

Interview with Miguel Ralão

For a dressage rider, what do lusitano horses mean to you? We would like you to point out their special skills and their main handicaps.

Miguel Ralão:

“The lusitano horse, first of all, it’s “our horse”, the Portuguese horse, which, since my childhood, I was attached to and always rode. It is the horse that I identify as “our horse”. I think that recently, in terms of breeding, and even in terms of dressage competition, there is a greater acceptance for this kind of horse, to compete with other horses, specially conceived for sports. These horses, as a rule, are not conceived for sports, while the others, most of all, are. I personally love to ride these horses. I love to ride any horse, but I feel closer to these horses. Of course, and as I said earlier, in terms of breeding, as the other horses are bred for sport, there are some athletic performances than most of the lusitano horses cannot reach. But I think that with work, method and perseverance, and by continuing to compete internationally, we can succeed, and, proving this, in recent years, there have been consecutive teams riding lusitano horses getting good marks.”

Do you think that lusitanos, in the international competitions, are often discriminated because of their physical characteristics?

“I wouldn’t say they are intentionally discriminated. Our horse, as I said just now, has some ability and some glow in some exercises that others do not. But there are some gaps in their physical and athletic form. Concerning this, some judges penalize these defects while others grade the good features. As with everything that is judged and subjective. But they are not discriminated. I think that, sometimes, there is a complex about it.”

So, one last question, which has already been answered in part, but that I’ll renew: Why do you like to ride lusitanos in international competitions?

“As I just said, it’s “our horse”, the portuguese horse, which I’ve always been connected to. 40 It’s with great pleasure that I compete internationally as a Portuguese rider, riding a portuguese horse.”

Thank you.