

Interview with Cardenas of Spain

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INTRODUCTION: DESCRIPTION OF THE STUD FARM:

Name: Cárdenas Stud (Yeguada Cardenas)

Situated: Antiguo Lagar de San Pablo, ECIJA (Province of Sevilla) SPAIN

Actual number of reproducing animals: 60.

Foundation mares: Mallorca, Edenita, Karioca, Iliada, Cariñosa, Electra, Iarquia, Ilirica, Ilustrativa, Adivina, Aborrecida, Lancera V 1957 y Alteza X.

Foundation stallions: Bilbaino III, Vasallo II, Valido, Poseído III, Levitón and Jenson.

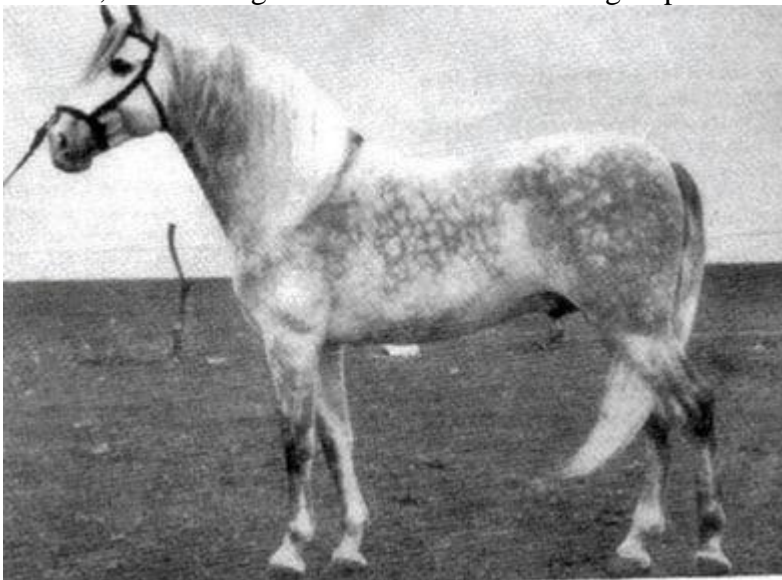
Most representative horses: Valido, Vasallo II, Genil, Gastador VIII, Jubiloso VIII, Juguetón V, Ungido IV, Clásico-MAC.

Colour: Grey.

Genetics: Carthusian and the Military Stud.

TELL US THE HISTORY OF THE CARDENAS STUD:

My father was fundamentally a great breeder that bred magnificent animals, he bred pigs, beef cattle, goats, sheep and he had a group of female donkeys to breed mules, which was very profitable in those times. I remember that he kept the female mules, because they were not valued on the market for being false. At home, with a trained staff, they were handled and caressed from very young, what the Americans call "imprinting", and they were kept at home for labour. I remember how the goats he bought had very big udders, and could not walk in the fields, he mixed them with another breed until he succeeded in getting goats that with an udder half the size gave the same amount of milk, which means, my father was a great breeder, and also a great farmer. He also had a group of Breton mares to breed mules.



Bilbaino III

The stallions that were used for the donkey mares were small Bretons, and the donkey mules they produced were very strong and therefore sold very well. Later, he sold the Breton mares, because of their low fertility rate compared with the ones from our own country, and then he bought a group of Andalusian mares around the year 1942 or 43, from some gentlemen from Osuna de Estepa, called Honorato Jordán and his brothers. This man was very good friends with Roberto Osborne.

The first stallion my father had was called Soberbio, he was the son of a Carthusian stallion and a mare of Honorato Jordán. The purchase of more mares continued, not directly, but through Alvaro Domecq and Manuel Delgado because my father was a tremendously busy man, and did not have time to go to the auctions of the Military Stud. This stud auctioned mares from many different origins, and when Alvaro Domecq or Manuel Delgado saw mares with origins from Curro Chica, they called my father, and if he gave his approval, the mares were bought. That's were almost all the mares I possess now come from.

Around the year 53/54 my father bought Bilbaino III, bred by Roberto Osborne, even though when we bought him he belonged to Fernando Terry Sr., who is now dead. Bilbaino III was a beautiful stallion but with a tremendous dishing, who complemented well the fantastic mares we had at home.

I will tell you a story about the purchase of Bilbaino III. We were going, my brother Pedro, who is four years younger than I am, and me, with our parents to Cadiz to spend the summer holidays with a relative of my mother, who stayed with us. On the way we passed on the National road IV, which at the time passed through the centre of Jerez, on the Calle Larga, and we coincided with an exhibition of horse carriages, and there were two horses pulling two charrets.

One was Descarado II and the other one was Bilbaino III, and as we were very interested in horses, we asked our father to stop to see them better, and we liked them so much that we asked him to buy one of the horses. We insisted so much for three or four days that our father asked Manolo Pavón, who was a horse dealer and a friend of the family, to buy one of the horses. We then went to the Military Stud in Jerez, where there were two stallions, sons of Bilbaino III, they were Gorrón II and Hacendoso IV. They were fantastic, but there were no sons of Descarado. So my father asked Manolo Pavón to try and get Bilbaino III. Manolo Pavón started going regularly to the Terry stables, and he found out at what times Fernando Terry went to visit his stud. He coincided with him, and as he was very pompous, he flattered him on all his horses and especially on Descarado II. He didn't speak so well of Bilbaino, though. With time and flattering, he managed to make him sell the horse.

This horse gave beauty and lots of class to the foals he gave us, while our mares added strength. Out of all these foals, my father, my brother Pedro and me, selected two stallions from the same litter. It is normal that there are good litters, and then I don't know why, there are less good litters. Well, from this excellent litter, as we could see that Bilbaino was going to disappear after serving us for twelve or fourteen years, we selected two stallions, sons of his, called Vasallo II and Valido. If the mare to cover was a full sister of Vasallo, she was covered with Valido, and vice versa.



VALIDO



VASALLO II

They were both used for the other mares, depending on the qualities of the mare. Valido was a horse with a fabulous extended trot and Vasallo was a very strong horse, with a very solid neck that took away one of the problems that Bilbaino had, which I did not tell you, that with age his crest fell over and he transmitted this defect to his offspring. When I started to manage the stud, even if I then was studying elsewhere, when I came home, I managed the stud, and my father who, as I said, was a very busy man, trusted me and listened to what I had to say.

It seems that I connected well with him in this aspect. So one year I sent twelve horses to slaughter because of the problem with the fallen crests. At the time we had many mares, over a hundred. The dishing disappeared with Vasallo, who came from a mare called Adivina, who was not very good but gave good foals, who herself came from a state stallion which from my point of view was the best, called Helicón. Valido gave fantastic sons, while the good mares came from Vasallo. The father of Valido's mother was a very good horse called Jamonero, who was exported to Portugal, where they spoke of him as a god.

Another of the stallions that passed our farm was Poseído III, who had his influence because he was the father of Genil, who was the first Spanish champion in the championships organized by the ACCE, as it was called then. At the time the ANCCE or the FENACE did not exist.

I had to sell Poseído III for a number of reasons that are of no importance here, and I sold him to Fermín Bohórquez, who is a very sympathetic man. By that time, I was working for a pension fund, one of the first ones that were founded in Spain, and I was the regional director for Andalucía. Wherever I went, there was a call from Fermín Bohórquez asking me when I was going to sell him Poseído III. So, one day I got fed up and sold the horse to him, and I made a mistake. He kept him a couple of months, had a photo made with his wife behind on the croup, who is very beautiful by the way, and this photo circulated over the world among horse aficionados. A man from Costa Rica saw the photo and finally bought the horse. Laura Collado, daughter of the buyer Mr. Adrián Collado still has Poseídos, as all the sons of Poseído III has got the same name, with different numbers after. Poseído III gave very good offspring, but he gave a lot of dishing. Although Genil was a pure Carthusian, he only dished a little bit in short trot, but it disappeared when he extended the trot.

As I said, he was the first Spanish champion of the ACCE, because Vasallo II and Valído were champions at the Country Fair in Madrid. I can say that this stud has had eight Spanish champions, which are Vasallo II and Valído in the Country Fair, Genil, Valído again, Gastador twice, Ungido and Clasico. This is obviously an impressive honour for me.

Going back to the history, we continued covering with sons of Valído, of Vasallo, Jubiloso VIII. He was a son of Vasallo and Salomé. Salomé was a splendid mare and Jubiloso VIII was a horse with a difficult temperament. In those times we had no good riders at the farm, but for a while we had "el Guajiro" with us, who prepared the horse very well, we showed him in a couple of dressage shows and he did very well. Jubiloso is a horse that improved a lot on the movements, especially with the mares I have by Poseído IV, who we bought later from Expasa, when this company bought the stud farm from the Terry family, and he gave very bad movements.



JUBILOSO VIII

My father wasn't too keen on going away to shows, I animated him and organized everything. We went to the Country Fair and did very well. Look at that bronze horse on the table, it was given by the Portuguese Association of breeders of Lusitano Horses, and you had to win it twice in a row or three alternate times to be able to keep it forever, and we got it three times in a row. The success of the Country Fair was total, because there were three or four good studs, Terry, Lovera, Granda, but the competence never had a chance. Later we started with the ACCE Championships.

When my father left us and my mother was still alive, we continued as widow and sons of Miguel Angel de Cárdenas, and when my mother left us, my brother wanted to separate and asked me, who was closer to the stud business, to make two parts of it.

Once it was done, we made a lottery, and he took his part away, two or three days later I heard that he was selling 30 horses, and when I heard which horses he was selling I got goose flesh, because among them were Mastil, Quitasueños, Lancera, who is the mother of Clásico, and I knew she dropped very good foals, she was not beautiful but she gave good foals.

To run a stud is not only to know about the horses, it is to know about these individuals, which is, to know what the mother gave, the grandmother, which defects were transmitted and which were not, and I knew all these things because I went frequently to the stud, and my brother didn't, he was counselled by technicians. When I found out, I decided to buy them for the price he put. My brother inherited the brand, it is custom that the youngest inherits it, because it is understood that the oldest one has already separated from his parent's house and has created his own brand. When this happened I put the C for Cárdenas on my brand.

WHAT IS IN YOUR OPINION THE SECRET OF YOUR SUCCESS, MAINTAINING WHAT WAS ALREADY GOOD OR CHANGING IT FOR BETTER?

I have not changed anything fundamental, I did not change blood lines, I have limited myself to selecting what I thought was the best from the line of my father. But I have not made big concessions in beauty, nobility etc., which are the characteristics that defines our breed, to get a more functional horse. What I have done is select horses with better legs, and taller, not because they are a fashion but because I like big horses. At the moment I have a bay stallion, but not because they are in fashion, but because he is very good, very beautiful and very functional.

What has guided me in the evolution of this stud has been and is, my passion for the Spanish horse. To give you an example, I sold Gastador VIII personally when he was two years old. We had Bilbaino III, Vasallo y Valido, we had many good stallions and we had to sell horses. The man I sold the horse to sold him on, and I lost track of the horse. On the other hand, Mr. Manolo Bertolín had bought a trained horse from me, and as he is a businessman, after keeping it a few months and in spite of the love his daughter Fátima had for the horse, they gave him more money for him and he sold it. His daughter Fátima did not say hello to him, did not speak to him and refused to eat, then her father phoned me almost in tears, very emotional, asking if we had another trained horse to sell.



GASTADOR VIII

The horse had to be from us, but we did not have any more trained horses. Then I received the Equestrian magazine, and on the cover was a photo of Gastador VIII ridden by a Portuguese trainer at a stud farm in Valencia. I called Manolo and suggested he buy the magazine, take a look at the horse and buy him. And so he did. While he was his property, he showed him as stallion of his stud and the horse was Champion of Spain. Imagine how much it cost to buy him back, but I did. Thinking it over, even if it cost me, it wasn't too much. I remember I swapped him for a pair of carriage horses. Manolo was very good, because he recognized the process of creating the horse's value.

Gastador VIII who was covering the mares, and who gave two Champions of Spain in Ungido and Clásico, was a son of Valído and a full sister of Vasallo II, so take a look at his consanguinity, and if you are going to ask me about consanguinity I can already tell you it is very good.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR ANIMALS ?

They are Cárdenas, which means they are a line on its own, distinct from all the others, that in spite of the years is still beautiful, noble and useful, product of a selection well founded in the Carthusians and the Military Stud. There was a time when the officials had to go to the Equitation Academy to learn to ride, and they received lessons in the morphology of the horse, its muscles etc. This people with their knowledge produced a horse named Maluso who is today very discredited, but he had a son called Agente, and he had in his turn two sons called Jenson and Levitón who were tremendously much used in the past by many breeders. Well, I have been one of them, who have used these two horses in their time, with the intent to get rid of the dishing and get more functionality. In this is what I have separated me from the Carthusian line.

I have many friends in the horse world, who have taken care of for years and while I was at the zenith , which I still am even if they think the contrary, to say everywhere that my horses are no good for anything, and this is something that people who talk a lot, who are in the bars, repeated and repeated, and one knows that a lie repeated many times, sometimes is converted into truth in the judgement of those who hear it. My horses have always been useful, my fathers horses have always been useful, what happens nowadays is I select them and I only show those who have possibilities to win a dressage competition. But even after the ridden functionality test was introduced, I have won shows, many shows, even if some persons still go on saying my horses are good for nothing. But of course, now they have to defend their own products.

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FROM YOUR JUDGEMENT, WHAT DO THE MARES GIVE, AND WHAT DO THE STALLIONS GIVE, IN A STUD FARM?

The big difference between males and females is that a stallion can cover around twenty to twenty five mares in one season, while the mares can only have one foal. The result is that it is much easier to make a stud by selecting the males than by selecting the females.

Normally mares and stallions give 50 % each, but it is also true that the mares normally transmit some characters better than the stallions like the size. Between a big female and a big male, there is always more probability of the foal being big of the big mother, than of the big father. The same goes for the temperament, if one of the two progenitors have a bad temperament, the possibilities for it to be transmitted are big, even if the other progenitor have a good temperament, which is to say that the bad temperament is very hereditary. Outside the normal rule, there are some individuals that impose systematically more than others, independently of if they change partner, and these are called "race makers".

There are breeders who have got female lines. I myself have got female lines. For example the mother of Clásico and Vándalo, called Lancera V 1979, was a mare who gave fantastic foals with any stallion. I have

got daughters, grand daughters and great grand daughters from this mare. Another mare of this type is Adivina, who gave marvellous foals. She was the mother of Vasallo and some other important products. Aborrecida would be another example.

Well, if you look at these three mares, you will get very surprised, because they were not the three most beautiful ones, on the contrary I had a mare, Universal, who won I don't know how many prices and who did not drop good foals. You have to be very observant. You don't know what a mare gives from the first foal, you see it after two or three. It is of course understood that all the stallions used on these mares are good, even if different ones. To breed well you need good mares and good stallions. The saying of good stallion and bad mares, and vice versa lengthens and makes difficult the selection process. Normally what is good gives good.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH PHASES DOES EVERY BREEDER HAVE TO GO THROUGH?

A breeder makes many mistakes. What he needs to ask from God is time to make right his mistakes. The one who thinks he is there, because he has had success in his fourth year is totally mistaken. All stud farms have saw teeth as everything in life. Some moments you are up, some you are down. My stud started to be emblematic after so many prices and so many years selecting. When you hear somebody say, like I have heard, "this is a Cárdenas" without they knowing you, then you are on your way to reach the category of an emblematic stud. That people know your animals for their morphological characteristics is very flattering. The saw teeth come many times because of the different quality of the litters, which without any clear reason, some years are good and some years are less good.

WHICH STALLIONS ARE YOU USING AT THE MOMENT?

If we go by the order they are in the stables, we start with Mastil who I use very little, he has got some magnificent and good looking mares, he moves very well. Then we have Vándalo, who I did not use before, and now I will start using him. I am using Clásico and will go on covering with him. Ecuador will start being used when the show season is over, because when he covers, he opens himself up on top of the mare and loses elasticity. And last is Genio who I will also use. Genio is son of a horse from the Bocado Stud which I rented five years ago, and from a mare that gives very well with any horse, although she is not one of the foremost, called Zambra, daughter of Quitasueños and Palmera who gave fantastic foals.



QUITASUEÑOS



GENIL

AND HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT YOU HAVE SUCH HOMOGENEITY IN YOUR PRODUCTS WHEN YOU USE SO MANY DIFFERENT STALLIONS?

Think that I have used Bilbaíno III for twelve years, his two sons and half brothers Valído y Vasallo another twelve years. This stamps a lot, so even when I have used a stallion from outside like one I bought from Candau and I have been using him, even if I will not use him any more, the result is that the foals look very much like the mares.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CONSANGUINITY?

Consanguinity is fantastic, no breed can be created without consanguinity, not one, but you must know how not to abuse and how to select. The bad ones, take them out and send to slaughter, but don't sell them. And if the parents give fallen crests, don't use them again, eliminate the mare. I, thank God, have the possibility to do so, others don't, but he who wants to be a breeder, must have economic possibilities, if not, forget it.

The maximum degree of consanguinity I recommend is of half brothers, even if the lines of not brothers also are influential, we are then talking of levels of about 20 %. Once we used Bilbaíno III on some of his daughters, the products of these crossings were more feeble and generally not so good. They were sold to Australia, to a man called Ray Williams, I remember perfectly well. Since then we have not done any more experiments, but with half brothers, yes, and we have proved that it works very well. Think that we have done this in general with the whole stud and not with only a few well selected animals to stamp the stallions. Remember that of the many daughters of Bilbaíno III, we covered them with sons also of Bilbaino III.

I think people are very mistaken about consanguinity, because they think if you increase the consanguinity the products will be identical, and this is not true, because the variability is so big that its material shape is very ample. With consanguinity you don't only stamp the stud, also the stallion, and he who knows the stallions of a stud, by seeing the offspring, is capable of telling the parents.

I do not agree with the thesis that a stud with a high degree of consanguinity is more difficult to change than one with a low degree of consanguinity. What is true is, that in this business, between the planning of your objectives and the confirmation of the results lie five years, and sometimes up to ten years, and therefore the mistakes, if they are big, can be very difficult to change.

Time is an essential factor, and one has to know how to diversify the risks in the crossings, so the mistakes will be small and easy to repair. As I said earlier, if one can cover with an already proven stallion, we save many mistakes, even if it is also true that a proven stallion doesn't always function with all blood lines, with the exception of the horses that came from Roberto Osborne and who passed to the Terry family, Fernando Sr. and his sons. This line was improving to almost a 100 %, setting some well defined defects as dishing, and the fallen crests, but they gave a beauty and a class that the others did not even come near. It is a fact that the Military Stud has got lots of Carthusians from these lines, and even from earlier lines.

WHAT IS THE TYPE OF HORSE YOU INTEND TO BREED FOR THE FUTURE?

We breeders must have an ideal horse that serves as the objective to reach. It is very important to have clear ideas and not get carried away by fashions. I would like to improve the backs and the correctness of the legs, not touching the necks, on my present horses. I would also like to improve their endurance for work, that they get stronger all the time. This is the case with Vándalo, who doesn't come from the Carthusian line, but from the line of Levitón, who was his grandfather, even if he has got a lot of Carhusian. Well, Vándalo has inherited from his grandfather the capacity to canter for an hour, and continues cantering and hardly sweats. On the other hand Ecuador sweats after 10 minutes, although he is from the same line but via Jenson.

But going back to the horse of the future, I think one have to stick to the characteristics of the breed and select the most functional animals inside these characteristics, with beauty and nobility. It is precisely one of the things that thrill people about the Spanish horses, they don't kick, they don't bite, and they are easy to train, more intelligent than other breeds, and with more heart and courage than anybody. Are we going to lose this to obtain a functional horse? It would be absurd, it would be going against our own interests.

ON THE ANDALUSIAN MARKET, WHO ARE THE BUYERS OF TODAY AND WHO WILL BE THE FUTURE BUYERS OF OUR PRODUCTS, IN YOUR OPINION?

I don't think there is only one class of buyers, there are different classes, there will be the ones who come to buy a horse for dressage and who is looking for our easy to handle horses, , and there will be the client who comes to buy a pure Carthusian, not here, elsewhere, and who will pay very well, if the horse is spectacular

and beautiful. It is true that at the moment the tendency is towards the functionality, but also towards the Carthusians which are very expensive, especially the mares, independently if they are good or not.

TO CREATE A MORE COMMERCIAL HORSE, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS SUPERFLUOUS AND WHAT IS LACKING IN OUR ANDALUSIAN?

For the horse I have in my imagination, the Spanish horse is lacking in everything because it is an ideal horse, utopian, but which has to be pursued.

The first thing to do is to eliminate lots of rubbish that exist in the breed, at the breeders, in the stud farms, which is what the horse dealers buy. To not loose four hundred thousand pesetas on the horse, you sell an individual that might go to France, and who will give you bad publicity. There has to be a better selection inside the parameters of the breed for beauty, nobility and functionality, improving on the present and make more publicity for our horses, for example placing a horse with somebody who is a great horse lover and, for example, is the president of Mexico etc. All this I am telling you is not at all easy to obtain. There are persons who want to be breeders today, and to be winning prices tomorrow, and this is not possible.

Look, the Andalusian horse must continue being a beautiful horse, because however functional it is, if it is ugly, the client will prefer a Hannoverian for dressage. I think that our horse will all the time play a greater role in dressage, but it must be pretty, attractive, if not, you will not sell.

DO YOU THINK THAT DRESSAGE IS A PASSING FASHION, OR SOMETHING THAT WAS MISSING IN THE ANDALUSIAN AND WHICH WILL STAY?

I don't think it is passing, because the Andalusian is better suited for dressage than for "doma vaquera", where many horses break down. The Spanish horse usually has a magnificent head, and this is very important for dressage, but also it is usually an intelligent and noble horse. Some are very nervous, easy shying, but this is fixed with a good rider, and this is what we breeders generally lack, because it is very expensive and difficult to find a good one and to keep him. When they start being successful they leave. I have already had this experience with one.

Dressage has served for the Andalusian to demonstrate that it is useful, and with this it has entered in a very, very important market. A horse that can perform well the Grand Prix can be sold for prices we are not used to see. I was offered 20 million pesetas the other day for Vándalo, and I don't have to deny it, and I did not sell him because I want to use him for stud. If I am looking for functional horses, and I have got one of my own brand, why should I look for it elsewhere?



VANDALO

DO YOU THINK THAT THE ANDALUSIAN CAN BE A PROFITABLE BUSINESS, OR DO YOU THINK IT WILL CONTINUE BEING A BAD BUSINESS?

Of course it can be a profitable business, if we follow the guide lines for selecting that we have been talking so much about, with good riders trying out and helping with the selection of good horses. It can be very profitable. But there is much work.

Having said the latter I would like to add that the Andalusian has always been a highly priced horse, always, since it was created by Phillip II. It was a horse for the nobility, the high hierarchies of the church, etc., it has always been expensive and it should go on being expensive to be able to select, to be able to sacrifice the individuals that should not be used for reproducing. What happens is that when you have been doing this for so many years, normally all the mares give you good foals. You have to have a long term in time and pray to God that he will give it to you. That is why that photo over there is so important to me where you see Don Vicente Romero García at ninety four years of age on horse back. I have been lucky in that my father started the stud because I already had a solid base.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEBODY WHO WANTED TO BECOME A BREEDER?

First to get some good mares, twelve, fifteen, twenty. If twenty are possible, then twenty, which is better than twelve. Obviously we are talking of a man with economic possibilities. And then a proven stallion as my father did with Bilbaino III. Remember that we could have bought Descarado, but when we saw the offspring of the one and the other, in spite of Bilbaino being not as good as Descarado, his offspring were better. My advice is that if one starts with a colt for stud use, to only give him two or three mares, until one sees the medium quality of what he gives. And if you can, get a proven stallion that has got lots of Carthusian blood, not pure, because the pure ones have been very badly selected.

WHAT IS MIGUEL ANGEL DE CARDENAS THINKING OF WHEN HE SITS FOR HOURS ON THE STANDS OF THE BREED SHOWS?

Many things, I analyse other people's horses, I compare my horses with other's. If you stay between the walls of your house and don't compare, you don't know exactly at what point you are. I think of how the judges give their points, which depresses me a lot, and I think of the breed, how the breed is doing, and I agree with Alfonso del Castillo when he talks of the bad quality of many horses that are chosen champions in the ring. There are individuals at the best shows that are not thrown out of the ring, and who ought to be thrown out for lack of breed fidelity.



TWO TIMES SPANISH NATIONAL CHAMPION - CLASICO-MAC