

# Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling

The man who gives  
the horses  
freedom





The sky is blue and the sun has almost melted the last snow - only few lines of white break the warm golden glow of the dry field. The stallion dances - his white tail shining like silk. This is a happy horse; free, proud and beautiful. Free to do as he likes; no fences keeping him, no reins, nothing - just an open field under his hooves, fresh air in the nostrils and pure life in every cell of his body! Yet everything he does seems centred magically around the man on the ground, even when he runs far away and easily could ignore the existence of the person. When they move close together the stallion is in absolute composure - symbol of perfection, shape and power - a picture of natural aesthetic beauty. The two of them dance and play - they react on and with each other, in a very special kind of light and gentle unison, allowing both to stay themselves, giving room for individual ideas and wishes, but all the time connected.....

It sounds like a dream, or a scene from a Warner Bros. production, but is actually from an extraordinarily authentic and true video clip found on YouTube. And a dream is precisely what Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling embodies in his interaction with horses - that dream of being one with those proud, powerful and dignified animals. That dream of being with a horse that really chooses your company beyond anything else. Various YouTube videos show Klaus in beautiful harmony with different horses and one of the things that make these stand out clearly from others, is the happiness of all the horses and the obvious freedom he offers them.

They are full of life and energy, permanently watching out with pinned ears and big open eyes for the next move of that human being who shows them that we are able to understand and communicate with them.

The Dutch *Icelandic Horse Magazine* writes: 'What is it that Hempfling does with horses? When you see him working, he looks like a magician. Hempfling wins the complete trust of a horse, often literally, in a jiffy. He makes such an impression on the animal that it chooses his company and leadership above everything else.' And in the international online magazine *Horses for Life* you can read: 'I have never seen a horseman like him. You will leave his workshops with an incredible amount of food for thought and you will never approach horses in quite the same way again'.



Story by  
Natasha Stern





## Dancing With Horses

Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling is the author of the international bestseller *'Dancing with horses'*, now regarded as a cult classic all over the world. He has shaken up the international horse world with his thought-provoking and ground breaking approach to horses, and with his publications and courses he touches equestrians worldwide. Before his professional career with horses began Klaus wandered in the Spanish Pyrenees observing wild horses and learning from the last Caballeros - the ancient horsemen of Europe who aim to ride 'by thought alone'. Klaus learnt that being a horseman is a lifelong quest; it is an ongoing search for oneself. That our horses' behaviour teaches us something about ourselves. On this basis Klaus found his very own way to these often misunderstood beings and his unique work with horses is valuable for anyone involved with horses in any sphere.

Klaus belongs to the best known horse trainers around the globe, although he was 29 before he even touched a real horse - two years later *'Dancing with horses'* was published, and became a bestseller in 9 languages. In his opinion it is not the practical experience with the horses that decide how far the horse will really trust you and seek out your leadership voluntarily, it is far more everything you learn before approaching the horse - the preparation of the human being is essential, because the horse seeks, like no other being, an authentic partner signalling absolute confidence and security in every situation. Only then the horse will truly connect. Togetherness with horses is always a question of trust and dominance and with the vast majority of horse types there is no chance of practising with the horse - if you look for harmony you must master your body language to a





very high degree before you meet the horse and you need to be mentally strong and authentic. Therefore the heart of Klaus' work is the mental and physical development of the human beings' awareness through exercises of physical perception and spiritual contemplation.

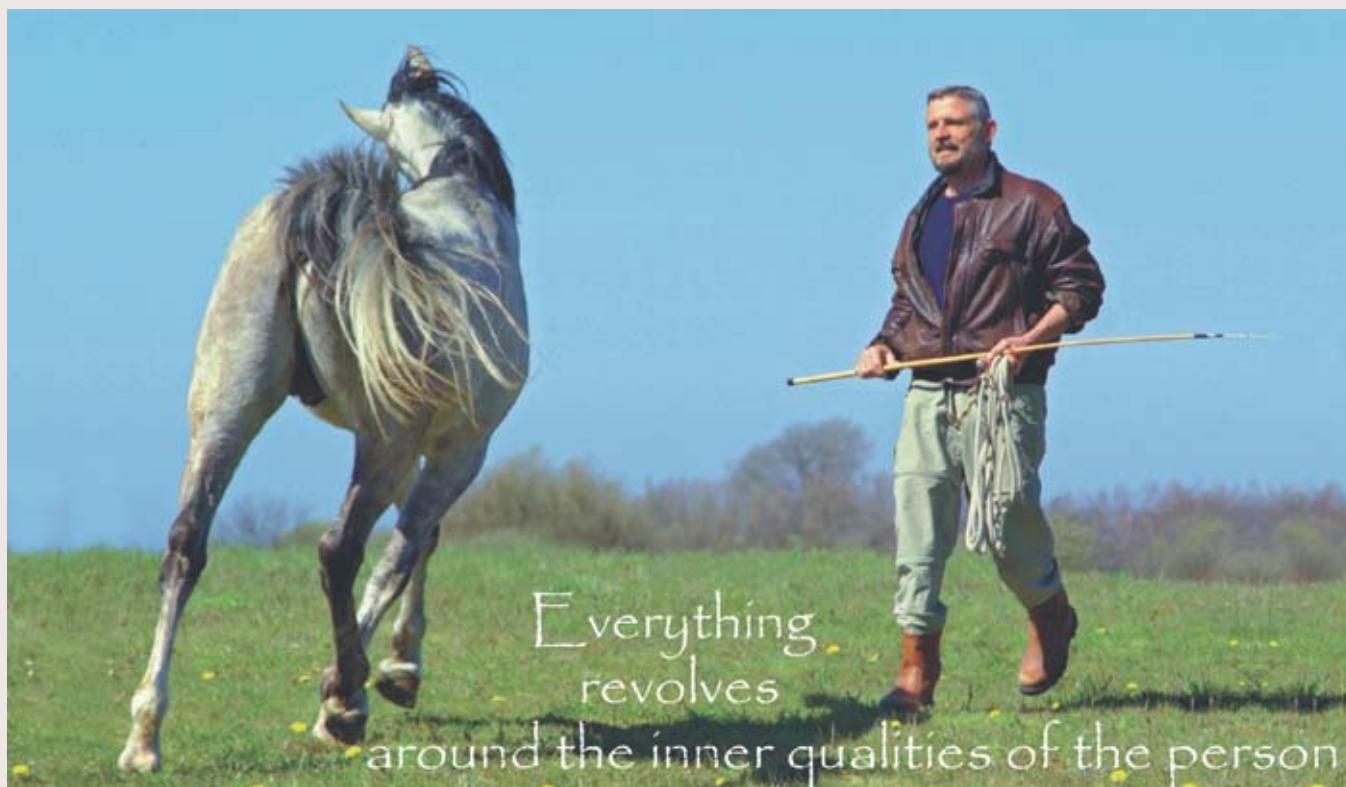
Klaus combines the horses' authentic freedom and voluntariness with original principles of collection. At liberty the flexibility, self-carriage and expression is supported through natural encouragement and because everything grows naturally in accordance with the horse's genetic



abilities, it will more and more often move on its own with nicely curved neck-line, the croup level lower than the withers and the hindlegs reaching far underneath his body, carrying the weight on the hindquarters. The horse changes mentally and physically into a generally collected, energetic and powerful being and it all becomes permanent features of the horse's own nature.







The effect of this approach to the horse, where the type, shape and duration of any exercise, is determined by the horse alone and his willingness to grow further, is that the horse continues to grow into its optimum, but constantly free posture. The external shape which we perceive as an image of beauty, balance and power, is experienced by the horse as an immense support and development of his entire, individual being, and with the change, he comes to recognize the cause of this enormous, positive development - which is the person at his side. The person now becomes more than just a friend, he becomes the

most important supporter ever - and a horse loves nothing more than the being who understands how to nurture him properly.

Klaus' students learn that you must convince the horse immediately that you are worth trusting and able to protect him - this makes the horse trust and where there is trust, there is trust all around. Everything revolves around the inner qualities of the person so it all must be practised carefully alone without the horse, or with human partners. Together with the horse the moment is determined not by routine and following a strict plan, but as a result of dedication, surprise, wonder and inner quiet and joyful flowing. Klaus wants the horses to be creative, alive, individual and full of power, because then they participate in every exercise with absolute commitment.







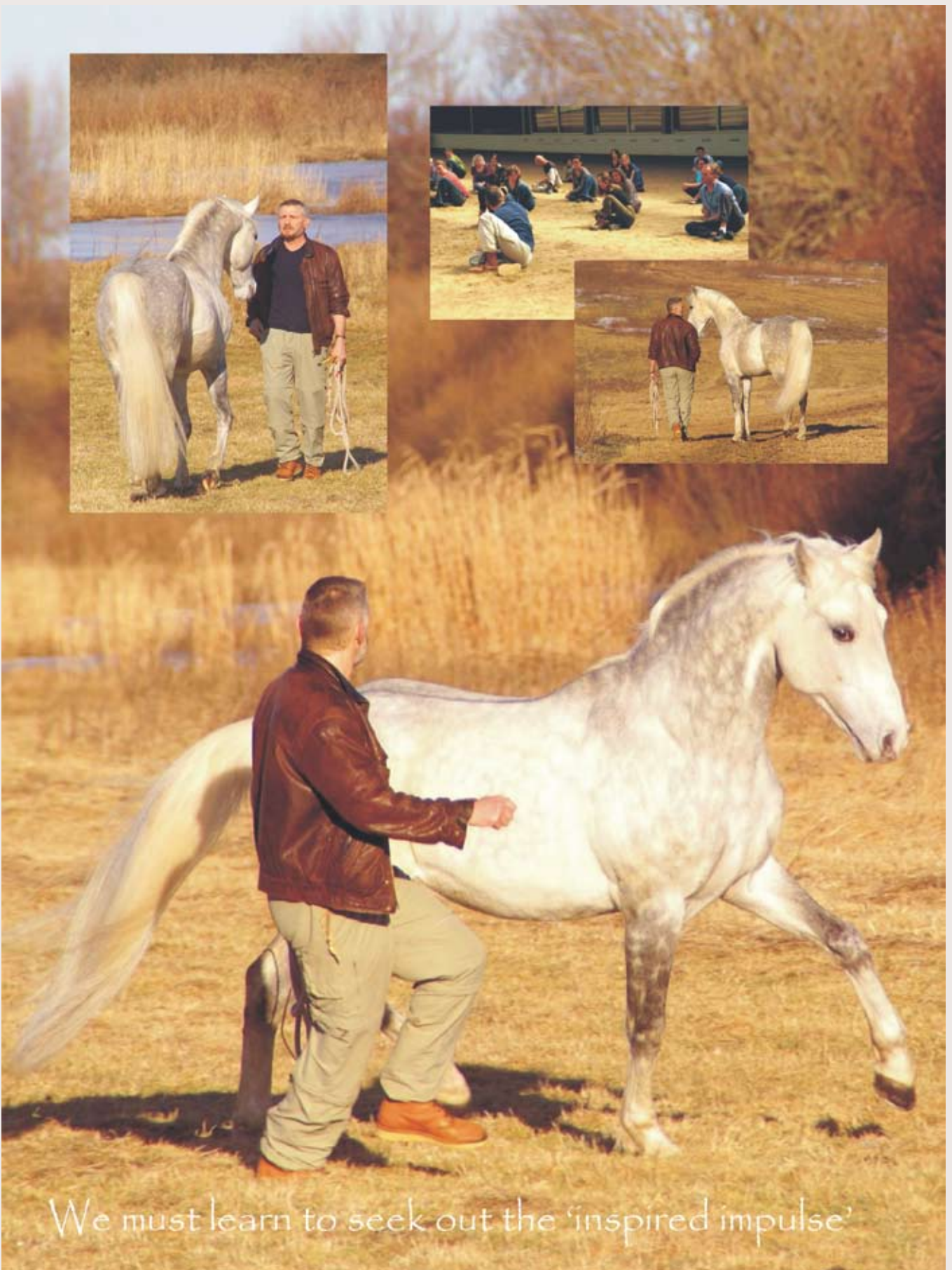
On YouTube you can watch Klaus' legendary encounters with horses that were given up by professional riders - his work with aggressive or nervous horses is sensational. He leads a hitherto lethal stallion from the National Stud in Barcelona past an in-season mare on a loose lead rope - the stallion never met him before but nevertheless gives him total respect barely casting a glance towards the tempting mare. A Breton stallion, the size of a bus, that has not been allowed out of his box for months because the soldiers at the stud fear for their lives is soon following Klaus like a lamb. Within minutes he transforms them into cooperative companions because they recognize him as a worthy and trustable leader. He says that the horses mirror so accurately everything that goes on inside us. A horse can see through any mask - recognizes sadness, despondency, fear and despair, but also inner strength, calmness and happiness, and reacts accordingly. When a horse attacks, and Klaus reacts absolutely unconcerned, calm and kind, only protecting his vital space as far as necessary, the horse soon takes on his attitude and opens up completely because he feels understood.

## Balanced Weight Riding

To enable the horse to carry a human being, without pain and injury as a result, Klaus concludes that the collection and lateral flexibility is crucial, and if the foundations are right, then little or no further training is required. The KFH riding system 'Balanced Weight Riding' therefore starts with thorough groundwork and lungeing at liberty, building up the potential for the exercises of the High School Dressage (Haute Ecole), like shoulder-in, Spanish walk, passage, piaffe etc. before mounting the horse. When the horse







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moves correctly in balance, the rider may communicate very accurately through minute weight signals, produced by slight changes in the position of the hip and the upper body, causing a natural response by the horse.

This way of approaching horses obviously demands something of us - we must master ourselves before we can master a horse. We are required to be the best we can be and must learn to trust our intuition and seek out what Klaus calls the 'inspired impulse' - that moment when we just know we can, at this precise moment, do the thing we couldn't do before. And a wonderful additional effect of his trainings is, that it all has a great influence on our lives in general, far beyond the togetherness with the horses - participants of his courses say they are life-changing.

His recent book '*The horse seeks me*' is the long-awaited practical continuation of his first book. In his own words, Hempfling says that "I've ventured forward in many different respects with this book.

[www.hempfling.com](http://www.hempfling.com)

In it, I write about lots of methods, emotions, states and practical experiences, for the first time. On a one-to-one basis, I describe how I get close to horses, how I lead them to themselves and persuade them to break out of their inner and outer shells, so that they may finally dance freely. It really has it all." For the first time, he gives a complete account of the ways in which horses can be handled naturally, using the deepest trust as a foundation, and guides the reader to the very heart of his world of equine understanding.



Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling was born in Germany in 1957. He has been involved in various kinds of artistic work all his life, and has done much studying of native and primordial cultures. These studies revealed to him the significant mythological and symbolic meaning of the horse. At the age of 29 he decided to look at the real horses, but soon realized that what he experienced in the established horse world was not in compliance with his studies. He decided to try finding another way, in accordance with the ancient myths of the knights' horsemanship. His publications on handling horses in a sensitive and natural way have gained him global recognition beyond equestrian circles, where he is considered a pioneer for new ideas in natural communication. After many years in Spain he now lives with his family on a small island in the Danish Archipelago. There he conducts exclusive courses for people from all over the world, passing on his knowledge about how to use body language in a purposeful and conscious way when dealing with horses, to achieve harmony and true friendship. His three most important publications about his horse work are '*Dancing with horses*', '*What horses reveal*' and '*The horse seeks me*'. You can find more information on his website: [www.hempfling.com](http://www.hempfling.com)