

Los Angeles Times CALENDAR weekend

July 20, 2006

WITH THE KIDS

Head over hoofs about white stallions

By Brenda Rees

As carriers of a prestigious equine bloodline, Lipizzaner stallions may be a little more pampered than most horses — cushy private trailers, one-on-one coaching and some of the tastiest alfalfa cubes this side of Nebraska — but their history and nobility give them a leg up on your average animal acts.

Returning to the Southland this month after an absence of more than 20 years, the World Famous Lipizzaner Stallions will show off the choreography that's made them popular for centuries.

Paying homage to their ancestral roots at the famed Spanish Riding School in Vienna, Austria, the Lipizzans will prance, march and glide with tail-swishing synchronicity to a soundtrack of Strauss, Mozart and compositions written specially for them.

"It's like watching ballet with dancers who have four feet," says Gary Lashinsky, for 36 years the owner and producer of the performing herd based in Orlando, Fla. "There's so much mystique about the horses that comes from movies, television and stories. People are just fascinated with the breed."

Today an estimated 3,200 pedigreed stallions remain, 47 of which live in Orlando with Lashinsky. "It's hard to explain that bond between horse and man, but it's something ancient that keeps both of us going," he says. "I really feel like we owe them so much more than we can truly give. They are magnificent in so many ways."

Lipizzaner Stallions, Ontario Convention Center, 2000 Convention Center Way, Ontario. 7:30 p.m. today; 3 and 7:30 p.m. Friday. \$20.50 to \$22.50. Info: (909) 937-3077. Tickets: (800) 882-8258. Also: Aug. 18 at Palm Springs Convention Center; Aug. 19-20 at Anaheim Convention Center.