



VI Kaliber Andalusia Endurance Ride 2011

Marta Hidalgo wins the 400 kilometers Andalusia Endurance Ride

Spanish Marta Hidalgo won the 400 kilometers 2011 Kaliber Andalusia Endurance Ride riding HERMES, past year's winner with his owner Eduardo Sanchez, the cousin of Marta

by Kristian Fenaux ■ photos by Kristian Fenaux

The Kaliber Andalusia Endurance Ride is a unrivaled event in the world of the equestrian endurance sport, not only because it is probably the longest endurance ride, but also because of the outstanding scenery of the Spanish region of Andalusia: a luxuriant countryside, an unequalled historical background and a unique architectural heritage, all of it dressed up with the very best of Andalusian hospitality which makes everything even more inimitable.

The sixth edition of the Kaliber Andalusia Endurance Ride took place from 2nd to 9th april, going this year from west to east, following the Guadalquivir river. The start was in El Rocio with the final finish line in Andujar, 7 stages and 400 kilometers later, after visiting Seville, Carmona, Ecija and Cordoba.

Thirty six horses from five nations lined up at the start, coming from Brazil, France, Italy, Switzerland and Spain.



Marta Hidalgo on Hermes, Carmona

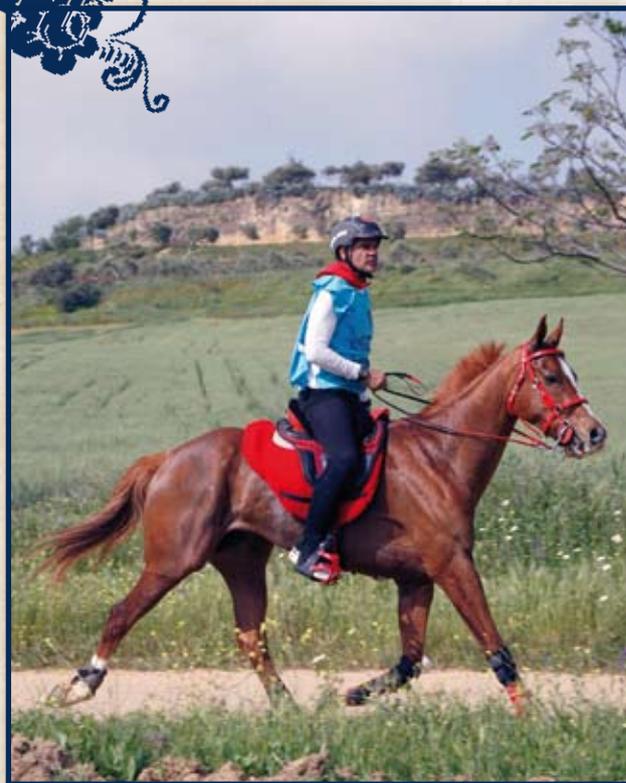
The competition rules of this unique ride state that if a horse is pulled at any vet-gate, then it gets a penalty, but can still compete during the following days if the vets think the horse is again fit to go. If a horse needs a rest day, it may be allowed not to start but gets also a penalty. The final standings show that thirty two horses officially finished the ride, with twenty one of these without penalties, five more with one stage penalty and the other six horses with two or more stage penalties. Twenty one finishers out of thirty six starters is an outstanding achievement for a 400 kilometers ride, the best ever finishing rate for this ride, a success based on the rider's understanding of the need to measure correctly their horses' efforts day after day.

This year the Kaliber Andalusia Endurance Ride crossed the Natural Parks of Entorno de Doñana, Sierra de Montoro, Sierra de Cardena and Sierra de Andujar and visited the cities of Seville, Carmona, Ecija and Cordoba as well as se-

veral less known townships as Almodovar del Rio with its medieval castle, Montoro, Cardeña, Andujar and Fuentes de Andalusia. The weather was gentle and sunnier than past year, although the second stage, in Seville, finished with a huge shower.

The first stage went from El Rocio to Seville, on saturday 2nd of april, where Marta Hidalgo and HERMES finished in first position, laying the foundation of their final victory from the very first day. On sunday there was an exhibition stage, no competitive, through the city of Seville, with the riders visiting the most important areas of the Andalusian capitol city: the Puente de la Barqueta, the Giralda Cathedral, the Torre del Oro, the Real Maestranza bullring, the Plaza de España and the San Telmo Palace.

On monday the competition continued at the Dos Hermanas racetrack and going to Carmona. Jesus Ruiz on DURANGO and Joan Cano on LA-MARASH set the pace and arrived in the first positions at Carmona where stage winner Jesus Ruiz took over the leading position in the general standings. Next day, going from Carmona to Ecija, it was again Joan Cano and LA-MARASH who set the pace, followed now by Marta Hidalgo and Stefano Chidichimo riding respectively HERMES and PICAPIEDRA. After the vet-gate in Fuentes de Andalusia Cano and Hidalgo continued in



Jesus Manuel Ruiz with Durango, between Alcalá de Guadaira and Mairena del Alcor



Carlos Otaolaurruchi on Caracol, leaving Villamanrique de la Condesa

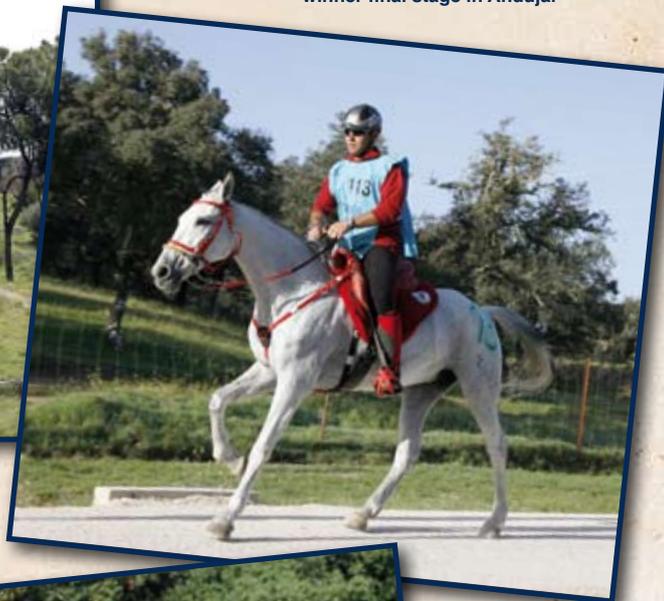
front and with less than 10 kilometers to finish line LA-MARASH was tired while HERMES took over to win the fourth stage and recover the general standings' first place for Marta Hidalgo.

The fifth stage went from Ecija to Almodovar del Rio, close to Cordoba and now it was Jesus Ruiz who tried to make a comeback with his anglo-arab DURANGO. He took the lead from the start, in company of Santiago Perez Dorao on SAYYARA, and they pushed the speed up to an average of almost 20 kilometers per hour. Halfway the stage french couple Paulette and Daniel Maldera, riding LOUNA-DE-RIVOIRON and OTELLO-DE-RIVOIRON, connected with the front riders, but these then rushed again forwards to Almodovar del Rio where Jesus Ruiz won the stage and recovered the first position at the general standings.

After a rest day in Cordoba, with a visit to the Caballerizas Reales (the Royal Stables), builded in 1570 by King Felipe II, the Kaliber Andalusia Ride continued on friday 8th of april with the most demanding stage of this year's edition, a 76 kilometers mountain stage between Villafranca de Cordoba and Cardeña. From the first kilometers french Paulette Maldera, riding LOUNA-DE-RIVOIRON, set the pace only followed by Jesus Ruiz on DURANGO and Marta Hidalgo on HERMES. They arrived at the vet-gate in Montoro with more then 8 minutes advantage to their follo-



Jorge Montaña with Espléndida, winner final stage in Andújar



Paulete Maldera on Louna De Rivoiron, fourth placed and Best Condition Award winner



Stefano Chidichimo on Picapiedra

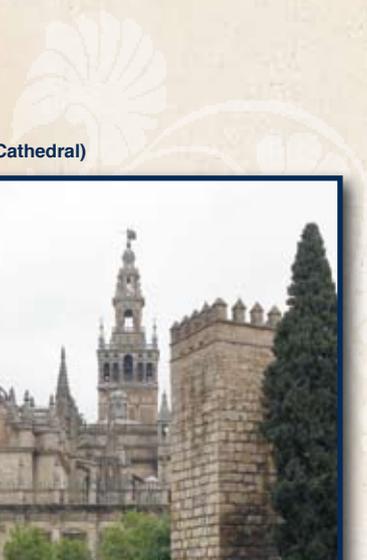


wers, and here DURANGO was the first to clear, gaining 2 more minutes from HERMES and LOUNA-DE-RIVOIRON. The second loop, all climbing upwards from Montoro to Cardena, brought the three leaders together again, but then LOUNA-DE-RIVOIRON lost a shoe and more than 15 minutes waiting for the race farrier. At the last crew point of the day Marta Hidalgo and HERMES went forwards to win the stage and regain the lead in the general standings.

The last stage went from Cardena to the Virgen de La Cabeza Sanctuary in Andujar, all upwards for 49 kilometers, to reach the final finish line. Both HERMES with Marta Hidalgo and DURANGO with Jesus Ruiz could still win the ride, but from the very first kilometers Marta Hidalgo and

HERMES kept close to the front riders Jorge Montaña on ESPLENDIDA and Carlos Otaolaurruchi on CARACOL, while Jesus Ruiz and DURANGO travelled with a second group about 5 minutes behind. Finally Jorge Montaña won the stage with ESPLENDIDA while Marta Hidalgo came in second with HERMES and secured the final victory.

After 7 stages and 400 kilometers Marta Hidalgo and HERMES were the winners with second place going to Je-



Seville, Plaza de Toros de la Real Maestranza, Puerta del Principe

Seville, Giralda (Cathedral)



sus Ruiz and DURANGO, followed by Carlos Otaolauruchi riding CARACOL and french Paulette Maldera with LOUNA-DE-RIVOIRON, who got the Best Condition Award. Twenty one riders did complete the 7 stages without penalties, out of thirty six at the start. The uniqueness of the Kaliber Andalusia Endurance Ride is not only the 400 kilometers competition, but the opportunity to enjoy both the endurance ride and the extraordinary andalusian country, all the monuments and historic buildings and the very special andalusian hospitality. This is a truly unique experience in a unique environment and a friendly and very spontaneous organization: the very best endurance ride in the world. □



Véronique Gaillard / Daniel Maldera (sprint last stage)



Natasha Rosenthal with Rum Wadi De Sommant in Seville