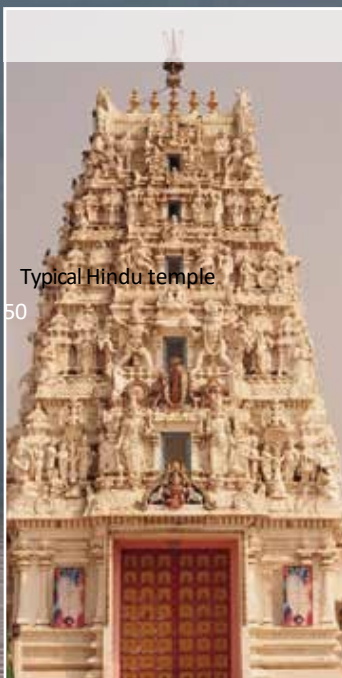
Bright colours abound in flower-filled gardens, ornate paintings, textiles such as blankets, shawls and saris, fruits and spices in the markets, on buses, lorries and tractors adorned with glittering kitsch and painted in bright colours.

and painted in bright colours through the streets. More tranquillity can be found in the nature reserves of Rajasthan. A touch of Jungle Book hangs over the tiger reserve Ranthambore, where hordes of monkeys scamper through the ruins of temples, an abundance of wild animals roam the forests and even the king of the jungle, the majestic tiger, makes an appearance, quickening the pulse of awestruck visitors. Less thrills, but special adventures are offered by elephants and camels, which are available for somewhat different riding experiences. Tourists can ride decorated elephants to the magnificent Amer Fort in Jaipur.

Camel safaris into the Thar desert are organised from Jodhpur. If you want to stay on horseback, the best place to go is Udaipur, the city of horses. Here, the Indian Marwari horses are available for the Equitour riding programmes.

Sari - the clothing of Indian women

Typical Hindu temple



Marwari

For Indians, horses are divine creatures. Rajasthan's horse breed is unique and rare: the Marwari horse. The breed is recognisable to everyone by the crescent-shaped ears that touch at the tips.

Marwaris are slender, elegant horses with a proud bearing, courage and enormous stamina. Some have the Revaal, a gait similar to the tölt. Size:

145 to 165 cm height

Conformation: Long-legged, slender, high erection

Colour: All colours

Character: Self-confident, intelligent, reliable Traits:

Enduring, robust

Suitability: Trail riding, leisure riding

EQUITOUR RIDING PROGRAMME

On both Equitour riding programmes, you will experience the cultural and scenic highlights of Rajasthan on typical Marwari horses. In February, you will travel through the diverse Mewar region. In November, you will visit the traditional full moon festival and camel market in Pushkar. Hospitality, the finest cuisine and luxury included. www.equitour.com/india.htm

Country info India



Size: 3,287,000 km²

Population: 1.43 billion Capital:

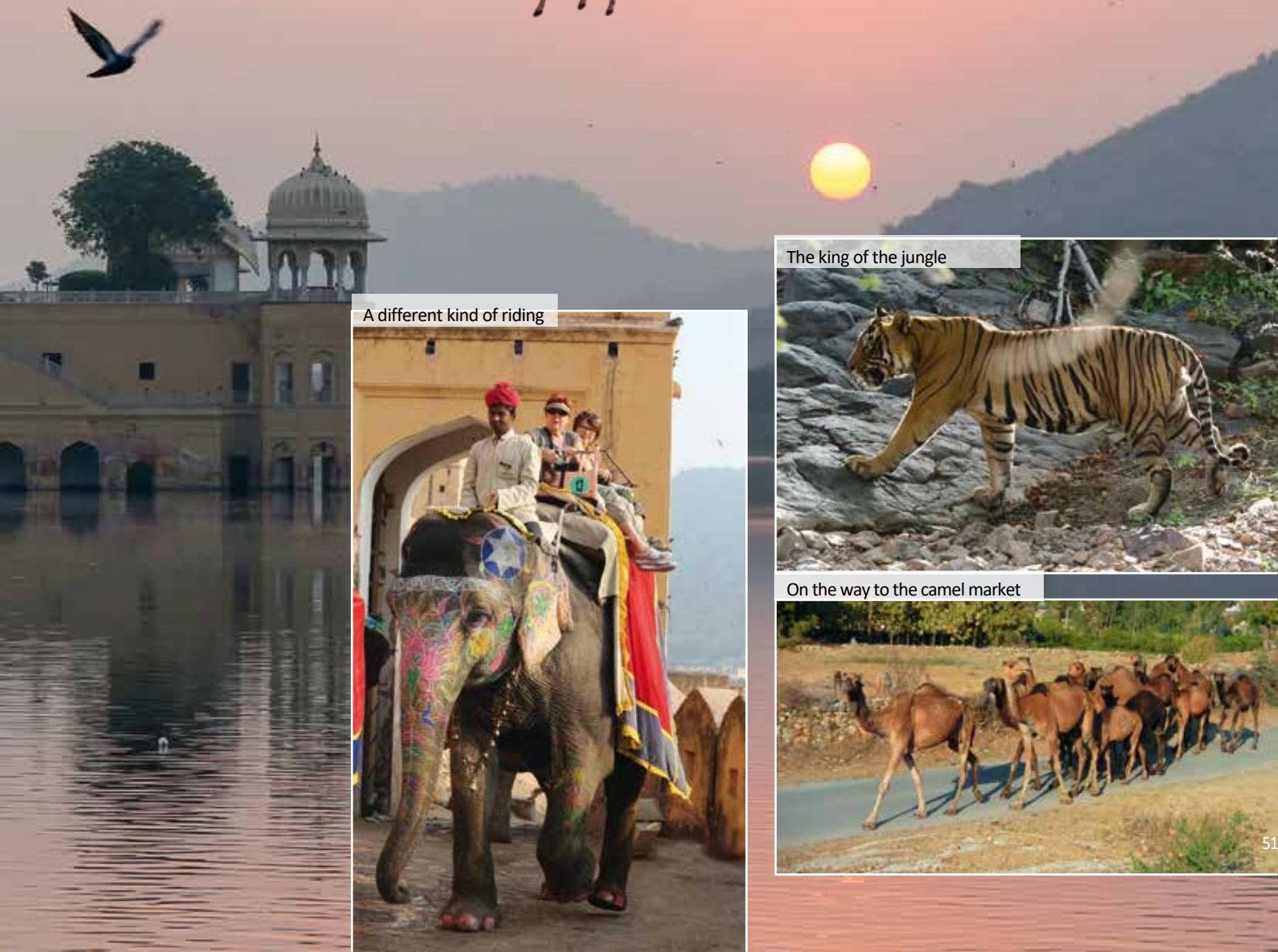
New Delhi

Language: Hindi, English, 21 other official languages Religion: Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhs, Buddhism, Jain

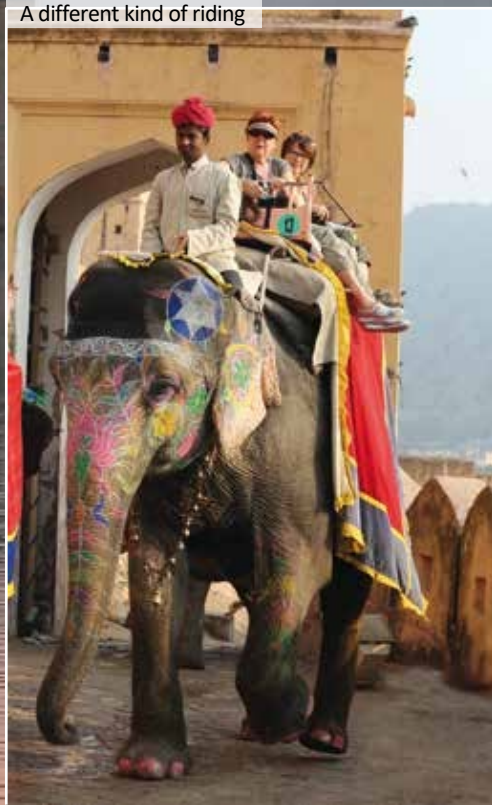
Currency: Rupees

Climate: North: subtropical, south tropical Best

time to visit: all year round



A different kind of riding



The king of the jungle



On the way to the camel market



Interview with Ute Peterskovsky

In love with Rajasthan

Little Aisha - Ute's favourite
horse
favourite horse

Ute actually only wanted to train horses in India for a while. In this interview, she tells us what became of it.



Have you ever thought about emigrating and how did it come about?

I didn't think about emigrating directly, but I've always enjoyed travelling and went to India in 2002 to look after the horses of the Maharana's uncle in Udaipur for a year. There I fell in love with the Marwaris, bought a horse of my own and soon realised that I didn't want to leave. In addition, I met my future husband Virendra and we dreamed of a future together with horses. In 2005, we bought a farm and three horses and started Princess Trails.

How was it to be accepted into the Indian family?

In India, it is difficult to live together if you are not married. So we decided to get married. In India, it's not two people who get married, but two families. Virendra's family, an old aristocratic family, wanted to see their son married in keeping with his status. I didn't fit in. So we were on our own for the first few years. It was only when our son Jai was born that my parents-in-law accepted our marriage and we finally moved in with my parents-in-law in the family home.

Despite certain rules, I had my freedom. Many Indian women spend their time after marriage on housework, cooking and children. That wasn't the case for me, as I was travelling a lot with the safaris. After family tensions, I was happy when we moved to the farm. Living with the horses was the best thing for me. But the extended family is important. It's the social network that you spend a lot of time with.

What was it like with the Indian food? Do you get used to the spiciness?

Yes, of course. My mother-in-law taught me how to cook Indian food. She is an excellent cook. We also cook a lot of Indian food on our safaris, and most of the riders like it. You can adjust the spiciness.



India is one of the most exotic destinations in the Equitour programme. What makes it so fascinating for you?

The mixture of different cultures and the contrasts. India is chaotic, dirty, loud, but also infinitely wise. In the temples and villages, time seems to have stood still.

to have stood still. Life is determined by the monsoon and the seasons. And by astrology. People only get married, celebrate, buy or travel when the stars are in favour. At the same time, India is a high-tech country.

The majority of people are united by Hinduism, but there is also a Muslim minority, Indian Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, etc., all of whom live peacefully together. And they mostly all live together peacefully. I have rarely met such warm, hospitable people as the Indians. They are the ones who make India so special.

Are there any other breeds apart from the noble Marwaris, and what are horses used for in India?

India has many horse breeds. The best known are the Marwari and Kathiawari horses, which are named after their Marwar (Rajasthan) and Kathiawar (Gujarat) are named after their areas of origin. Horses arrived in the country with the Indo-Aryans and later with the Muslim conquerors. Thanks to their cavalry they were able to conquer almost all of India. The Muslims brought oriental horses with them and opened up a lively trade. More horses arrived from Central Asia. Horse markets emerged, which still exist today. However, horses were expensive luxury goods and therefore reserved for the nobility. Farmers worked with oxen, camels and donkeys. This is why the horse is still regarded today as a noble animal that is not used for ordinary labour. When the British colonised India, they put an end to the transcontinental horse trade and brought their own horses into the country instead. Australian horses were imported for the Indian heavy cavalry, as local horses were too fine and ornamental.

local horses were too fine and delicate. Thus began the decline of the Marwaris and Kathiawaris. There were only a few cavalry units that still relied on them and the nobles also started buying British horses. When India became independent, no one had money for horses. It was only interest in horses returned with the onset of tourism. The search for good horses for breeding was painstaking. Today there are breeders and breeding associations again.

How do your horses live? Do you have a favourite horse?

Our horses live in a herd during the day and in paddocks at night. Good horse husbandry is important to us because it creates balanced and healthy horses. In the morning

Ute and stallion Ekling Baksh in the farm's natural lake...



... where the horses can also enjoy themselves freely

and in the evenings our horses are given concentrated feed and roughage, occasionally alfalfa.

We have bred many of the horses ourselves, but we have bought a few more. Aisha was born in 2014. She is the granddaughter of my foundation mare Ashtami. Aisha is particularly close to me because I bred her mother and father myself. She is very ambitious and prefers to go in front.

The Marwaris and Kathiawaris are honest and clear-headed. They are great trail horses because they are sure-footed and hard-working. They like to go forwards and love nothing more than a fast canter. Nevertheless, they are always manageable.

Why is India definitely worth a visit and is there any other tip for travellers?

Just because of the great horses! But of course the country itself is also interesting. If you want to see nature, I can recommend the Ranthambore or Sariska National Park. The Taj Mahal in Agra and the Palace of the Winds in Jaipur are always worth a visit. But the defiant forts of Jodhpur or Chittorgarh are also worth a visit. And an absolute favourite place of mine is the Jain temple in Ranakpur.

Many thanks dear Ute!

The interview was conducted by Jessica Kiefer



Ute takes the guests to the camel market in Pushkar

Chief Joseph Trailride

The long journey of the Nez Percé

Gabriele Kärcher spends many years in the vastness of the American prairie. In Idaho, she joins a historic memorial ride.



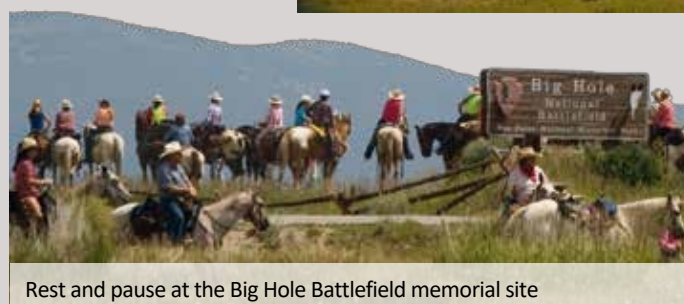
Silence lies over the Big Hole Battlefield in western Montana. An eerie silence in the face of the bare teepee poles of an abandoned Nez Percé Indian camp. A group of riders appears on the mountainside, all on more or less colourful Appaloosas. There are more and more of them. The whole column is almost a kilometre long and crawls like a speckled snake towards the Indian village. A week earlier and 100 miles further north, 180 men, women and young people have swung themselves into the saddles of their Appaloosas to follow in the footsteps of the last free Nez-Percé chief Chief Joseph and his troop of brave tribal members. Their odyssey was 1,170 miles long and began on 15 June 1877 in their native Wallowa Valley in the state of Oregon.

At the time, the US government ordered the Plains Indians to reservations, but Chief Joseph and 700 followers refused to give up their freedom and fled from the US cavalry, heading for Canada. The flight of the Nez Percé lasted three and a half months. It led over mountain ranges, endless prairies and through Yellowstone Park. The fugitives were unable to enjoy the beauty of nature, as hunger and battles weakened and decimated the group. Barely 40 miles from their final destination, the Canadian border, the remaining 500 Indians were captured by US troops. After a last desperate fight, 5 October 1877 Chief Joseph had to surrender and lay down his arms and surrender to village soldiers.

Abandoned Indian



A 100 kilometre ride every year



Rest and pause at the Big Hole Battlefield memorial site

The sad fate of the Nez Percé is less well known in this country than their horse breeding, as their name is inextricably linked to the Appaloosa. The Nimi'ipuu, as the tribe calls itself, owned one of the largest herds of horses on the continent. The white settlers took a liking to the spotted specimens in particular and named them Palousey, Appalousey and finally Appaloosa after the Palouse region where they lived. As early as 1938, the Appaloosa Horse Club (ApHC) was founded, which was dedicated not only to the breeding of the breed but also to its history and thus to the Nez Percé tribe.

In 1965 - 88 years after Chief Joseph's surrender - a group of Appaloosa riders set off for the first time on his dramatic escape. his dramatic escape. The Chief Joseph Trailride was born. Since then, the route has been travelled in thirteen annual stages on the back of purebred Appaloosas.

Every summer, Appaloosa and Nez Percé enthusiasts meet up to cover a hundred-mile section of the trail in a week. Riders and horses from all over the world take part. The only condition: Horses must be Appaloosas registered with the ApHC. Despite the tragic background, the Chief Joseph Trailride is today a happy and conciliatory event in which members of the Nez Percé also take part.

In addition to the historical significance, each stage offers overwhelming natural experiences. Starting in the green, fertile Wallowa Valley in Oregon, the trail leads over mountain ranges and canyons of the Rockies to Idaho and Montana, where it passes through forests, the famous Yellowstone National Park and finally over the endless prairies of the American West.

West. 15 to 25 miles are travelled each day, which means six to seven hours in the saddle. Tents and luggage are taken to the next camp by ApHC support vehicles. camp. And sometimes riders who have overestimated themselves and want to give their backsides a day's rest. a day's rest. However, most of the participants are die-hard repeat offenders who have already ridden several stages of the Nez Percé Trail.

The entire event is a masterpiece of organisation. Catering for horses and riders, luggage transport, route planning, permits, evening programme - ApHC members manage all of this routinely and confidently. A doctor, a vet and a farrier ride along in case of emergencies.

At the camp, there are water basins for the horses and cold drinks for the riders when the head of the column reaches the camp. The participants conscientiously take care of the horses before they think about their own refreshment. While the horses recover from their long march, the participants head out for a barbecue and country dance in the evening after a short field shower.

The highlight of the last day is a solemn Indian ceremony. Tribal members recall the sad history of their ancestors with haunting words, sometimes in their own language.

At the end of the annual stage, the participants, who have become good friends, say goodbye. This is exactly where they will meet again next year and saddle up their Appis for the next section of the route.

Gabriele Kärcher



Only Appaloosas may participate



Style: Participant and her Appaloosa



Appaloosa

Appaloosas are descended from the horses of the Spanish conquistadors. There were also coloured horses among them. These had a special significance for the Nez Percé. The tribe established its own breeding programme, preferably with spotted horses. Today, Appaloosas are bred and ridden all over the world.

Size:	142 to 162 cm height
Conformation:	Western type, athletic, square
Colour:	Prefers tiger piebald, also all other colours except pinto
Character:	Balanced, calm, people orientated
Traits:	Enduring, fast, handy
Suitability:	Trail riding, leisure riding, western riding





Menorca

The little fine one

When you think of the Balearic Islands, Mallorca and Ibiza spring to mind. For connoisseurs, however, Menorca is the true dream destination, because white beaches, black horses, Caribbean-coloured sea and unspoilt nature are the treasures of the eastern sister island.



Balearic island



The Cami de Cavalls



Together with a non-riding friend, I took for a suitable offer and found what I'm looking for on the small Balearic island. The four-star hotel, a former finca, is located one and a half kilometres from the beach and has a pool and well-tended gardens. 27 guest rooms are spread over several buildings. The personalised service and excellent cuisine make for a perfect stay.

We travel from the airport in a hire car, as we want to explore the island in addition to the three days of riding. The roads on Mallorca's little sister island are well signposted and in excellent condition. This means we can make many excursions before and after the star rides, for example to the lighthouses in the north, but also to picturesque

places like Ciutadella or Cala Fonells. Talayotic buildings made of gigantic stones are scattered all over the island. The Talayotic culture was a prehistoric culture on the Balearic Islands.

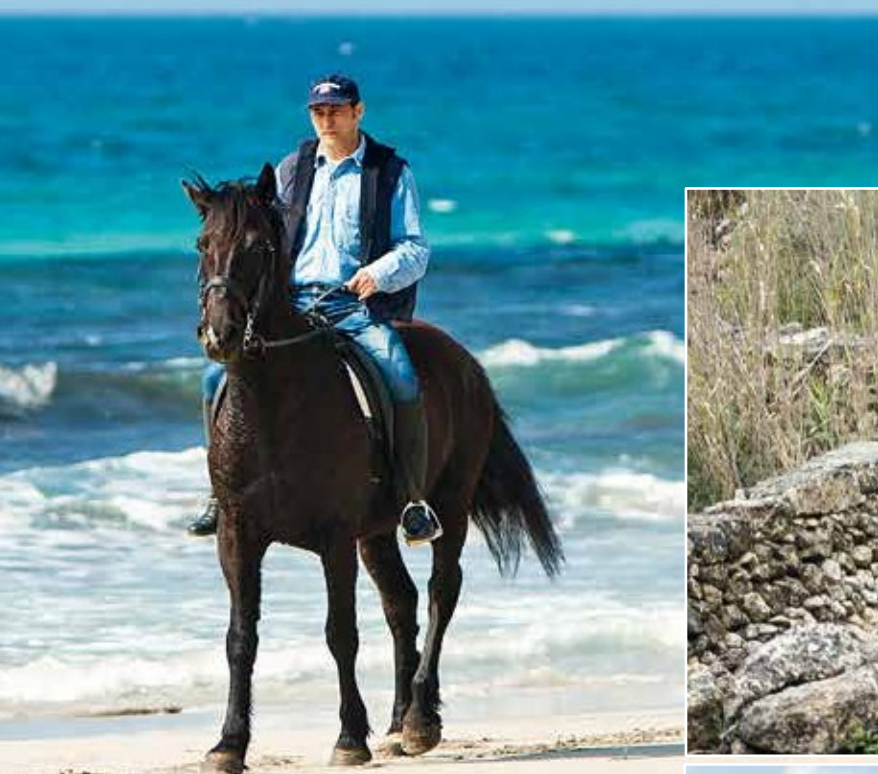
The Cami de Cavalls is a coastal circular route on Menorca that is good for hiking on foot or, even better, on horseback. We are mainly travelling the southern part of the route. On horseback, we visit beaches in small coves that are inaccessible by car. The bays are framed by sandstone cliffs and lush greenery.

The special thing about Menorca is the colour of the sea: an almost Caribbean turquoise. The water is very clear and there are sandy beaches, but also quite rocky stretches.

Menorca with comfort on horseback on the Cami de Cavalls - for Elisabeth Hambrügge, that sounds like a holiday just the way she likes it.



The stylish hotel



We pass the ruins of the Talayotic culture

Compared to the larger islands of Mallorca and Ibiza, the island seems more pristine, tidier and cleaner. Menorca is less touristy and less built up. It speaks in favour of the Menorcans that they have decided against building sins and mass tourism.

Menorca is also a horse island, as it has its own breed of horse: the Menorcan. There are many fiestas on Menorca where the Menorcan horses are ridden through the crowds and demonstrate their elegance to the celebrating public.

The rising and standing on the hind legs, known here as the bot, is impressive.



Menorquins at San Adeodato Stud Farm



The bot - climbing and running on the hind legs

On the first day of the riding programme, our group meets for dinner at the hotel. A table is reserved for us and we have the opportunity to get to know each other. There are six riders and one non-rider in total. As the five other riders are French, we communicate in English. It works well and we have a lot of fun right from the start.

The first day of riding starts with a hearty breakfast on the hotel terrace in fantastic weather. Sarah, our riding guide, picks us up afterwards. Born in the UK, she has lived in her adopted home of Menorca for many years and accompanies the star rides.

We drive by car towards the beach to the San Adeodato stud farm, which is attached to the hotel. There we meet Marti, our second guide, who has already saddled all the horses for our first ride. Before the ride, we are given an insight into horse breeding and a demonstration of Menorcan horsemanship by Marti. He demonstrates the Spanish walk and the bot on the stallion. The elegance with which these horses move is impressive. You can see from the stallion that he enjoys it himself.

Then it's onto the horses and off we go. Our first destination is the prehistoric Talayotic village of Sant Agusti, which was built between 1200 and 1000 BC. The ride continues along the Cami de Cavalls to the beach of Santo Tomas. Now, in April, there are only a few tourists on the road and we can our horses into the surf. At lunchtime, we enjoy a delicious tapas meal in the beach restaurant. My non-riding travelling companion joins us there after having hiked the path to the restaurant. The rides are organised in such a way that non-riding guests can get to the rest stops every day, either by hiking or by car transfer.

The group of riders demonstrates the height of the Cova de Coloms cave

In the afternoon, we ride into the hinterland and cross several gorges on the stony footpaths of the Cami de Cavalls. The sure-footed Menorcans cope well with the sometimes steep and hard ground. They bring us safely to our next destination: the Cova des Coloms, a large cave, also known as a cathedral. Towards evening we reach a meadow

near our hotel. After this extensive day of riding, we let our four-legged friends out into the lush greenery. And our group once again enjoys the excellent cuisine at our hotel.

The next riding day is the longest. We ride for seven hours along the Cami de Cavalls along the coast, over hill and dale, up and down steep slopes and through deep gorges. Again and again we reach secluded beaches, far away from traffic. For lunch, we meet our non-rider again, whom the service team has brought to the beautifully laid table in the forest. We enjoy a delicious meal before continuing through the hinterland back to the pasture at our hotel, where the horses enjoy their well-earned rest.

Rain is forecast for the next day. Nevertheless, we decide to go for a ride, which we enjoy despite the rain. We ride up the cliffs at Son Bou beach and have a wonderful view of the coastal region despite the gloomy weather. Due to the weather conditions, we take the horses back to the San Adeodato stud farm before lunch at the beach restaurant. My travelling companion uses the rainy morning to visit the museum in Mahon.

Riding lessons in the Menorcan riding style are actually planned for the afternoon, but the rain makes this impossible in the riding arena.



Through the mountainous hinterland



Every bay is a photo opportunity



This is where the heart opens



The colours of Menorca



As we are all staying longer at the hotel, we postpone the riding lessons to the next day without further ado. The organisation and coordination by the hotel is excellent. Despite the weather conditions, they try to offer us the full service of the booked riding programme. For the lesson in Menorcan riding style, we visit a stable near Ciutadella by minibus. There we were able to familiarise ourselves with the bot and the Spanish pace on the Menorcan horses. Even my inexperienced fellow traveller is impressed by this riding style.

What I particularly like about the programme is the mixture of culture, beautiful scenery, excellent food and comfortable accommodation. But especially the breed of horse and the way of riding, which was completely foreign to me before. I also like the fact that we can spend a great week's holiday as riders and non-riders, experiencing everything together and yet everyone gets their money's worth. Menorca has left a deep impression on me and I will definitely visit this island and its horses again!

Elisabeth Hambrügge

www.equitour.com/mensta.htm

Sunset on the hotel terrace



Bathing fun for two and four-legged friends



Photos: Elisabeth Hambrügge, Hotel Rural Binigaus Vell

Menorca

The little big dream island

Mallor comes from big, Menor from small. This is how the sister islands in the Mediterranean got their names: Mallorca and Menorca. What Mallorca has in size, Menorca makes up for in natural and cultural treasures.

The coastline in the north of the island is spectacular. Foaming waves crash against the rugged limestone cliffs. The year-round north wind ensures pleasant, not too hot weather on the island. In the south, bays and snow-white dream beaches invite bathing holidaymakers. The historic towns of Mahón and Ciutadella are home to the ruins of the ancient Talayotic culture. Tombs, towers, houses and entire villages made of huge boulders give the island a mystical aura. Talayot means tower building, after which the builders from prehistoric times were named.

At the northernmost point of the island, Cap de Cavalleria, there is a 200-year-old lighthouse that can be seen from afar, perched on 100 metre-high cliffs.

Beach holidaymakers get a feeling of the Caribbean on the white beaches and turquoise waters. Active holidaymakers

will find all kinds of water sports, as well as countless hiking trails to the island's highlights. One of the most beautiful long-distance hiking trails is the 185-kilometre Cami de Cavalls, which runs along the coast around the entire island. The treasures of Menorca lie along the way.

Cami de Cavalls means path of horses. This is almost an invitation to follow it on horseback. Equitour offers sections of the Cami de Cavalls as star rides, where you can discover the coast and hinterland in the saddle.

Menorca is particularly interesting for horse lovers, as the island has its own horse breed, the Menorcans. They go back to the horses of earlier inhabitants and conquerors: the British brought English thoroughbreds, the French brought trotters, the Moors brought Berbers and Arabian thoroughbreds, the Portuguese brought Lusitanos.

EQUITOUR RIDING PROGRAMME

On Menorca, Equitour offers varied star rides. Reliable horses and friendly guides lead the riders to beautiful beaches, through the mountains and to cultural and geological features. The four-star accommodation leaves nothing to be desired in terms of comfort, catering and hospitality.

www.equitour.com/mensta.htm

Country info Menorca

Size: 695 km²

Population: 100,323

Capital: Mahón

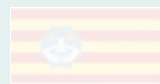
Language: Catalan, Spanish

Religion: Mostly Christian

Currency: Euro

Climate: Mild Mediterranean climate

Best time to visit: April to September





Foals are born brown, but later turn black.



Menorcans have only been recognised as an independent breed since 1989. Although there are also a few brown and grey horses, the breed is entirely focused on black horses. Breeders and riders of Menorcan horses celebrate their own festivals, the Fiestas de Menorca, at which they perform difficult movements with their black horses, in particular mounting and locomotion on the hind legs, the running pesade, also known as the bot. These dressage lessons are part of the Doma Menorquina, which combines elements of the high school with classical dressage.

Caballo de Pura Raza Menorquina (PRM)

Size:	155 to 165 cm at the withers
Conformation:	Baroque type, elegant, expressive
Colour:	Black without markings
Character:	Courageous, intelligent, spirited, strong nerves
Characteristics:	Docile, lively movements Suitability: Dressage, show, trail riding

The lighthouse at the northern tip of Menorca

Mystical: the buildings of the Talayotic culture

Photos: Elisabeth Hambrügge, Pixabay / Eleatell, Eiraimstochter

Invitation to gallop along the beach

The natural paradise of Menorca

EQUITOUR FUN & FACTS

Interesting facts to marvel at and smile about



Horses are known to be flight animals. Speed is their survival concept. There have been horse races for as long as humans have been riding horses. This time it's all about racing and speed on the Fun & Facts page.

Records of the horse world

The fastest

There are two contenders for the title of "fastest horse in the world":
With its powerful hindquarters, the Quarter Horse has enormous sprinting power and is faster than any other horse over short distances. The gelding "A Long Goodbye" set the track record of 88 kilometres per hour.

However, the king of the racecourse is the English thoroughbred. It is bred solely for speed and can reach speeds of over 70 kilometres per hour, making it the fastest horse in the world. The record holder is the thoroughbred stallion "Winning Brew" with a speed of 70.76 kilometres per hour over a distance of 402 metres.



Truly big-hearted

The stallion Secretariat (1970 to 1989) from the United States is a legend of the racecourse. He not only set records on the racecourse, he also caused amazement after his death. His heart was weighed before his funeral. It weighed 9.2 kilos - three times as much as the heart of an average horse. A truly big-hearted horse!



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Other countries, other races

Quarter horses and thoroughbreds are not the only racehorses. Unique horse races are organised in many countries.

Mongol Derby - the longest horse race in the world

Not ten, not a hundred, no - the Mongol Derby runs an incredible 1000 kilometres through the Mongolian steppe, making it the longest horse race in the world. All participants ride on small Mongolian horses, which have to be changed every 40 kilometres for animal welfare reasons.



have to be changed every 40 kilometres. The race lasts ten days, with the riders spending 13 or 14 hours in the saddle each day.

The entry fee is also record-breaking: the fun costs over 15,000 euros, for which each starter receives around 25 horses, a team of trainers and race preparation.

Indian Relay Race



A popular competition among several Indian tribes is the Indian Relay Race, a relay race in which the participants complete a one-mile circuit one after the other on three different horses. In the Indian way, of course, without a saddle.

The horses used are thoroughbreds. Their speed is important, but a quick change of horses is almost more decisive.



Do you know this one?

Children at the start

In some countries, there are special races just for children and young people. Here, too, Mongolia shows its most extreme side. At the Naadam Festival, the annual national festival, young boys ride Mongolian horses for between 12 and 35 kilometres, depending on the age of the horses.



Mini thoroughbred

England is the birthplace of gallop racing and racehorses. And if you want to become a successful jockey, you have to start early. Pony races serve as an introduction to racing. Whereby pony does not stand for cuddly Shetland or Dartmoor ponies, but for hot little mini thoroughbreds.

for hot little mini thoroughbreds that have no less bite than their big brothers.



Barrel race

The little ones start early in the USA too. In barrel racing, little steppies steer their horses confidently around the barrels as soon as their feet reach into the stirrups.

"It was the 11th of November when I went to the racecourse to bet. My son turned 11 that day. And in the 11th race, which took place at 11:11 a.m., there were 11 horses at the start. So I put all my money on the 11!" "So, did you win?" "No, the stupid horse came 11th!"



The jockey finishes the race first. The trainer comes to him and scolds him: "You could have had to stay with the horse!"



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Franz Editing and layout:

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Authors:

Jil Dorn Julia

Frey

Guy de Galard

Elisabeth Hambrügge

Gabriele Kärcher

Jessica Kiefer

Denise Neufeld

Franziska Vaas

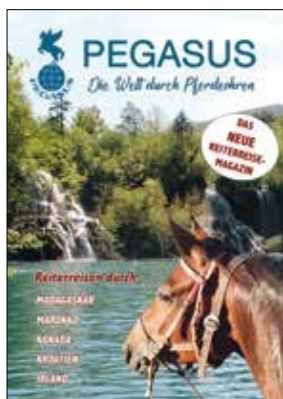
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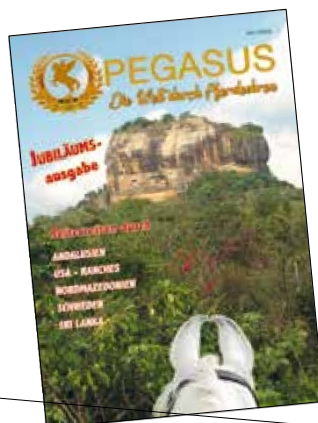
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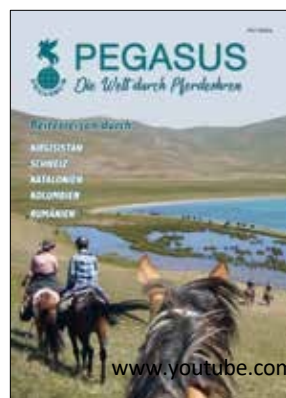


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on horseback through...
...South Africa

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...Djerba



**...Northern
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Web:
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