

# Cooking Lake Saddle Club

**February 12, 2018**

**Looma Hall**

**WHAT IS HORSEMANSHIP?**

# THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

## J.S. RAREY (1827-1866)

As quoted in:

The Modern Art of Taming Wild Horses  
Ohio State Journal Company 1896

- FIRST – That he is so constituted by nature that he will not offer resistance to any demand made of him which he fully comprehends, if made in a way consistent with the laws of his nature.
- SECOND – That he has no consciousness of his strength beyond his experience, and can be handled accordingly to our will without force.
- THIRD – That we can in compliance with the laws of his nature by which he examines all things new to him, take any object, however frightful, around, over, or on him, that does not inflict pain, without causing him to fear.

# Ken's Definition of Horsemanship

- The ability to listen to your horse and understand his needs;
- To be able to give him those needs so that he become respectful which then turns into trust;
- To be able to give him the ability to think and not be fearful when new things come up;
- He looks to me for support because I have told him I will never let anything bad happen to him when he is with me;
- I will allow him the time to hunt and search for the answer to my questions;
- I will allow him to make mistakes so he can learn from his mistakes;
- He understands he is accountable for his decisions in a way that he learns from;
- I give him the “best deal” to move his feet – and then I do whatever I have to - to get him to move his feet;
- What I have to do for one horse is different than what I have to do for another horse;
- The experiences I expose him to might lead him to be fearful in the beginning - I allow him to work through his fears so he comes out with a good experience;
- With those good experiences his awareness and judgement becomes elevated.

# IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FEET

(Tom Dorrance)

- The only thing that gives a horse comfort is the ability to move his feet away from something he is unsure of
- When his feet are stuck, his brain is in primitive mode and he cannot learn
- Feel
- Timing
- Balance
- Knowing where ALL the feet are at any point in time

# *HEART* – By Monte Baker

*I talked to a friend just the other day, who's got lots of opinions and plenty to say.*

*We discussed what we both like to see in a horse,  
His requirements and mine were different of course...*

*He likes a clean throatlatch and a long skinny neck,  
And prefers that their hocks are set close to the deck.  
Short backs and hard feet and clean slopin' shoulder,  
And a gaskin that looks like it swallowed a boulder.*

*He likes a short face and a big ol' soft eye, and says these are the horses he's likely to buy.  
And when he'd completed his lengthy discourse, on all of the attributes of the quality horse,*

*He asked my opinion, and where do I start?  
And I said that I... just wanted horses with heart.*

*I said I wanted heart above all the other. I don't care if he's Smart Little Lena's full brother.*

*Or just how much money his grandmother won, or rather he's roan, palomino or dun.*

*But give me a horse with some grit and some try,  
And some heart and some guts and that's the one that I'll buy.  
And I've found it's the same with a woman or man...*

*The good ones won't quit you when the shit hits the fan.*

# What Is Riding?

“Piaffe is excellent proof of balance and impulsion and is a sign of accomplished schooling. It results in the raising of the forehand, with the weight-bearing foreleg remaining vertical and a lowering of the haunches with distinct and active engagement of the hindquarters under the body. The photo on the bottom right shows Otto Lorke in a pesade, an air in which the horse shifts all of its weight back towards the rear and ends up on its hindquarters”

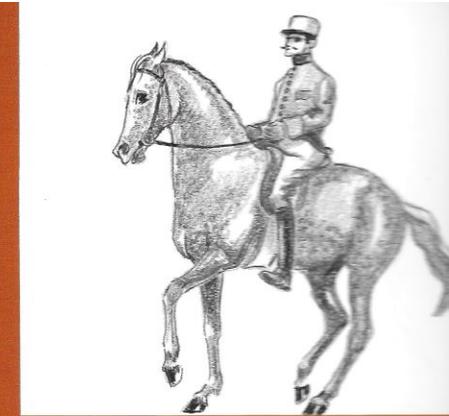
**Please note: all of these horses have their head distinctly in front of the vertical and their poll the highest point**



Otto Lörke



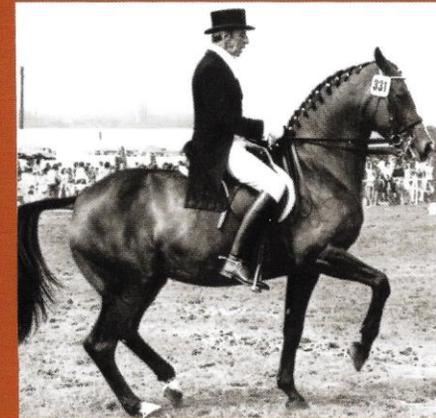
General Decarpentry



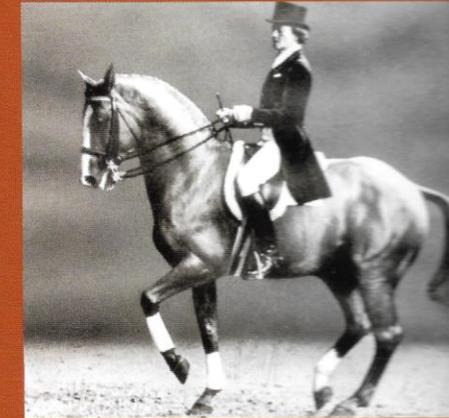
Etienne Beudant



Nuno Oliveira



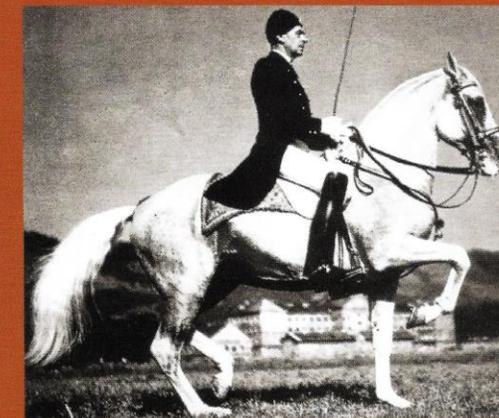
Josef Neckermann



Liselott Linsenhoff



Richard Wätjen



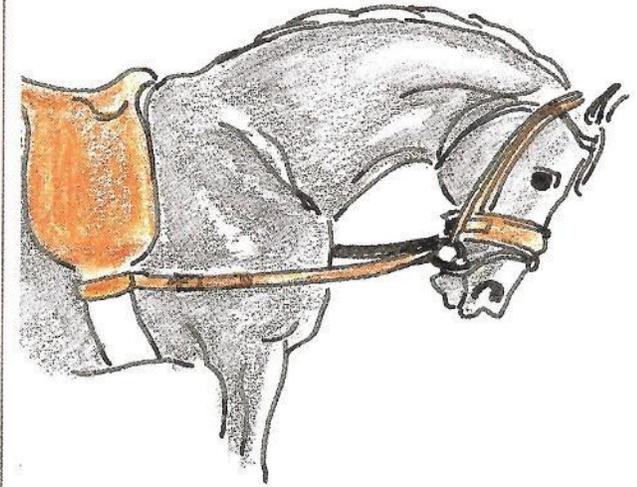
Alois Podhajsky



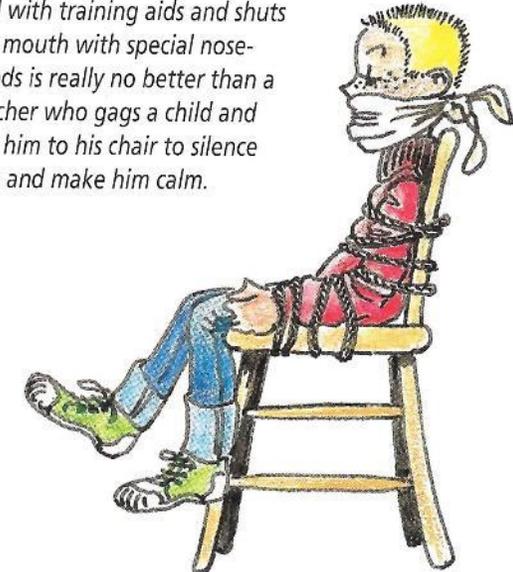
Otto Lörke

# Horsemanship is not about the tack you use - or the clothes you wear

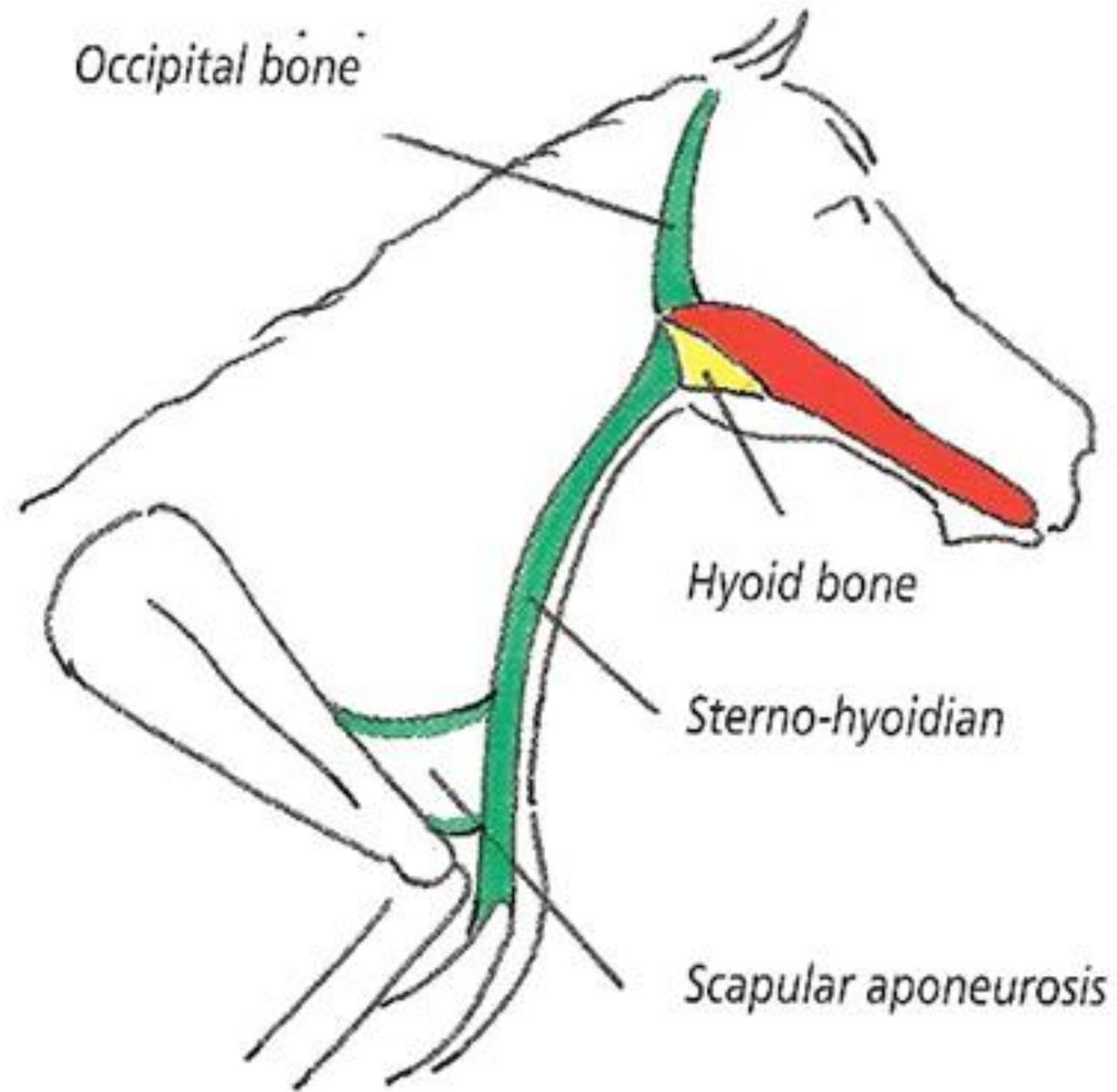
- It is about the respect you have for your horse and his needs
- It is about the respect and trust your horse develops in you as you become a better rider
- Amateurs practice until they can do it right  
Professionals practice until they can't do it wrong
- The basic foundation applies to every horse, every breed, every discipline

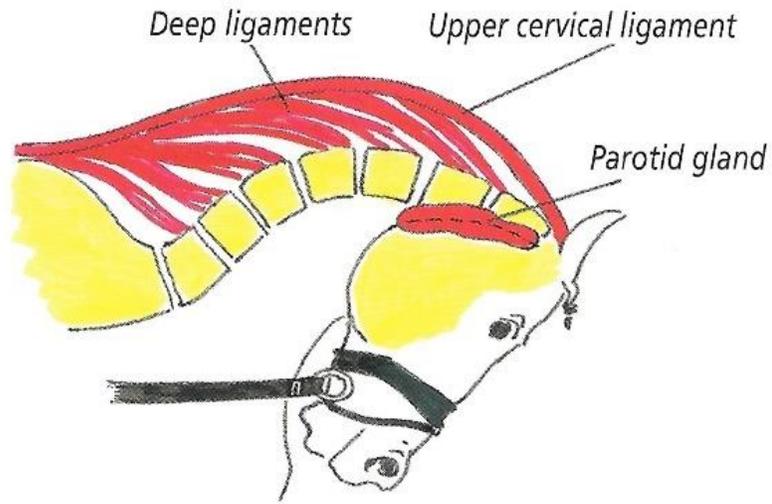


*A rider who forces flexion of the poll with training aids and shuts the mouth with special nose-bands is really no better than a teacher who gags a child and ties him to his chair to silence him and make him calm.*

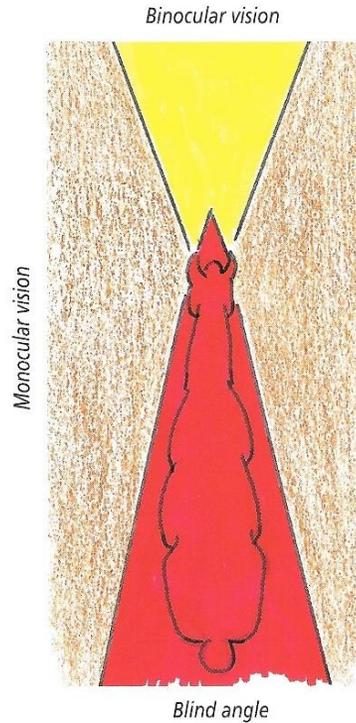


The hyoid bone and the tongue form a crossroads for everything to do with the forehead: the tongue, the pharynx and the larynx are attached to the hyoid bone located between the branches of the lower jawbone. The muscles linking the hyoid bone to the sternum, to the head and to the shoulders determine the mobilisation of the tongue.

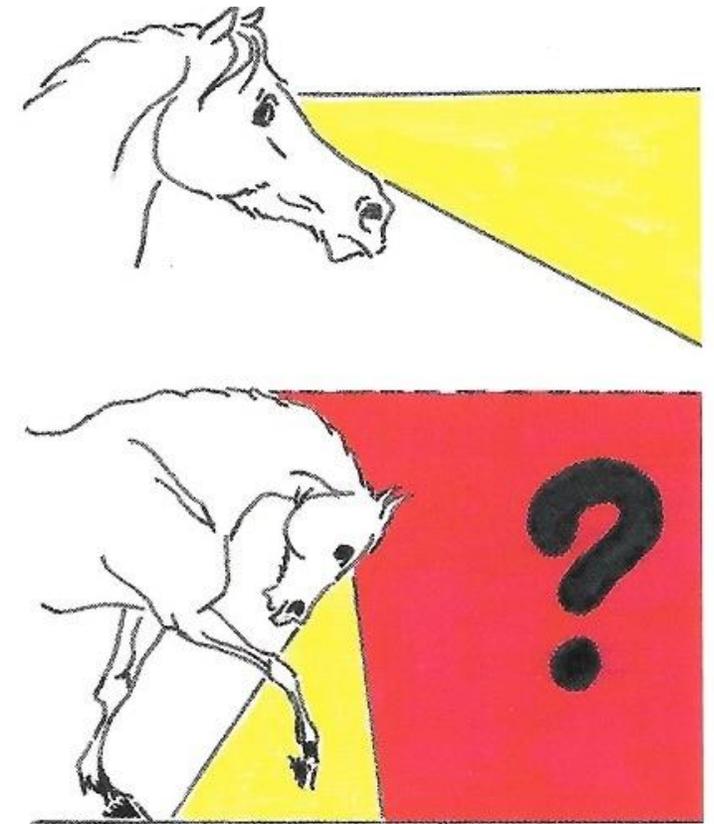




*The upper ligaments of an overbent horse are subject to extreme and prolonged extension that causes lesions. The parotid glands are subject to extreme compression.*



*The binocular field of vision in a horse only operates in a very limited angle (shown in yellow) and only extends for ahead when the horse's head is positioned high with the poll open. Once it is overbent the horse only has restricted binocular vision that scarcely allows him to judge where it is putting its feet.*



# MR. GOOGLE IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT

Nor, necessarily, are those winning in high end competitions.

I am not always right, and as I learn from the horses, I have changed what I do and how I do it.

What is right for one horse is not necessarily right for another horse.

But I think you can all agree – these pictures do not, for this moment in time, demonstrate putting the best interest of the horse first.

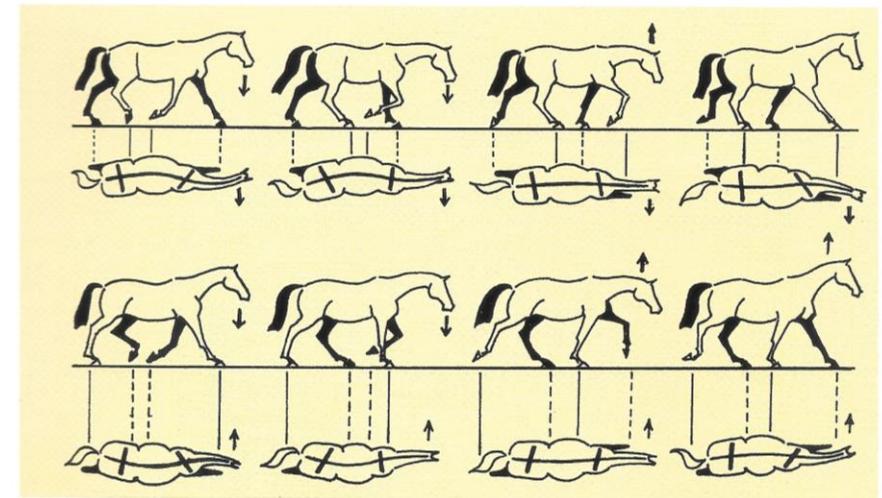
Although these are all upper level english dressage competitors, you see the same in reining, jumping, driving, gaited classes, and country pleasure to name a few. Upper level stock breeds english and western pleasure is a whole different discussion.



Overbending is now the rule:  
At the "highest level" people are winning on horses that are regularly overbent. These pictures were taken in 2004 at the Athens Olympic Games and at international dressage competitions. Photos: Toffi

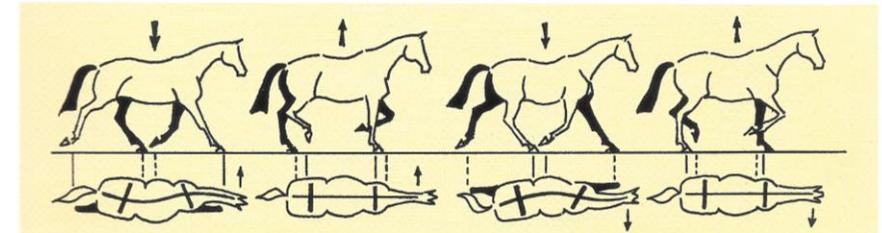
# LOCOMOTION

- Cannot be established without the freedom of the atlas joint
- Needs to be developed first on a loose rein and then advanced to the collected (NOT PULLING) rein
- The rider has a big responsibility for locomotion by being a RIDER not a PASSENGER
- Movement of our body, hands and legs must be timed up with the feet of the horse

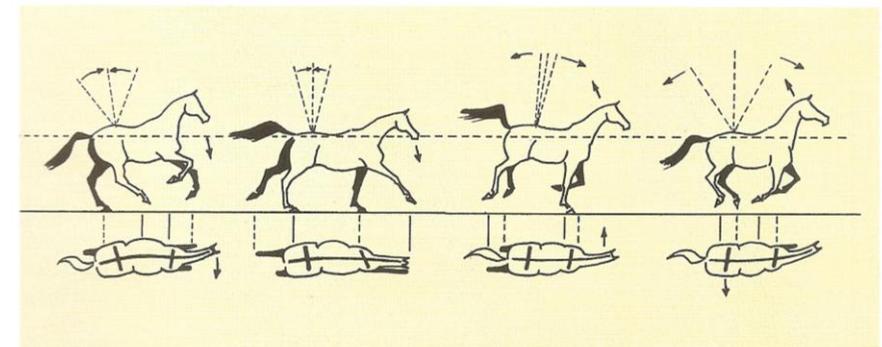


At walk

At trot

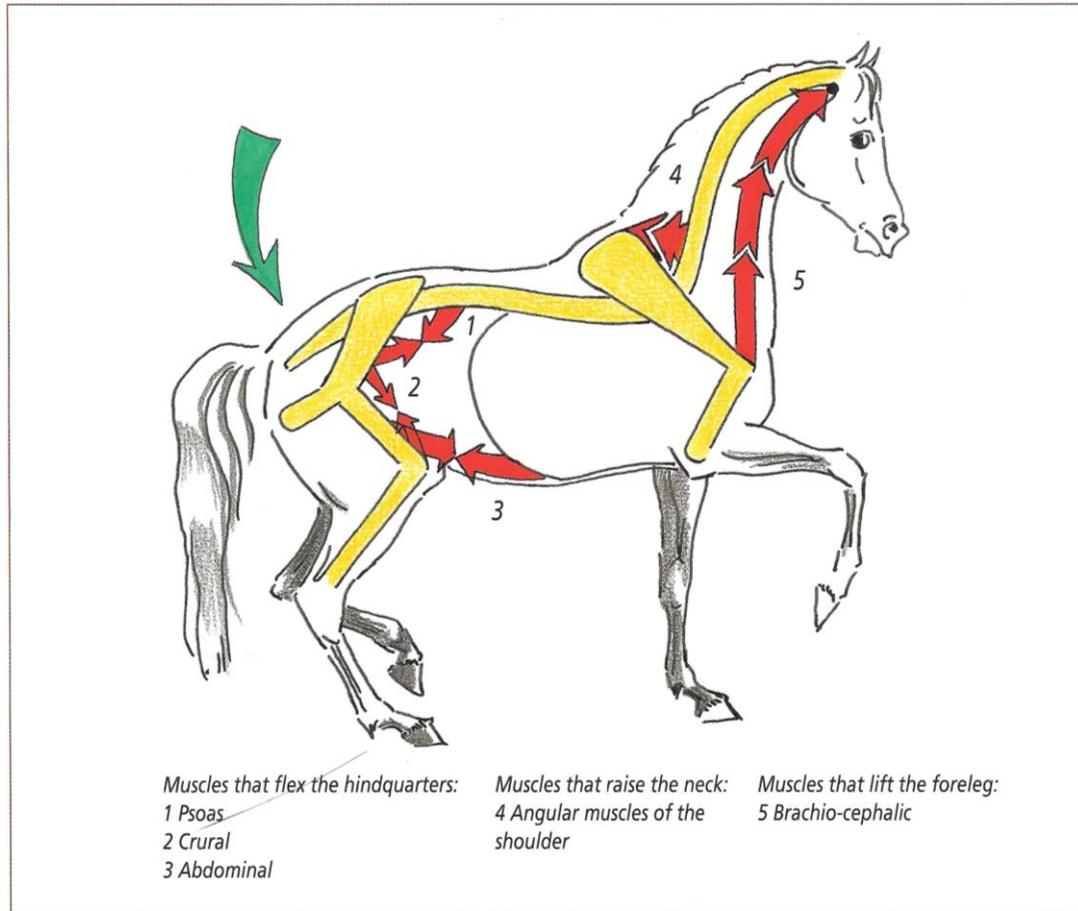


At canter



The undulations of the spine at walk, trot and canter (taken from "Reasoned Equitation" by Commandant Licart). For more clarity, the amplitude of the spine undulations have been deliberately exaggerated.

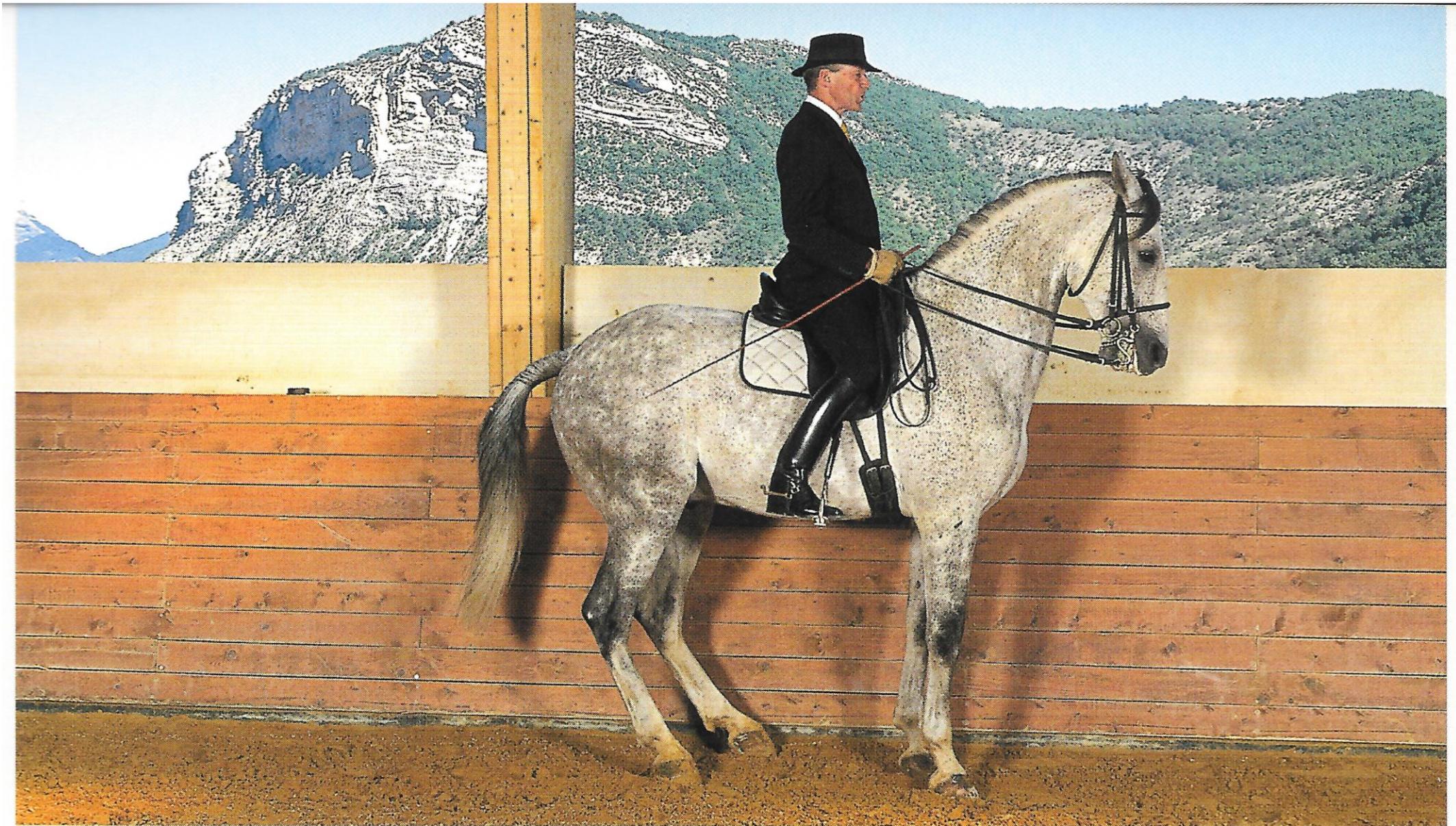
# THE CIRCLE OF COLLECTION



*In a good piaffe, the psoa, crural and abdominal muscles round the dorso-lumbar segment and cause the flexing of the haunches. The base of the neck lifts, the brachio-cephalic muscles pull the shoulders upwards.*

What came first – the chicken or the egg?

- Collection converts thrust into lift
- Transitions – either within a gait or between gaits – needs to have lift
- True collection is a gift from the horse, it cannot be forced by the rider
- Locomotion, or the lack of it, is the clue to revealing true collection versus forced posture
- Self carriage is required before true collection



*The horse also shows increased flexion of the haunches in the "parade" or in other words a collected halt,...*



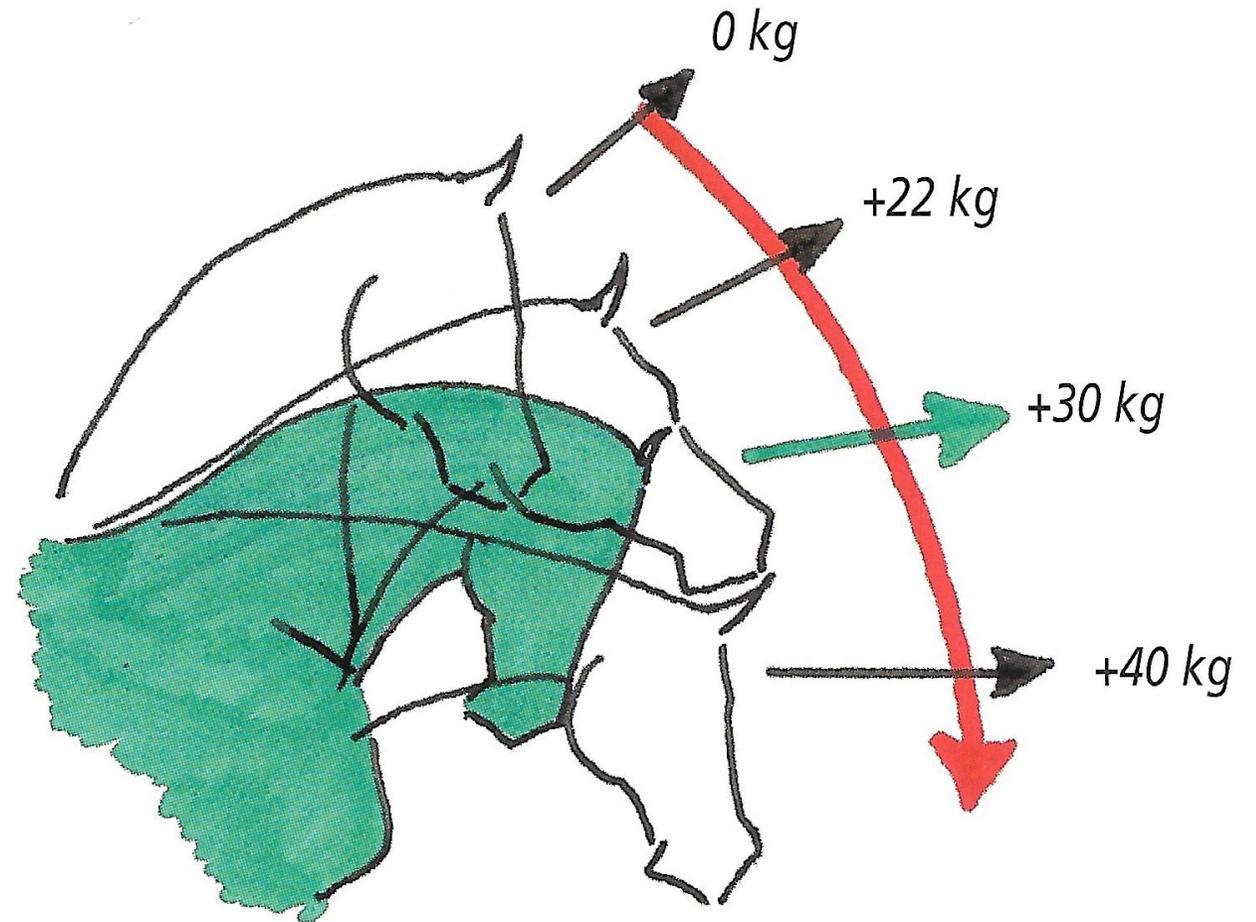
*...in a true piaffe...*

*... and in the pesade. Photos: Laurioux*



# What about head position?

- First – relaxation of the topline and locomotion
- The poll must be the highest point on the line between the withers and the poll
- The lower the head, the more weight the horse must balance
- Asking the horse to raise his head cannot take away from the elevation of the base neck



# FOUNDATION FOR PROPER TRANSITIONS

- All transitions – up AND down – are initiated from the hindquarters
- Before horses are asked to canter, you need to be able to have your lead at the walk and trot
- He needs to be able to carry asymmetry in a symmetrical gait before he performs asymmetry in the asymmetrical gait of the canter.
- You should also be able to start your trot from the walk in the correct diagonal every time – that's not you rising, but your horse using the correct diagonal pair on the first trot stride



*l'Épaule en Dedans.*

## ***The Man in the Glass – Dale Wimbrow***

When you get what you want in your struggle for self,  
And the world makes you king for a day,  
Then go to the mirror and look at yourself,  
And see what that guy has to say.

For it isn't your Father, or Mother, or Wife,  
Who judgement upon you must pass.  
The feller whose verdict counts most in your life  
Is the guy staring back from the glass.

He's the feller to please, never mind all the rest,  
For he's with you clear up to the end,  
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test  
If the guy in the glass is your friend.

You may be like Jack Horner and "chisel" a plum,  
And think you're a wonderful guy,  
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum  
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

You can fool the whole world down the pathway for years,  
And get pats on the back as you pass,  
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears  
If you've cheated the guy in the glass.

# MENTORS

- The three people I admire the most are now all gone, but their experience with horses totals 265 years.
  - Bill Dorrance, Tom Dorrance, Ray Hunt
  
- Mentors today in alphabetical order
  - Dr. Deb Bennett
  - Martin Black
  - Buck Brannaman
  - Mike Bridges
  - Bryan Neubert
  - Randy Reiman
  - Joe Walters

# SOME REFERENCES and OTHER MATERIAL

- All illustrations and photos are from, or adapted from, Twisted Truths of Modern Dressage – Philippe Karl
- True Horsemanship Through Feel – Bill Dorrance
- True Unity – Willing Communication with Horse & Rider – Tom Dorrance
- Think Harmony – Ray Hunt
- The Art of Making a Californio Vaquero Bridle Horse – Mike Bridges
- Cow Horse Confidence – Martin Black
- Kinship With All Life – J. Allen Boone
- Horse Conformation & Biomechanics – Dr. Deb Bennett
- Evidence Based Horsemanship (book) and Exploring Evidence Based Horsemanship (DVD) – Dr. Stephen Peters & Martin Black
- Collection or Contortion (book), Tug of War (book) and If Horses Could Speak (DVD) – Dr. Gerd Heuschmann
- Eclectic Horseman Communications Publication

## Wikipedia

- De La Guérinière is credited for the invention of the [shoulder-in](#), which he called the "alpha and omega of all exercises"; he was the first to describe it. His treatise *L'École de Cavalerie*, "The School of Horsemanship", which was published in parts between 1729 and 1731, and as a complete work in 1733, is an important book on the training of the horse, detailing equitation, veterinary treatment, and general horsemanship. This book has become an important text for the [Spanish Riding School](#) of Vienna.
- De La Guérinière gave exercises to increase suppleness and balance of the horse, and a progressive schooling system to reach an overall goal: a light, obedient, calm horse that was a pleasure to ride. De La Guérinière is also credited with the invention of the [flying change](#) and the [counter-canter](#).
- In his book, *Ecole de Cavallerie* (Paris, 1733), de La Guérinière stresses the use of few [aids](#) and punishments while riding. He advises the use of the shoulder-in at all [gaits](#), including the [gallop](#). De La Guérinière states the rider must also have a good seat in order to have a soft, light hand, and makes several references to [William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle](#)