

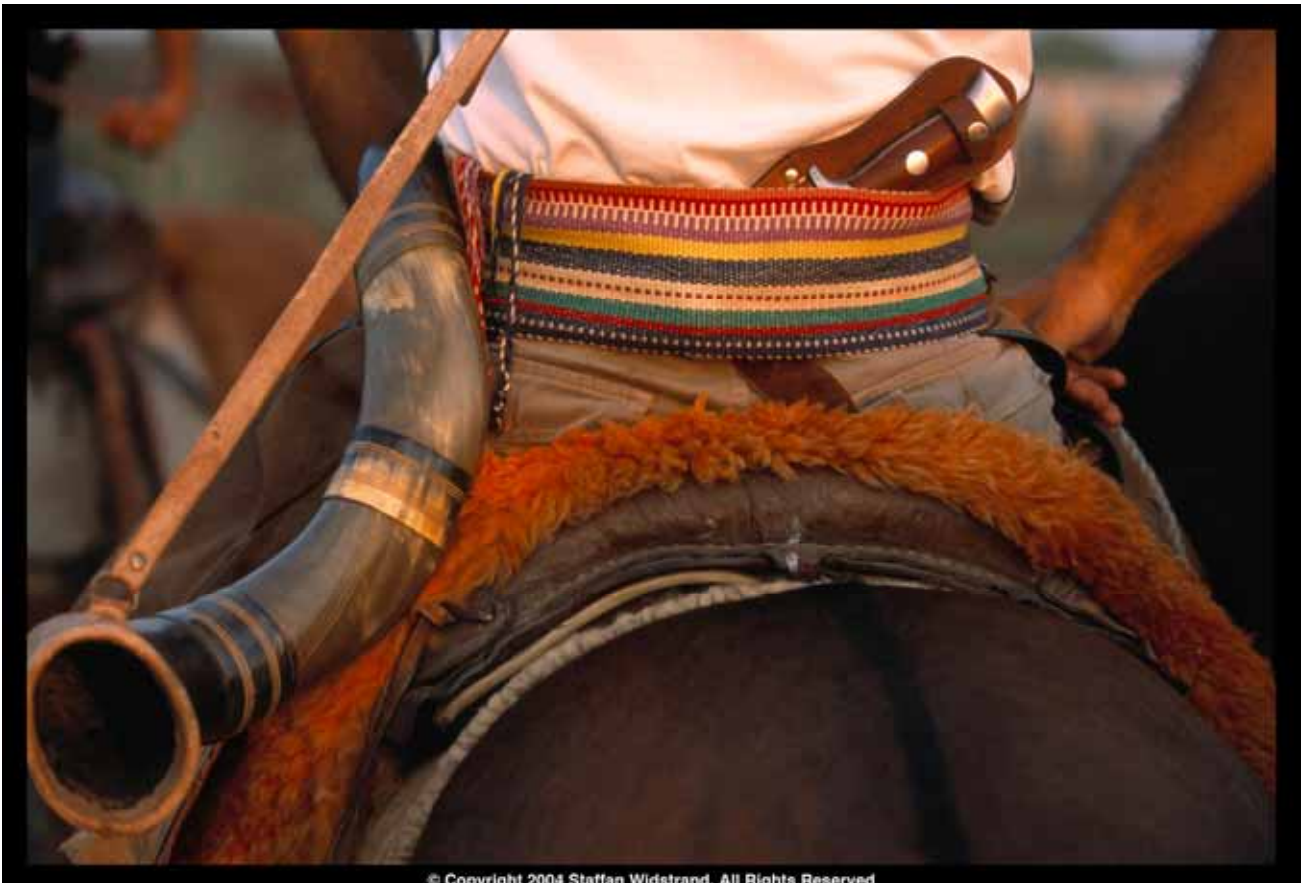


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PANTANAL - BRAZIL

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE JAGUAR



ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR BRAZILIAN ADVENTURE?

The intense smell of hot, black Brazilian coffee, horses and leather. Saddling in total darkness, with the Milky Way as the only guiding light. Horses snorting, ready to go. Peões laughing, tucking in here, adjusting a leather strap there. The adventure is on, horses and people ready, all systems go. Full immersion into the real life of a Brazilian cowboy.



Come along on a breathtaking riding adventure together with a bunch of hilarious cowboys, os peões do Pantanal! Their horses, the Pantanal criollo, are fast, agile and light in hand - probably the best kept secret in the equestrian world...

SMALL GROUPS, CARING GUIDES

My groups are hardly ever bigger than eight people, making it possible for each guest to feel not just like any other guest. Here in Pantanal we are cared for by a set of incredibly interesting people. We are guided by fabulous horsemen like Fernando de Barros and Daniel Rondon.

I am personally always with you on these rides, to help you translate and interpret both nature and culture.

This is an area to which very few tourists travel, and the atmosphere is genuinely friendly. This is ecotourism at its very best.

Ten days around three different fazendas, riding between them, spending one night out in hammocks. The style of riding is working style, with long stirrups and laid-back reining in what is probably the most comfortable saddle in the world...



A SPECIAL TRAIL RIDE

Our adventure will take us on a ride between three different cattleworking fazendas, ranches. It is a very special trail ride and it only takes place once or twice a year. For 2005 we are planning a wetland trail in May, and a dryland trail in October. The difference is about seven feet of water. The Pantanal wetlands in central Brazil is truly unique and one of the world's greatest natural resources, with a biodiversity that equals the Amazon area. But in Pantanal you have bigger chances of actually seeing the animals, as the terrain is much more open. A part of your fee will go to a local jaguar conservation program – this is a unique possibility to go on a holiday quite out of the ordinary and also help in conservation work. The fazendeiros we will meet have all united in an association, and the new Pantanal Nature Reserve has been created out of their private grounds.

RIDES OFFERED IN 2006

May 6-17

July 1-12

In Pantanal there is possibly the biggest chance in the world to actually encounter the elusive jaguar. But mostly we only see its tracks.



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PRELIMINARY PROGRAM: INN-TO-INN RIDE

1st Day – Campo Grande Arrival, transfer to our hotel, trip to a local saddlery to tack up and then dinner at a great steakhouse downtown with a local guide who can tell us more about the Pantanal, overnight.

2nd Day – Campo Grande/Pantanal After breakfast, Walter and his minibus will come pick us up and drive us down the highway towards Bolivia, to the cattletown of **Aquidauana** (approx 2h). At the small Aeroclub we will meet up with Pita and Amadeus and stow our luggage into the waiting Cessnas and take off towards our first Pousada, ranch. It'll be a 45 minute flight straight out into the most central parts of the Pantanal. We unpack, have lunch with Fernando and then go out for a first ride out in the bush. It will also be a first tour in what is probably the most comfortable saddle in the world... After a good shower, we'll all sit down for a huge dinner, Pantaneiro style. We might take a night ride in Fernando's jeep to look at animals.

3rd Day – Pantanal – After breakfast, we're off with our Peões (cowboys) to herd the fifty or so free-roaming horses back to the ranch for a general check-up. That'll probably take us all morning. Lunch back at the Fazenda, then we go back to the horses to see our Peões at work, and maybe ride a new tour of the grounds, unless we decide that working leather is more fun. Dinner.

4th Day – Pantanal – Quick cup of coffee in the morning, take off on horseback around 5.30 am, we are getting our real breakfast way out in the bush. A long ride through wildlife and fantastic scenery to a farm close by called Fazenda Nhu-Porã, where the peões will meet up with their own special breed of Pantanal horse. The sandy grounds are made for fun cantering and we will race our guides. Lunch at the farmhouse. Presentation of ranching lasso-work. Back to our own farm in the late afternoon by truck. Dinner is served as we arrive.

5th Day – Pantanal – Breakfast and take off on horseback around 7.00 am to follow the activities of a peão Pantaneiro. Lunch at the farm. In the afternoon, demonstration of how to produce leather handcraft and you can try yourself. In the evening, dinner is served in the beautiful diningroom at the farm. Pack our gear for leaving tomorrow.

6th Day – Pantanal – A quick cup of coffee already at 5.30, then we are off on horseback towards the next Fazenda – real breakfast awaits us out in the bush. Our luggage is being transported in a car, and we'll have lunch under a huge tree on the "road". We arrive at the Fazenda around sunset, find our rooms, take a quick shower and sit down for an evening meal with our new hosts.

7th Day – Pantanal – Milk the cows at 5.30 (for those who want to participate), choose horses to ride, and then breakfast. After breakfast we are off through the Vazante do Manduvi and th river. When we arrive at the farm Roça Nova, we share a horn of tereré before lunch. Then we relax in hammocks and take off on horseback around three in the afternoon. Our goal is the homestead Invernada do Arizona where we will spend the night under the stars in hammocks. After a huge Pantanal Churrasco (BBQ) we sleep like babies in our hammocks.

8th Day – Pantanal – Breakfast at 6:00 am in the bush, with "Arroz Carreteiro", a special dish the Pantaneiros eat when they are on the trail. Leave at 7:00 am to go towards Santa Cruz Farm. We meet up with the crew from the Fazenda that is our next and last goal. We have a huge lunch all together at the Santa Cruz farm..At 1:30 pm we leave by car (Toyota 4X4) with arrival late in the afternoon, Dinner in the beautiful hexagonal diningroom.

9th Day – Pantanal – After breakfast, we saddle up a fresh bunch of horses and take off with our Peões Manezinho and Daniel. We will now ride in a completely different kind of nature, more closed in, with more woods. We will easily spot the deer, and also tapir, ant-eater and capybaras. The crab-eating fox runs all over the forests, and isn't as shy as the elusive jaguar. Back to the Fazenda for lunch, in the afternoon we will ride into the vazante do Castelo, and ride back toward late afternoon. Later, dinner is served in the diningroom at the farm.

10th Day – Pantanal – After breakfast, we'll ride with Manezinho and Daniel to their neighbour, Campo Novo, where there is also a small school for Pantanal's children. We'll have lunch with the kids, and deliver some presents to them that we have brought from our homes, and then ride back towards late afternoon. We'll have dinner and then take a walk in the darkness in the land of the jaguar.

11th Day – Pantanal – We'll get up long before the sun, have a quick cup of coffee, and then take a boat-ride as the first sunrays hit the waters. We are on the lookout for the jaguar... We will probably meet the family of giant otters, the macaws, the peccaris and capybaras. The caymans are all over the place. As far as the eye can see, there are caymans. Some Piranha-fishing perhaps? Lunch at the Pousada. After lunch we saddle up and ride off towards Salina, a huge salty lake with lots of birdlife. Back at the Pousada, we help Manezinho and Daniel to unsaddle the horses, then bring them down to the Rio Negro to go swimming with them. Huge Farewell dinner in the evening. Pack our bags for leaving the Pantanal.

12th Day – Pantanal/Campo Grande – We leave our Fazenda with Pita and Amadeus in the morning to go back to the aeroclub in **Aquidauana**, where we will go visit a local saddler, then we're off in our minibus towards Campo Grande. Here you can choose to stay one more night in a hotel, or you can take off towards São Paulo/Rio de Janeiro to continue your Brazilian holiday. Those who choose to stay this last night in Campo Grande, all go downtown for a great Brazilian dinner.

13th Day – Departures

GENERAL INFORMATION

Meeting Place: We all meet up at the airport of Campo Grande, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Flights normally arrive in the morning from São Paulo.

Typical riding day: There is no "typical" riding day! Everyday is different, but we ride around 4-8 hours every day, have gorgeous lunches and work cattle. We also ride out and stay overnight in hammocks, as this is an inn to inn ride. We will see huge amounts of wildlife and we will have the chance to let the Pantanal horse have a go on the sandy grounds. We will travel by horse to close by ranches to see more of the people and the region.

Meals: Great food...Enormous amounts of stews, rice, beans, salads, farofa, arroz carreteiro, and lots of Pantanal specialities. We can have wine or beers with our meals, there is also always water and soft drinks of course.

Sleeping Arrangements: We stay in the homes of the locals we are visiting, in simple and nice 2-3 bed quarters, with en suite bathrooms. One night in hammocks is a possibility.

Non-riding activities: There is no specific program for non-riders, but you can certainly go swimming in the Rio Negro river, go fishing, go on jeep safaris, take walks in the land of the jaguar – always with a guide. For non riders we will always manage to get together for the meals, even if lunch is taken out in the wild..

Medical Requirements: All travellers need insurance for accidents, no special shots required, malaria prophylax recommended, but no malaria present in the Pantanal for the last 20 years – but please consult your local health services for updated news. Please advise us about special diets or physical conditions.

Weather Conditions: The weather in Pantanal during October is mostly sunny, and warm. Temperatures vary from 20-35 degrees C, and the occasional shower of rain can happen as the rain season can start early. And when it rains it pours, make sure your windjacket is also good against the rain. Waterproof boots are also a good idea, unless you bring two pairs to switch – they WILL get wet! In April/May, we are just coming out of the rain season, so the lands are wet. Or wetter... A hat or hardhat is a good idea, too.

Dates 2006: May 6-17 July 1-12

Riding ability: Good, general physical condition, master the three basic gaits: walk, trot and canter

Weight limit: 100 kg/220 lbs

Age limit: 18 years (12 years if already a confirmed rider and accompanied by tutor)

Group size: Average 4-8 riders

Price: 2600 Euro per person

Single supplement: 500 Euro



Included in the price: All riding and activities at the ranches - Pick-up to and from the Airport in Campo Grande, where the general meeting point is located – first hotel night in Campo Grande - Both local guides and an English speaking guide - Assistance by car and Cessna transports, Accommodation in shared bedrooms with en suite bathrooms at the farms - Full board, i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner at the Fazendas

Not included: Air fares, airport taxes, drinks with the meals, meals in Campo Grande, tips to the Peões, around 20 euro per guest at each Fazenda - Optional last night in hotel in Campo Grande

Bring: Camera, Swimming suit, riding clothes (several layers to be put on or taken off depending on the weather), sun protection cream, good riding boots that can take a lot of water, helmet recommended by insurance companies, windjacket