

European Road Trip with Jaime Jackson

by Jill Willis

Before we even left the U.S., the schedule for Jaime Jackson's and my trip to Europe to do some promotion on behalf of the AANHCP (Assoc. for the Advancement of Natural Horse Care Practices), the new training program, and natural hoof care, was already shaping up to be a jam-packed, relentless one. We had several "anchor events" around which we built the rest of the itinerary. Primary on the schedule—Jaime had an invitation to speak about natural hoof care at a special symposium on different methods of trimming at a Dutch vocational school, **The Helicon**, at its Deurne campus, which houses its equestrian educational programs, including the leading farriery school in Holland.

The symposium featured four different lectures, and was one of several events scheduled in conjunction with the annual educational fair held at the school by the **European Federation of Farriers (EFFA)**. Because it was also a part of the school's 40th anniversary celebration, farriers as well as students had been invited to attend the special Congress titled "Trimming: Now and in the Future." It felt like tremendous progress to have this very traditional farriery school eager to bring Jaime in from the U.S. to lecture on the wild horse model and "The Natural Trim."

We had invited all of our European CPs (Certified Practitioners) interested in becoming instructors for the new program to meet with us, so that Jaime could review the new curriculum and conduct a teaching workshop. Since we were going to the Netherlands for the Helicon event, it seemed to make the most sense to keep everything based in Holland that first week, before we headed over to Italy where Jaime had another speaking engagement, in addition to a commitment to conduct a workshop for 10 of our Italian students in the program.

Arriving in Holland

We arrived in Amsterdam on the first of November, which turned out to be our only free day on the entire trip. We found our way to the rental car facility outside the airport and soon headed off to Ede, where the hotel was located. We were staying about 90 minutes from the airport, and our adventure began almost immediately when road construction caused us to be unable to take our exit... We never were able to turn around and get on the proper exit, but somehow we managed to bump into Ede and then the hotel.

The fun further continued when I discovered that for the first time in many, many years of traveling to Europe for business, my blackberry would not work. It was "locked" to its U.S. provider, a concept I was completely unaware of, but had apparently agreed to use. So no texting and no constant email access for me. At least there was wireless



All photos courtesy Jill Willis

AANHCP CPs Louise Bach-Holler (Denmark), Nick Hill (Scotland), Wout Overbeeke (Holland), Gudrun Buchhofer (Canada), Luca Gandini (Italy), Jaime Jackson (USA) and Jill Willis (USA) in Lunteren, Holland.

network at the hotel. Well, there was...except it was not working properly for any of the guests!

The pressure was on, but I was determined to make it all work. We had a lot of irons in the fire, and I was not about to let a malfunctioning blackberry be our downfall. We had originally booked the tickets to get in a few days early, in order to adjust to the time change, and possibly allow us one free day. But now there was no time, as just about every possibility we had initially explored ultimately turned into something tangible. Our schedule was completely booked, with commitments on 19 of the 20 days we were there.

Since this was Jaime's first trip to Europe in 10 years, it was to be his first time over there since the AANHCP had been formed. Not only was the trip long overdue in general, but because we had made some fairly dramatic changes to the AANHCP's training program structure this past year, it seemed especially important we take the time to go this fall. While most of the feedback we received about the new training program had been met with enthusiasm, we knew that some of our members were confused or concerned about related changes that had occurred. Thus, we both felt it was important for our CPs to be given the opportunity for some direct "face to face" time with Jaime.

CPs Bjorn Rhebergen and Wout Overbeeke, both native residents of Holland, were the perfect hosts! Like many of the Dutch people, they are fluent in English, and so communication was effortless. Wout and his wife, Regine, organized the location—as well as most of the logistics—for the **instructor training program workshop**. Bjorn organized a day-long public event, where Jaime was to give lectures on Paddock Paradise and natural hoof care in the morning, and then provide a hands-on workshop, along with five of our other CPs, in the afternoon session.

In all, CPs from four other countries also came to spend the week with us. Gudrun Buchhofer (Nova Scotia), Luca Gandini (Italy), Nick Hill (Scotland), and Louise Bach-Holler (Denmark) were all flying

into Amsterdam to attend both the instructor training as well as the rest of the events in Holland.

The day that everyone was scheduled to arrive, Jaime and I had an appointment with Afke Teunen, a writer assigned by the **Dutch equestrian magazine, BIT**, to interview Jaime for an article that had been in the works for nearly eight months. Afke had asked if she could have about a four-hour window for her interview. We both immediately liked her on a number of levels. A former horse owner, she expressed some of same feelings of guilt about the unnatural ways she had cared for her horse at one time—just like so many of us who have since found our way to a better understanding of natural horse care. She was well prepared for the interview, asked good questions, and seemed especially fascinated when Jaime brought out the wild horse cadaver hooves. Seeing them for the first time, for real as opposed to just in pictures, and being able to touch them is usually a momentous moment for most people. She was not an exception. The four hours that we spent with Afke raced by, and no sooner had we said our "good-byes," we saw Gudrun enter the hotel lobby, having just arrived from the airport.

That evening, Wout and Regine were the first to show up at the planned get-together in the lounge of our hotel, Hotel Paasberg, in Ede. They are a striking couple, both good looking and tall, as though they'd been cast to play the part of two somewhat glamorous but earthy, outdoor, equestrian types. It was a real coordinated effort having all eight of us arriving from different parts of the world, meeting for drinks at 7 pm. Bjorn soon arrived with Nick; Louise Bach-Holler and her husband, Thomas, arrived together at the hotel with Dr. Luca Gandini. Most of them had not seen Jaime for at least several years, and I could see the excitement and anticipation emanating from each CP in their own way. For a few of them, just seeing that Jaime was there seemed to bring a sigh of relief.

Although I had been working with everyone from a distance, it was my first time meeting most of them, and I liked everyone immediately. Although they had all made a point to step up to the plate just by making plans to be there, I could detect a bit of hesitancy from a few of them, and Jaime being there to discuss some of their concerns directly seemed to be reassuring. Although I felt that we were in the midst of making a lot of progress in the structure of the AANHCP, it was no secret that there was some confusion among the ranks as a result of some of the ancillary changes that had occurred.

I assumed I was not the only one who felt a sense of frustration over a lack of communication—and professionalism, to boot—from the "leadership" of the association during the years since I had first joined the organization. Although a lot of changes had taken place within the AANHCP in the previ-

ous year, there was not a clear understanding about what our role was—or was not—in some of the situations that had occurred. Naturally, people were curious and wanted to better understand the issues behind some of the decisions we had made as well, as those actions that were a result of decisions we had not been directly involved in making.

Thankfully, no one seemed to be particularly interested in wasting time on idle gossip. So, to the degree that we could share information that was not confidential, we talked candidly that night about some of the events of the past year—changes in structure, and changes in the program. Jaime and I were united in the belief that the bar needed to be raised in the training program, in order to be confident that a higher standard of excellence would be achieved upon completion. I tend to think of the streamlining to be like that of any detoxification process. Often things appear to get worse before they get better, as a result of the laws of chaos. But I also believe that if we are acting in accordance with the flow of nature and its energy, then it is only a matter of time before healing takes place. And when the foundation is laid properly, the future structure will be strong. Simple!

For the next three days, we met each morning for the **instructor training program workshop** at a gorgeous turn-of-the-century farm and equestrian facility in Lunteren, a heavily wooded, beautiful rural area where Wout and Regine kept their horses, just walking distance from their home. In fact, the cobblestone path between the barn and one of the pastures led right down to the Paddock Paradise they had recently completed for their own horses to live, along with any of Wout's client's horses in need of rehabilitation.

Most of us stayed together until 10 or 11 pm each night—all the while engaging in a series of conversations and some spirited debates on a variety of topics related to horses and natural hoof care. Jaime's review of the new curriculum instigated numerous conversations about our experiences with specific cases and clients, as well as an exchange of ideas on different issues with hooves, diet and horse keeping practices. We discussed challenges, possibilities and the fact that there is a lot we don't know that research could tell us. All the CPs trimmed a cadaver hoof, simply to demonstrate an absolute understanding of the model and the finer details of the trim. And, of course, we received some excellent feedback that is being incorporated into the first training camp that takes place in Texas in December.

We finished a few hours earlier on the third and final day, in order to meet the photographer from BIT Magazine who wanted a few hours to get some shots of Jaime at work. Luckily, the sun came out for the first time in five days, just minutes before we arrived. Wout had Regine's bay gelding, a very sweet Dutch Warmblood named Trance, groomed and ready for his starring role with Jaime. Hooves had been rinsed, and mud wiped away. Upon finishing that, we headed back



All photos courtesy Jill Willis

Wout Overbeeke at the AANHCP's public clinic in Arnhem, Holland.

to the hotel to prepare for an early morning departure to the Helicon Campus, for the **European Federation of Farriers trimming symposium**.

Wout picked up Jaime and I, and the rest of the group were arriving separately. When we pulled into the parking lot of the Deurne Campus of the Helicon School, it was filled with farriers' vans—all customized with their company names and telltale horseshoe-designed logos. I couldn't help but wonder what they would think of Jaime's lecture. Would they even attend? Would they listen? Would they understand?

At 9:00 am, the General Manager of the school, Frans Hoeks, took the stage to welcome everyone, and then to introduce 50-year veteran U.K. farrier David Gulley, president of the EFFA, which sponsored the day's "Trimming Symposium." Ironically, just before introducing Jaime as the day's first speaker, David Gulley talked about the previous day's "fascinating field trip to a local horseshoe factory," and then remarked that "the trim is the most important part of the shoeing process."

However, in response to several statements Jaime made during his presentation on natural hoof care, he was given a "thumbs up" from the school's GM who sat in the front row. I guess progress often takes one step forward and one step backward!

Following the lecture, the grounds manager took us into the barn to show us six barefoot horses which Jaime could use during the afternoon workshop to demonstrate the natural trim. Because so many people had signed up to attend the workshop, we weren't sure how we were going to accommodate everyone once it started raining. Fortunately, Wout and Louise both had their tools in their cars and agreed to trim as well.

The horses we used were typical of those who spent most of their time inside stalls. Each one was extremely anxious, and demonstrated fairly neurotic behavior. Although we did our best to exercise some form of crowd control, our workshop was very popular and the attendees did not want to leave as new people showed. Over the course of three hours, a lot of questions were asked and answered, the horses got trimmed, and even the calm of all the horses under our gentle handling was noticed and commented on. We definitely brought something new to that partic-

ular group's level of awareness!

It was particularly uplifting to have a sense of the impact that Jaime's presentation had made, when many of the farriers attending his lecture at the Helicon ended up showing up the next day to attend the **AANHCP's public clinic** where Jaime gave a similar presentation on natural hoof care, as well as a lecture on Paddock Paradise and natural horse care.

Bjorn had organized the clinic at "De Paardenmaat," which was a gorgeous, rustic horse boarding facility set on 40 rolling and wooded acres that belonged to his clients, Piet and Anita Nibbelink. The barn had been transformed into a lecture hall for the morning session, and then the trimming workshops took place in a large outdoor arena that afternoon. Not only did we have farriers, veterinarians and a number of horse owners attending, but also quite a few barefoot trimmers, as well. Several of those who were self taught thought they had been conducting the same method of trimming, and others came to learn more about the wild horse model.

Jaime spent about an hour with his workshop group, before even beginning to trim. He wanted to stress that they should not leave thinking that, after spending a few hours, they now knew how to perform a natural trim. He explained that much of what the AANHCP does by simulating the wear patterns of the wild horse is done in order to stimulate natural, healthy growth. Although the trim is simple, the underlying principles are very complex and it was clear that the more the participants learned, the more they began to realize how much they didn't know—a sure sign of intelligence!!

The cold and dark from the sun going down forced everyone back inside a rustic log lodge attached to the barn, where the conversations continued. Many people were excited to share the results they are seeing from implementing Paddock Paradieses for their horses. Because Holland is basically flat and very wet, the traditional pasture set-up lends itself to creating chronic laminitic conditions, and many people were forced to find a healthier alternative. In fact, in a presentation by Bjorn earlier in the day, clinic participants were able to see first hand from drawings and diagrams how this traditional boarding set-up was to be transformed into a natural boarding facility through the installation of a planned Paddock Paradise he was designing for our clinic hosts, the Nibbelinks.

On to Italy

Although we hated to leave the warm camaraderie of our group in Holland, our week in Holland had come to an end, and we said our goodbyes to everyone. Of course, we would still be seeing Luca a lot over the next few weeks, as we traveled to Italy. Jaime and I were scheduled to depart for Rome the next day and begin the next stage of our trip.

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The weather in Rome was a welcome change from the constant drizzling rain we'd had during the entire week in Holland. Within about half an hour after arriving at our hotel, Luca picked us up to take us to dinner with him and his partner of 25 years, Petronilla Cesarei, along with some clients-turned-friends, Stephanie and Mike. In fact, when Luca and Petri organized and hosted the orientation clinics this past May in Italy, it was Mike who provided the English to Italian and Italian to English translations at the clinic. In addition to his University job as a sociology professor, Mike is also a professional translator, fluent in Italian, Russian and English, and has translated at meetings of various world leaders, including a meeting between George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin.

Petronilla had done a lot of the advance coordinating and organizing of various parts of the entire trip. In particular, she had organized a "Step 5" weekend clinic for Jaime to teach to 10 of the Italian students in the training program, in addition to helping with various travel plans. "Petri" is so at ease helping Luca organize his AANHCP clinics and workshops and annual Congress for "Barefoot Italia," a large group of like-minded endurance and trail riders who share a belief in barefootedness, because in her "real" job, she organizes events such as the G-20 and G-8 Summits for world leaders. Both Luca and Petri had grown up in the heart of Rome, and took us on a two-hour walking tour of the city following dinner that night. Such a treat!

The next day, Jaime and I decided to visit the Coliseum. Immediately upon arrival at the Coliseum—just an overwhelmingly beautiful and amazing structure—we came across a series of carriage horses for hire for all the tourists in the area. We went over to say hello to the horses, and take a look at their feet. Like most other equines with similar jobs around the world, they were shod in heavy shoes, with wedged pads and clips gripping into their hoof walls. As always, it is difficult to walk away from situations such as this, when horses are clearly in distress. There was one sturdy bay stallion in particular who seemed to know that we were not like most of the other humans he'd encountered. I gave him part of an orange, whispered an apology to him on behalf of my species, stroked his neck and promised I'd do what I could to bring about some humane changes for him and his fellow equines.

Later that night, the head of the Equine Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Department, Lucio Petrizzi, DVS, had invited Luca, Jaime and me to a dinner he hosted with another professor at the veterinary school, Pia Lucidi. We were joined by a young equine veterinarian, a natural boarding facility owner and friend of Luca's, as well as one of the AANHCP students who would be attending the Step 5 clinic, Anita Leombruni, who lives in that region of Italy. Anita frequently lectures on natural horse care and has been invited to speak before



All photos courtesy Jill Willis

From left, Prof. Lucio Petrizzi, Director, Dept. of Equine Surgery at University of Teramo School Veterinary Medicine (and owner of four barefoot horses), Prof. Pia Lucidi, Dept. of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Teramo's School of Veterinary Medicine (and creator of its new "Animal Wellness" program) with Jaime Jackson following his half-day seminar at the University.

classes of animal science students enrolled in the new "Animal Wellness" program at the School of Veterinary Medicine. Fun, engaging, stimulating, interesting, intelligent Italian and English conversation flowed on the topic of horses, barefoot hooves, pathology, healing, the wild horse and natural care.

The next morning, we were off for the 2-1/2 hour drive to Abruzzi, the location of the **University of Teramo's School of Veterinary Medicine** and specifically, its Equine Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programs. Jaime spoke in-depth to an audience of some 100 students, veterinarians, University faculty as well as members of the general public on Natural Hoof Care, Natural Horse Care, and Natural Horse Boarding using the AANHCP's model, the wild, free-roaming horse of the Great Basin.

It was so exciting that just 10 days after Jaime was invited to present his research and findings on natural hoof care to a group of farriers in Holland, he was now conducting a seminar on the wild horse model in a University setting with equine vet students and faculty. If up and coming young equine veterinarians could be reached when it was still possible to inspire them, who knows what might be possible for horses over the next 10 years?

With both Professor Petrizzi and Luca helping to translate, Jaime talked for several hours on natural horse care and showed some footage shot by the BLM of wild horses in Utah before, during and after a gather. At least another hour or more was devoted to taking questions. The wild horse cadaver hooves were passed around and discussed and numerous slides of before and after photos of Jaime's clients were shown. Two of Jaime's books that were translated into the Italian language had just been published, and the room buzzed with chatter when those were made available. Lots of good questions were asked, in addition to many people simply wanting to share their positive experiences as a result of finding NHC and/or Paddock Paradise.

After everything was winding down, a veterinarian by the name of Cristina Zacchia was introduced to us by Professor Lucidi. Dr. Zacchia worked for the Ministry of Health and Animal Welfare Office in Rome, where she conducted visits to zoos and other wild animal exhibits to make sure the standards of their habitat was met and maintained. She asked us to lunch, in order to discuss some ideas on ways that the Ministry's office could help further the mission of the AANHCP. She was also interested in bridging her work with the natural habitats of zoo animals to that of horses' natural lifestyle via Paddock Paradise. Hopefully in later issues, we'll have lots of good news to report from these new alliances. Prof. Petrizzi, who has his own barefoot horses, also intends to have a continued and growing involvement between his students and the AANHCP. In fact, Luca is already beginning to formulate two possible research projects for the AANHCP, using some of Prof. Petrizzi's equine vet students to gather and record data.

We returned to Rome that evening and took a high speed train to Florence the following morning, where we were met by AANHCP students Dario Arcamone and Ilaria Damiani. Jaime conducted mentorships with both of them that day at El Asil Arabians, a world renowned breeding farm of Egyptian Arabians located in a magical setting in Pistoia, about an hour from Florence. Dario had just recently started trimming horses at El Asil, and there was a lot of curiosity about natural hoof care from the employees and other boarders, as well. Even the farm's owner, Moschini, showed up to meet "the famous American hoof expert." Three horses were trimmed, and Jaime consulted with the owner of a shod stallion to confirm that the horse could benefit greatly from having the shoes removed and being in Dario's care.

We set out early the following morning, so that Jaime could conduct another mentorship with both Dario and Ilaria before driving to the location of Jaime's Step 5 Clinic, titled "Introduction to Trimming Live Horses." Dario, a sculpture instructor to English-speaking students at the Studio Arts Center International in Florence, had also been hired to translate for the weekend, since most of the students Jaime was teaching that weekend did not speak any English.

The Step 5 Clinic, held at a beautiful, Italian-country resort on 30 acres in the north of Italy between Pisa and Turin, is owned by AANHCP student Gigi Guerino Borgis. Along with guest facilities for humans, Gigi and his wife also run a boarding facility and have an Arabian breeding program specializing in endurance bloodlines. In addition, they have a large number of rescue horses living in a large Paddock Paradise installed for both their own and clients' horses, so it was the perfect place to hold the two-day clinic. We had a gorgeous classroom for the students inside the main lodge—a perfect learning environment, with plenty of horses at our disposal in need of trimming.

In addition to supervising the natural trimming of

some overgrown pasture horses, one boarder had requested a consultation with Jaime for her shod and laminitic Palomino Quarter Horse who had also endured a resection on one foot. It seemed especially helpful to these students beginning their field mentorships to have witnessed Jaime removing the shoes and trimming (and just as important, not trimming what needed to grow) this particular horse.

We continued on into Tuscany the next week with Dario and Ilaria, where Jaime conducted more mentorships with them on a wide variety of client horses that included: a gorgeous chestnut Thoroughbred mare who had a fracture of the coffin bone at the extensor process; a foundered Shetland pony who lived in a chicken coop; and two French Draft mixes, Megan and Ben, a mother/son team who had been rescued from a breeder raising horses for meat.

The week soon ended, and we were once again saying goodbye to more new friends. One Step 5 student had commented that he felt that the Italians have a unique appreciation for the inspiration and teaching of the great Masters of Art and Science, and that he saw an interesting parallel in the time he was able to spend learning directly from Jaime. I'm not sure if the students enjoyed their time with Jaime any more than he enjoyed his time with them. Although he loves his time beneath the horses and educating anyone who is interested, engaging in stimulating conversation while eating excellent food in a beautiful country with intelligent, curious and like-minded people who love to laugh as much as they love to serve the horse and the horse world is definitely a nice part of his work, as well.

You would think the trip was officially over after our plane departed from Rome to begin the journey back home. Instead, we had what I believe was a very significant occurrence when we changed planes in Amsterdam. I stopped to get a newspaper while walking toward our gate, and, when I came out of the store, I saw Chris Oomen, the organizer of the Helicon event, standing next to Jaime! He had seen us walking by while he was waiting to board a plane to Sweden to attend the European Federation of Farriers' annual conference. He seemed thrilled to run into us, and thanked Jaime profusely for the lecture and workshop. Then, he asked if Jaime would mind signing the book he'd brought along to read on the plane. It was a copy of Jaime's book, *The Natural Horse*. 🐾

About the author: Jill Willis, a CP, is the Program Director and Assistant Director, Operations, for the AANHCP. "Although it is very tempting to move to Italy, for now Jaime and I live and work together in the Central Coastal area of California where we live and breathe horses, natural hoof care and the AANHCP."

For more photos of Jaime's European Road Trip, please see page 24.

Q&A from Jaime Jackson

Questions From Horse Owners "About Natural Horse Care"

I get lots of NHC related questions from horse owners all around the world every week. Today, I'm addressing several concerns I hear commonly that stem from their trainers and "natural horsemanship."

Q: My three year old filly has been trimmed by one of your practitioners for nearly a year now, and the hooves look great and there haven't been any problems. For the past 3 months, I've had her at a trainer, since she has been a "handful" to ride, and I feel someone with more experience than me was necessary to get her started. Well, last week, I rode her for the first time, and she did real well. I got home (my filly is still at the trainer), and the next day, the trainer said she is "clipping" in the hind feet when being ridden, and so he put padding around her lower legs to protect them. He says the hooves are not balanced, and that I need to have some corrective trimming or shoeing done to fix the problem. Can you tell me what to do?

JJ: "Clipping", a type of interference, is when a left or right hoof strikes the other. Here's my rule of thumb in such cases. If your horse is not clipping when "at liberty" (no rider), and particularly when the hooves are trimmed according to NHC principles, you have to look at how the horse is being ridden. For a variety of reasons, especially with horses that are borderline too young to ride, clipping may be caused by heavy handedness, causing the horse to retreat from the bit ("behind the bit"), shuffling her feet to keep balanced, and "clipping" herself in the process, especially when turning abruptly or moving too fast "on the forehand." I personally believe it is harmful to ride horses much before they are five years of age, and some horses should probably not be ridden until even later. This has to do with the musculoskelature not being developed (mature) enough to take the load of the rider's weight and also the rider's demands, without "overloading the system" and causing imbalance and harm. The solution? Get an older horse to ride in the meantime, and learn to become a "natural rider." Above all, do not resort to "corrective" trimming and shoeing, as these are gimmicky measures that only lead the unwitting away from understanding the true nature of the problem. Tallow houses and equine hospices are full of horses that were forced to move in violation of their natural abilities, and because many of their riders didn't understand what this means.

Q: I would like to have one of your NHC practitioners trim my horse, who has spent years in shoes and has unnaturally-shaped feet. But my new trainer (who trims horses himself) says that it is better to gradually trim away excess hoof over successive trim sessions to balance the feet. He says this is because my horse's tendons, liga-

ments and muscles have to gradually get used to the new feet and that removing [excess growth] "all at once" will only cause harm. What do you advise.

JJ: My advice is to have one of our practitioners trim your horse's feet according to our guidelines, which call for removing all "excess growth" that is present. What is not understood here by your trainer, is that unnaturally shaped feet obstruct the natural gaits, which, in turn, cause the musculoskelature to develop in a compensatory (and pathological) way. A "negative cycle" then takes over, wherein compromised body musculature and unnatural movement deform the feet, which, in turn, further impede natural movement and muscular development; from the standpoint of biomechanics, the horse is all screwed up. Many horses simply go lame, and some permanently so if the cycle is sustained long enough. Why prolong the horse's anguish? The solution? Get the hooves trimmed according to our AANHCP Guidelines without delay. The horse's body will begin to adjust immediately without causing him harm. To help, I would make sure the horse has ample room to live in with the other horses, and consider staying off his back if need be, until he is obviously comfortable. The analogy I use is, if you yourself wear a size 7 shoe, but, through circumstances that are beyond your control (like your horse), you have been compelled to wear size 15, what do you want to do about it to restore your comfort? Continue to wear the wrong size, or get fitted to what you really need and make the adjustment?

Q: I keep hearing about "natural horsemanship" trainers, but when I check them out, I find that they shoe their horses or recommend that horses need to be shod. What is your opinion of this?

JJ: My opinion is that they should remove the shoes from their horses and get educated. The term "natural horsemanship" is another gimmicky term used today by some of these trainers, because "going natural" is "in" these days, and it probably helps their businesses. But what does it really mean? Probably just about anything, at least that's my observation. Let's try a definition that makes sense, and one that is in keeping with AANHCP principles: natural horsemanship is the care, training and riding of the horse not in conflict with his natural gaits, behavior, diet and feet. That's not really such a tall order if one understands what it means to be a horse in the "natural" sense of the word. And that's precisely why the AANHCP uses the wild, free-roaming horse as a model of understanding to simulate. Any system or method of horsemanship that ignores or rejects this premise, or can't explain what it means exactly, is very likely causing harm to horses and isn't very natural. My advice is to be skeptical, educate yourself about our model, and be leery of hiring someone who knows less than you about the horse's natural state.—Jaime Jackson

European Road Trip Photos



In November, 2009, Jaime Jackson and Jill Willis took an exciting trip to Holland and Italy, on behalf of the AANHCP. This trip made great breakthroughs for the barefoot world! Read Jill's article starting on page 14 for all the details.

Jaime Jackson Natural Trim Workshop for the EFFA.

All photos courtesy Jill Willis



Just like so many other places in the world, the Coliseum in Rome attracts tourists from all over the world and provides carriage rides to them. Jill says, "I wished we could have removed the shoes from this bay stallion and set him up in some comfy hoof boots."



Bjorn Rhebergen (CP-Holland) discusses the natural trim with his workshop group at the public clinic at "De Paardenmaat" in Arnhem, Holland on Nov. 8, 2009. Attendees included farriers, veterinarians, horse owners, and also quite a few barefoot trimmers.



Gudrun Buchhofer, CP-Canada, demonstrates the natural trim to the group in her workshop at the AANHCP's day-long NHC Clinic, open to the public, in Arnhem, Holland.



Close up of the Bay Stallion's Hooves, outside of the Coliseum in Rome Fall 2009.



Horseowner Roberto looks on as Jaime monitors Dario Arcamone's work on the hoof wall of this Egyptian Arabian at El Asil Arabians in Tuscany.



Jaime demonstrates rasping techniques of the natural trim to a Dutch farrier attending the day-long AANHCP Public Clinic on Natural Hoof Care in Arnhem, Holland.



Jaime watches as Italian student Dario Arcamone trims the right hind on this three-year-old Egyptian Arabian filly at El Asil Arabians in Tuscany (hooves below).



AANHCP Students Alessio Di Giammatteo (left) and Ilaria Damiani discussing techniques of rasping at the November Training Clinic in Italy.



Jaime Jackson with AANHCP students Dario Arcamone, left, and Ilaria Damiani—celebrating the successful completion of Dario's final exam, making him the second CP out of about 15 students currently enrolled in Italy.



Front hooves finished in a beautiful natural trim! Three-year-old Egyptian filly at El Asil Arabians in Tuscany.



Jaime conducting mentorships with Ilaria Damiani and Dario Arcamone in Tuscany on "Megan," a French Draft mix whose fate as "meat" was altered when owners Lesley Moore and Claudio Saba rescued her and her son, "Ben."