

"When Soberano went laureado in the breeding division, I just couldn't put him out to pasture. He is such a joy to ride, so I told the trainers, 'He's mine, now,' and he laureadoed in the pleasure division."

Mimi Busk Downey



Soberano^{CM}++

The Canadian Wonder

by Donna Bearer

As a child, Mimi Busk-Downey always knew what she wanted to do with her life; raise horses.

"I loved anything that had to do with horses," Mimi recalls, "and I knew that someday I'd get out of the city and onto a ranch of my own."

In her early twenties, Mimi began searching for the "perfect riding horse".

"I chose the Peruvian after considering Arabians and Paso Finos," Mimi said. "The Peruvian had the fire I was looking for combined with good temperament and the best locked-in gait

of any breed I had ever experienced. I liked the fact that the Peruvian comes from a small gene pool which has been kept pure for over four centuries."

One of the first moves Mimi made in her new roll as breeder, was to purchase a *Sol de Oro(V) son, *Su Senoria. Then in 1977, she purchased five Cayalti mares. The group contained *Soberana de Cayalti, a mare that most experts agree was the best that Cayalti had produced in the last twenty years. (She was sound until her death at age 26).

In 1972, Angie Schmidt and John

Delozier imported the pure southern stallion, *Piloto from Peru. A *Sol de Oro* (V) son, *Piloto became one of the most important sires of the Peruvian horse in the United States today. He was fifteen years old when he arrived in the United States.

*Piloto died in 1985 at the age of 28. Although he was only in the U.S. 13 years and has been dead for 14 years, he is still ranked number two on Rich Ovenburg's *Top Ten Breeding Stallions* list. In 1983 *Piloto serviced his last mare.

Having done her research, Mimi



***Piloto, Soberano's famous sire.**

knew that *Piloto had been crowned Best Gaited Horse at the 1967 National Show in Lima, Peru. She purchased *Soberana de Cayalti for her smooth gait, and with the intention of breeding her to *Piloto. The cross was made and in 1979 Soberano was born.

Soberano's exceptional gateado movement won him instant recognition. As a young stallion he won almost every class he entered. Mimi was careful not to become too excited about the potential she saw in the young stallion.

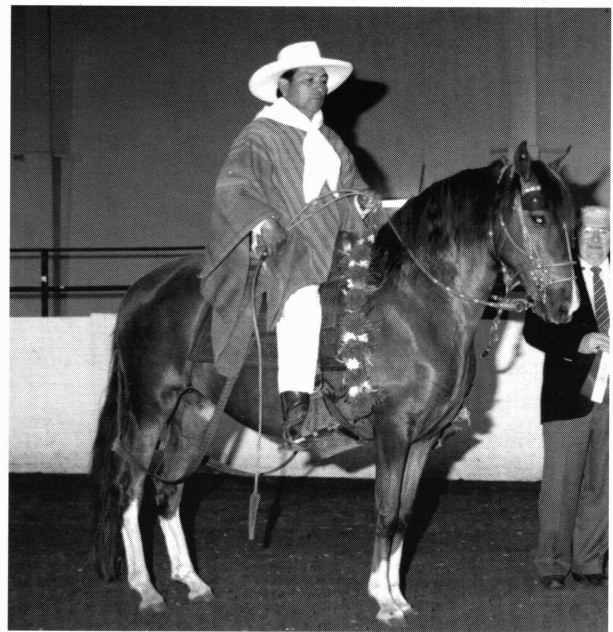
"Often," she cautioned, "a young horse will do great in the halter classes and early show classes, only to fizzle out under saddle, so I didn't want to get my hopes up."

Soberano's show ring success began early. As a yearling he was Canadian National Reserve Champion Junior Stallion. At two he won Best Gaited Horse of Show in halter. At three he was the Canadian National Champion Junior Stallion, won his bozal class in Canada and took second in Bozal at the U.S. Nationals.

Not only has Soberano accomplished everything Mimi hoped for in the show ring, he has also produced offspring that have dominated the Canadian show ring for the past fifteen years.

His famous daughter Mercedes CM won 21 titles including three times National Champion of Champions Breeding Mare, earning her Laureada. She won six Best Gaited Horse of Show awards. Judges singled her out for comments such as, "Breeders, study this mare. This what you are looking for." Like her sire,

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Mercedes CM, Canadian Laureada Breeding Mare

THE "GATEADO GAIT"

by Mimi Busk-Downey

Peruvian Horse owners in North America are very familiar with the timing of the paso llano and the sobreandando gaits. A very precise and evenly timed gait, the paso llano is the best gait of the Peruvian breed. The sobreandando, a slightly more lateral gait, is often performed at faster speeds. In this gait a horse will almost always extend and overreach more. What one rarely sees is the paso llano performed with the "gateado" execution. When in paso llano, many horses do little more than cap the front print with the rear hoof, only overreaching when they move into a sobreandando. The gateado horse is able to have considerable overreach while maintaining the timing of a paso llano. The result is a horse that moves like a cat, appearing almost as if moving in slow motion. The front shoulders must be exceptionally loose, not only in the outward arc of the forelegs, but also in the motion of the leg as it moves forward. Viewed from the side, the point of the shoulder rotates in an oval, achieving the slinking effect of a big cat. From the rider's vantage point, the shoulders alternately move forward like those of a swimmer. The horse appears balanced as it moves; its gait is graceful, elegant and precise.

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Mercedes possessed that incredible gateado gait.

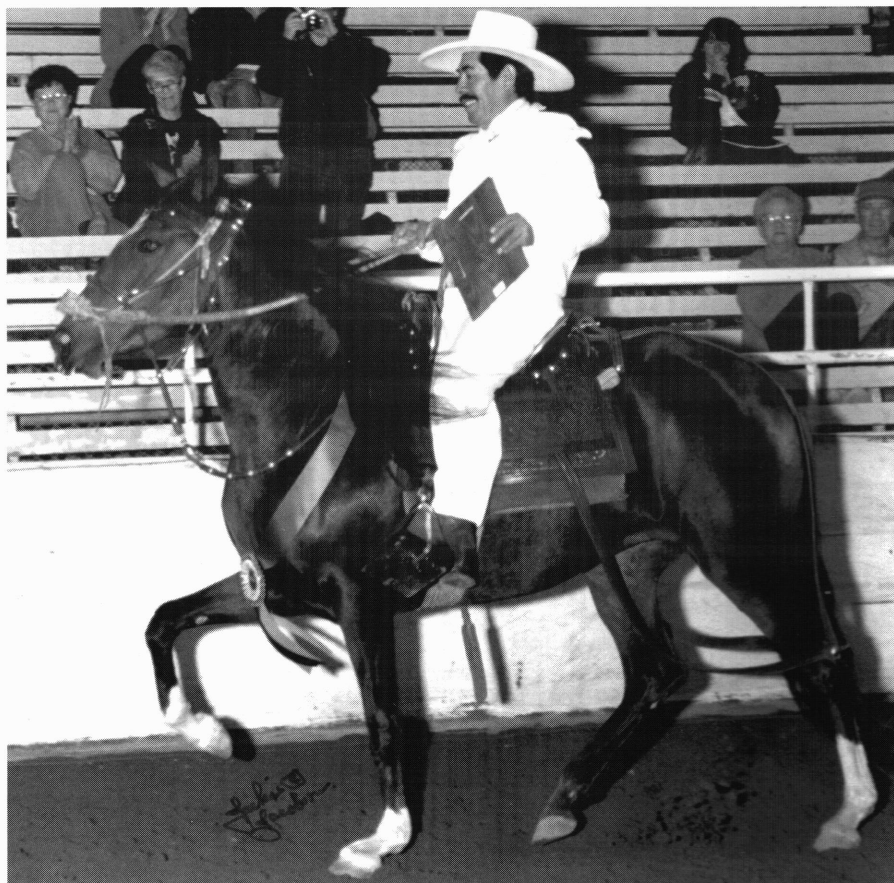
A list of the accomplishments of some of Soberano's get is on page 16.

Crescent Moon Ranch is a family operation. Mimi and her husband Dale care for their horses personally and enjoy exhibiting and showing them.

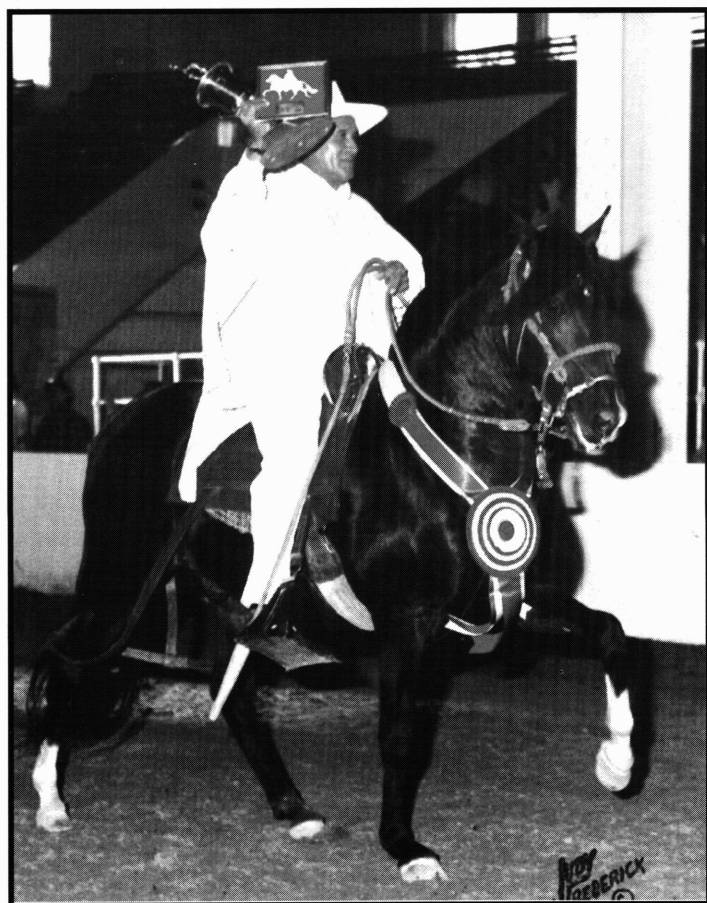
"Although we love working with the horses," Mimi said, "we think they deserve the best training we can provide, and we have been very fortunate to employ some exceptional trainers.

Don Sixto Chávez, one of the most famous Peruvian trainers in our century gets the credit for Soberano's training.

Don Sixto's reputation is universally recognized, and many experts consider him the best Peruvian trainer alive today. He has won the Peruvian National Enfrenadura on six occasions, which speaks of his talent as a reinsman. But an even further testimony to his abilities is intertwined with the story of Soberano. Don Sixto



Crescent Moon's present trainer Milciades Alvarado and Carisma CM, Champion Breeding and Pleasure Mare.



Don Sixto Chávez and Soberano

began Soberano's bozal work in 1982, and the horse showed every indication of being easy to train. However, early in 1983, when Soberano was ready to begin carrying the bit, he was involved in a freak accident in which he lost his tongue.

"We don't know what happened," grimaced Mimi. "We went to his stall that morning and blood was everywhere. When we checked Soberano's mouth, his tongue was gone."

After healing, Don Sixto resumed Soberano's training. But even with a special rubber-wrapped bit the horse was afraid of the bit and uncomfortable with it resting on his bars. His performance was erratic and his carriage greatly overcollected.

"Don Sixto employed his infinite patience, and thanks to that and his incredibly sensitive hands, he gradually won Soberano's confidence," Mimi noted.

"When the bozalillo was removed we added a metal gamarilla, which Don Sixto would not have considered using on a "normal" horse, but decided to try due to the special circumstances."

"Soberano became a complete joy to ride, and an impressive performer," added Mimi, "We are very grateful to Don Sixto and are certain that no one else could have achieved the results he did."

Crescent Moon's present trainer is Milciades Alvarado
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Alvarado (Mil).

Mil and Mimi can certainly identify with the term "it's a small world".

Mil is a *Maestro Enfrenador*, meaning master reinsman, a title which a trainer is honored with once he has won in the Enfrenadura reining competition at the Peruvian National Show in Lima, Peru.

Mil won his first competition and title in 1977, riding a pinto horse owned by Jorge Juan Pinillos. Coincidentally, Mimi was at that show and purchased a photo of the enfrenadura horse. She did not know that it was the *only* photo of the win! It is an unusual picture, and was among those chosen by Verne Albright to appear in his book *The Peruvian Paso and His Classic Equitation*. Verne credited Mimi as the provider of the photo, but no one knew the name of the horse or rider.

When Mil arrived in Canada in May, 1996, he met Dale and Mimi for the first time. Looking through the book by Verne Albright, he saw his picture.

"He became very excited," laughs Mimi, "He was so delighted to find the photo."

Friends had told him there was a good photo of his win, and he had rushed to the photographer's booth, only to find that someone had bought it. In those days photos were one of a kind and reprints could not be ordered.

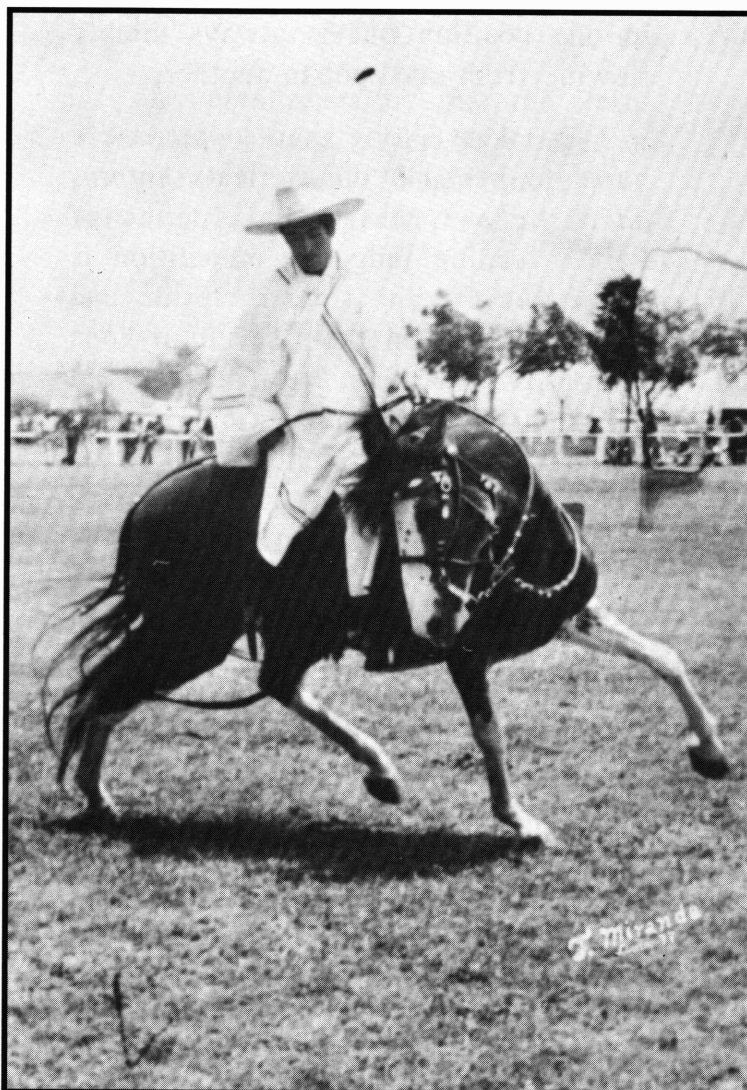
For nineteen years Mil had wondered about the photo and wished he had a memento of that special day. Then he came to Canada to work for people he did not know and discovered a pleasant surprise from his past.

In researching the information for this story, **Peruvian Digest** read many things that have been written about and by Mimi Busk-Downey. One thing that impressed us is the consistency with which Mimi has pursued her breeding goals. The things she wrote about hoping to accomplish twenty years ago, have become a reality. Everything about the Downey's breeding program is planned and carefully carried out. Nothing is rushed. Good breeding programs take a lifetime to accomplish. Mimi has certainly paid her dues and has produced consistent winners.

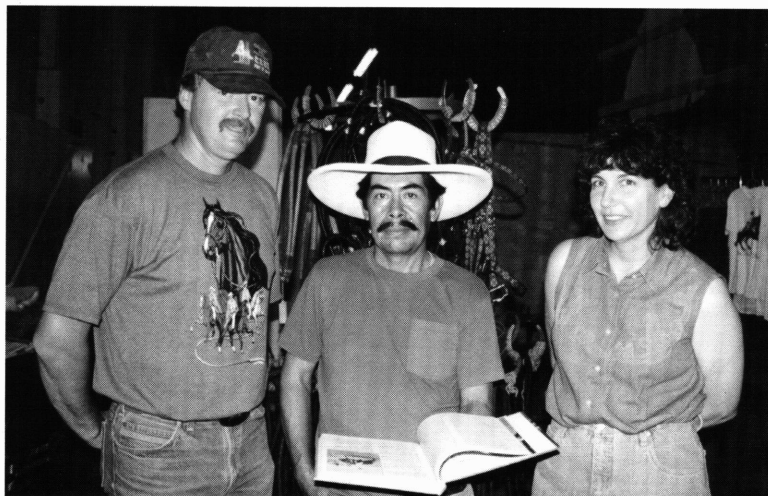
"We have several defined goals in our breeding program right now," Mimi added, "First, to create an heir for Soberano; second, to create the best outcross stallion for the Soberano line; third, to continue to add elegance to our

horses without losing strength, timing or smoothness. It has taken us twenty years to establish a "type" - we expect these three goals to require another eight years."

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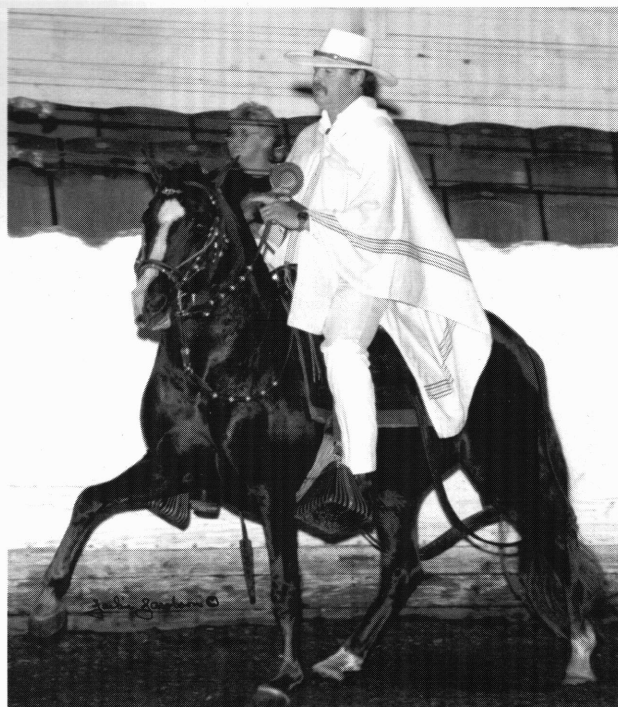


Above Milciades Alvarado performing the winning enfrenadura at the Peruvian Nationals 20 years ago. Below (L to R) Dale Downey, Mil and Mimi Downey discuss the photo that appeared in Verne Albrights book.





*Su Senoria, son of Sol de Oro (V), was the first stallion purchased by Mimi for Crescent Moon Ranch, in 1974.



Dale Downey on Soberano's son Ramiel CM, a multi-champion breeding stallion.

- Utilize older broodmares who have shown their worth.
- Let other breeders help you evaluate your herd.
- Sell the horses, which will not advance your breeding program, as trail horses, and do so with integrity.
- Never sell your best at any price.

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Mimi pointed out that it is important to have specific goals in mind when one breeds horses. If you breed spas-

modically, that is what you will get.

In 1990 Mimi and Dale sold half interest in Soberano to Gerry and Ester Holubiczko of Aromas, CA. He is currently standing at stud at Rain Tree Peruvians in Bulverde, TX.

When asked about advice she would give to new people starting in the breed, Mimi advised the following:

- Study which crosses work.
- Accept only bloodlines of unquestionable quality.
- "Tag along" with a proven program until you have learned enough to branch out.

Left, RRI Rojizo, the six year-old Soberano son owned by Gerry and Ester Holubiczko has won four different Champion of Champions Breeding Stallion titles. The young stallion won the titles under four different judges and three different riders.



Mimi Busk-Downey is a carded Peruvian Judge. She began training as a judge in 1989 because she wanted to continue the learning process and expand her involvement with the Peruvian breed. She has judged in both the United States and Canada.

Mimi and Dale make their home in Acme, Alberta Canada.

In addition to ranching, Mimi does customer service for the largest livestock feed company in Western Canada.

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