

est, originally consisted of four mares and one stallion.

“Now we have about 600 horses, and the Lusitano has regained the reputation it enjoyed in the past centuries as one of the best saddle horses in the world,” said Interagro founder Paulo Gavião Gonzaga.

Historically these majestic horses have strong ties to the royal courts of Europe, the military, bullfighting and the classical

training methods of the *Alter Real*, the traditional riding school of Portugal. Today Lusitanos are also recognized for their ability to perform well in a variety of modern-day equestrian disciplines — notably the increasingly popular amateur and professional sports of dressage and carriage driving — and for their generous temperament, making them popular with owners who like to ride for pleasure.

The Lusitanos from Interagro’s breeding

farm just outside São Paulo have been carefully selected for presentation at the 2009 Lusitano Collection. They are as much ambassadors for the breed as the breeders themselves, and they will be accompanied by a prestigious team including trainers, breeders, the Interagro in-house veterinarian and grooms.

Swedish Grand Prix dressage rider Pia Aragão is head of the Interagro Picadeiro in Brazil, where each horse begins its training. She will attend the auction to give advice and input as clients review the horses. “I know all the horses extremely well,” she said. “I know their temperaments and the quality of their gaits.”

Interagro also works with Heather Bender, a Palm City dressage trainer and rider who visits Interagro in Brazil during the months preceding the auction. She assists in selecting those horses that are most suitable for the U.S. market.

“Interagro understands that their best advertising results from people being successful with their Interagro horses,” Bender explained. “I will also be available during the tryouts so I can meet with buyers; people can tell me what they are seeking, and I can advise them due to my intimate knowledge of the horses we’ve brought.”

This year, the Lusitano Collection includes driving horses, breeding prospects and a carefully selected representation of horses already under saddle, a few with experience in dressage competitions in Brazil.

“Some of these horses can reach the top,” Aragão said. “There’s no doubt about it. We also have horses that would suit amateurs rather than professionals. They have such wonderful temperaments and are so willing.”

The 2009 Lusitano Collection, as with previous events, is by invitation only. Clients who are not already based in Wellington for the winter will fly from across the United States and Canada specifically to attend

