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Photo by Ili Zucal

HONZA & GASTON

Honza: Level 3 "Refinement" Graduate (Czech Republic)

Gaston [7-year-old Czech Warmblood x Russian Mustang]

"I started riding at eight-years-old at a riding facility in Czechoslovakia.

"When 'The Berlin Wall' came down in 1989, the facilities became privatized and riding became too costly.

"At 16, after four years away from horses, I started looking for people who had horses but weren't using them. I cleaned stalls in exchange for riding.

"I wanted my own horse - any horse - it didn't matter. Finally, at 19, I bought my first horse, Gaston, a three-year-old stallion. His father was a Czech Warmblood, his mother a Russian Mustang.

"It took three of us to push Gaston into the trailer. And after one mile of driving, we stopped to look at him. He had climbed under the front bar in the trailer and was stuck. We had to take the trailer apart to release him.

"I let him stand in the pasture at home for the first two days, then I put a bridle on him to ride, but I could not stop him. So, I pointed him toward the top of a big hill - even at the top it took some time before he stopped - but I didn't fall off, so that was good.

"One day I wanted to go to a



Photo by Casey

Western riding tournament. I took my backpack, a sleeping bag and food for Gaston. The tournament was 30 miles from my house and I had no trailer. After five miles of riding in a big shank bit, Gaston did not want to go anymore, so I got off and dragged him the rest of the way.

"I arrived late at night, and the stallion in Gaston came alive. He climbed his stall, he wouldn't eat, and he tried to breed other horses through the fence. A man who saw the problems I was having said he had seen Pat Parelli in Holland and that I needed to go learn from Pat.

"I then went to work at a handicapped children's school for my Alternative Military Service. I asked my father and sister to ride and look after Gaston, but it did not go well. Every week someone would fall off. My father broke his arm. One morning Gaston reared up and struck my sister

on the shoulder to get the feed she was giving the chickens. He threatened my mother at the front door... Everyone was scared of him.

"My Director, who is a friend of my Father's, said I could bring Gaston to the school because he wanted to keep my family alive. I kept Gaston at the Children's Hippotherapy Facility. Things there did not go well either, until two months later when one of Pat Parelli's instructors presented a Level 1 'Partnership Clinic.' It said 'no stallions' so I went alone.

"The instructor gave a demonstration with his Level 3 horse and right then I knew I had to study this system. I never knew such things were possible with horses.

"After gelding Gaston, I practiced every day what I learned at this clinic, as well as some of the things I had seen the instructor do with his own horse. I saw much progress and for the very first time I started to have fun with Gaston.

"One year later I took Gaston to a Parelli Level 1 clinic, thinking I was going to be the worst

person there. At this clinic I laid Gaston down, circled him at liberty and backed him into a trailer. One day in class the instructor came to me and said 'Honza, you are already Level 1... and more!'

"After that I started the Parelli Level 2 'Harmony' program, and in May 2000 I sent my Level 2 video tasks to a Parelli Instructor and passed. In August I went to a Parelli Level 3 'Refinement' Camp, and in March 2001 I passed my Level 3.

"My goal now is to find four unstarted, 3-year-old Arabian geldings and take each of them to Level 3!"

(Pat Parelli has invited Honza and Gaston to be part of the "USA Savvy Team" on the 2002 Success with Horses Tour. Don't miss it!)

Many people start Pat Parelli's Savvy System to learn how to overcome a problem or resistance, and how to stay safe around horses. But as they learn to solve these resistances, they experience a whole new level of horsemanship and find themselves doing more with their horses than they ever dreamed possible. To discover your true potential with horses, call 1-800-642-3335 or 970-731-9400 (Canada 1-877-PARELLI) for your free Parelli Natural Horse-Man-Ship brochure or visit www.parelli.com.



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