



## WHY BUY A DON WEST SADDLE? WHAT WAS ALREADY GREAT, IS NOW EVEN BETTER!

*By Don West*

**M**y personal philosophy has always been that a comfortable horse is a happy horse, and a happy horse makes for a happy rider. At the heart of every good saddle is a comfortable fitting saddle tree. As a breeder, trainer, riding instructor, clinician, and addicted trail rider of Peruvian Paso, Paso Fino, and other gaited horses, the development of the best fitting saddle tree, one designed specifically for all naturally gaited horses, has always been at the center of my quest. Beyond the basics, I wanted a saddle that reflected the heritage of our wonderful gaited trail horses, a saddle that I would be proud to own and ride myself. I believe my Don West Saddles do just that. Ride one yourself and I'm sure you'll agree.

Don West Training-Trail Saddles are *"for the discriminating gaited horse and rider"*. Proper equitation is enhanced by my close fitting, short-barred saddle tree, one that makes even contact with the horse's back without interfering with the horse's shoulder action, or sticking into the horse's loins. A rider's weight change in the saddle should be transmitted, through the saddle, immediately and accurately to the horse, without causing pain or discomfort. Flex-panels or other devices that lift the rider higher off the horse's back or dull the communication between rider and horse are neither required, nor desired.

Each Don West Saddle is built on the Don West short barred, contour shaped saddle tree, designed for the ultimate comfort of the horse, the comfort and security of the rider, and the proper position on the horse's back for correct gaited horse "sit-down equitation" riding position, one that brings out the best gait in any naturally gaited horse. My bulk-less rigging has no metal rigging plate. That eliminates lumps and bumps under the rider's legs, and enhances closeness between the horse and rider. My gracefully shaped full-floor tapaderos stirrups add an extra element of safety while enhancing the overall good looks of the saddle. Don West Saddles feature top quality American made leather and excellent workmanship...all at a reasonable price!

A special note to Peruvian Paso owners: BUYER BEWARE! There is only one GENUINE Don West Training-Trail Saddle, the saddle that I first designed to fit Peruvian Pasos! Success invites imitation---accept no substitutes. When I introduced the first American made Peruvian Paso Saddle to the Peruvian Paso public, twenty five years ago, I was accused of high treason. Some Peruvian made saddle sellers said that I would cause the demise of the Peruvian breed in North America! The conventional wisdom was that only traditional Peruvian Saddles, ones made in Peru, were legitimate. They insisted that all Peruvian Paso Horses had to be ridden, at all times, in Peruvian made saddles and tack. Everything else was taboo!

Well, the truth is, Peruvian saddles are beautifully tooled and handsomely decorated. But, they were built on ill-fitting, straight barred trees

that don't fit the modern Peruvian Paso horse comfortably, and often eventually sore them. On top of that, the leather is not tanned like good American leather. As a Paso breeder and trainer, I needed a saddle that was comfortable for my horses; one that could be used on horse after horse, without making the horse sore, or falling apart. When I bought my first Peruvian Pasos I also bought various Peruvian saddles from a number of venders, but always had the same disappointing results. Finally, out of necessity and frustration, I decided that if I was going to have a saddle that met my needs I was going to have to design and build it myself. So, I created my Don West Training-Trail Saddles, combining what was best in the Peruvian saddles with the best features of both Western and English saddles.

I started by having saddles built for me, on my own tree, by a master saddle maker that had built Western saddles for me in the past. At first, I didn't intend to get into the saddle business. After all, I was a professional horse breeder/trainer; not a saddle salesman! But, as I went to various Peruvian Shows, I took my saddles along. People saw them, tried them, and in spite of the initial bias against them, breaking with tradition, some people liked them...especially the trail riders. So, in spite of much verbal opposition, a new saddle company was born. Because I got started by taking my saddles around to shows, I called the company "Have Saddle-Will Travel", borrowing the phrasing of a popular Western TV show, "Have Gun-Will Travel".

In a few years, much to my amazement (and amusement), some of the dyed-in-the-wool traditionalists Peruvian tack dealers, who had been my most vigorous and vicious critics, began to copy some of my ideas! Yielding to the pressure of my success, they put fenders on some of their saddles and called them "Peruvian Trail Saddles"; certainly not traditional in Peru. They even began to add leather strings and tapaderos stirrups to their saddles, features that I've always had on my saddles. Well, what do you make of that? I guess, in the end, function rules over tradition...especially in *America!*

Actually, I didn't mind a little competition. In fact, I was amused and flattered that my ideas were being copied. Competition keeps you on your toes. And in spite of the years that have rolled by, were still way ahead of the game! While the others were complaining and criticizing, we were busy creating, improving the shape of our tree, developing a saddle that would bring out the best in both paso and all naturally gaited horses. Our goal? A saddle that is (1) comfortable for the horse, (2) comfortable and secure for the rider, (3) places the rider in the correct place ("sweet spot") on the horse's back for gaited horse "sit-down equitation", and (4) has materials and workmanship that will last, and that reflect the pride of ownership that we all feel in our own horses. I've spent years developing, improving, and field testing my Don West Training-Trail Saddles. I think they are the best saddle for training or trail riding Peruvian Paso, Paso Fino, other naturally gaited horses, and for those hard to fit, short backed horses too.

At Have Saddle-Will Travel, Inc. we build saddles, one at a time, to the size and specifications that our customers choose. We also try to keep a few of the most popular saddles in stock. We build them for people like us; people who know they were "*Born to Ride*". So, come on, join the growing group of people who "*Ride with Pride*" on a Don West Training-Trail Saddle. After all, don't you and your horse deserve the best? Of course you do!

So, why saddle for less! Order your own Don West Saddle soon. You'll be glad you did.  
Happy trails, Don West

At Have Saddle-Will Travel, Inc. Don West, the INNOVATIVE OUTFITTER "*Born to Ride*", we offer two models of our Don West Training-Trail Saddles; the Spanish Trail-Lite (no horn), and the Pecos Trail-Lite (with Horn). For those who want the Western look of the Pecos Trail-Lite, but don't want a horn, it can be ordered that way too.

**Happy trails, Don West.**

*Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited. You may not, except with our express written permission, distribute or commercially disseminate the content. Nor may you transmit it or store it in any other website or other form of electronic retrieval system.*