

# Tradition

heavy thunk and looked up and directly into the eyes of a bull looking down at me from only about 12 inches away. He had one horn partially through the opening and was just standing there staring at me. I almost reached out and patted him on the head, before reminding myself that

these are not the nice gentle Charlais I grew up around.

The event started off with a parade of all the Banderillos, the Forcados and then the two Cavaleiros for the evening, each mounted, in full dress garb, on one of

their many patiently waiting steeds. As the evening progressed I got an opportunity to very closely study the three Banderillos and most of the Forcados as they were all behind the wall with us, throughout each fight. The honor and respect in each of these men was remarkable! They were so quiet and decorous. Each one, in my mind, did things in front of those bulls, which were almost on the verge of madness. Yet, looking into their eyes, I could see each was quite normal and sane. When I had an opportunity, at the end of the evening, to speak with one of the Forcados, I learned just how traditional these men are. They don't do this out of some sort of displaced sociopathic need for adrenaline. They each choose to participate in this sport because it is in their blood, it is part of their heritage and is the tradition of their country. No matter that they are a full ocean and the length of the United States away from their home country, the desire to face the bulls for some seemed as necessary as the need to breathe air.

To say that the horses were brave is to state the obvious. To see Lusitanos doing what they have been bred to do for so many generations, was so far better than my imagination had ever led me to believe! They whirled and snorted and flagged their tails in the faces of the bulls. They danced and flew through they sky like a taunting Pegasus. The tiny hairs on my arms and the back of my neck were tingling at the sight of so much grace and athletic ability. Iberian horses truly are the horses of Royalty and little girl's dreams come true!

Oh, and yes, I did discover that I love Portuguese food!

We just don't have enough space in this magazine to share all the wonderful things we saw that night. If you would like to read more about this marvelous event, please see the full story on my web site at:  
[www.theandalusian.com](http://www.theandalusian.com)

We would like to extend our greatest thanks to Marc, Raul & Jose Cardoso as well as Candido Costa. More information can be found at their web site:  
[www.ranchcardoso.biz](http://www.ranchcardoso.biz)

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