



Spectacular 300-piece art exhibition opens at the Kentucky Horse Park

June 19, 2009



The Kentucky Horse Park's International Museum of the Horse is pleased to announce *Arte en la Charrería: The Artisanry of Mexican Equestrian Culture*, an exhibition illustrating one of the richest on-going traditions of Mexico through art objects and costume. *Arte en la Charrería* is on view now through September 11.

More than 300 spectacular objects in *Arte en la Charrería*—many dating from the late 1800s—offer a window through which to view the unique culture surrounding the charro, or Mexican cowboy. Leather work, costumes, textiles, silver and iron work, although crafted to serve a utilitarian purpose, merit consideration as art objects due to the exceptional craftsmanship of the charrería artisan, who takes pleasure in making each object with the bearer in mind.

The culture of charrería is rooted in a nearly 500-year-old heritage dating back to the introduction of horses and cattle to the New World. During the 19th century, charros began to organize celebrations to showcase their skills and compete against one another. After the Mexican Revolution, in an effort to preserve the tradition, these competitions were formalized by charrería associations. Charrería thrives today as the national sport of Mexico.

The objects in the exhibition are part of a collection started in the 19th century by Gumaro González, a landowner in Nuevo Leon, Mexico; collecting charrería artifacts remains a González family passion ever since. Gumaro's son and grandson, Roberto and Luis, built upon the collection by traveling throughout the country seeking the best embroiderers, tailors, hat makers, and blacksmiths. Through their devotion, they formed one of the most complete collections of charro articles, and the most important collection of charro saddles in Mexico.

The tour of *Arte en la Charrería* is particularly timely in that 2010 marks both the Bicentennial of Mexico's independence from Spain and the 100th Anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. The articles and costumes on display are more than simple vestiges of a nation's folk tradition; they are reminders of a rich heritage that continues to this day.

Arte en la Charrería: The Artisanry of Mexican Equestrian Culture at the Kentucky Horse Park is sponsored in part by AT&T Real Yellow Pages®, La Voz de Kentucky and Jalapeno's restaurant.

For information about the exhibition, call the museum at 859-259-4232.