

Speaker 1 ([00:12](#)):

You are listening to the Journey on podcast with Warwick Schiller. Warwick is a horseman trainer, international clinician and author who helps empower horse people from all over the world with the skills, knowledge, and mindsets needed to create trusting partnerships with their horses. Warwick offers a free seven day trial to his comprehensive online video library that includes hundreds of full length training videos and several home study courses@videos.warwickschiller.com.

Warwick Schiller ([00:47](#)):

Good day everyone. Welcome back to The Journey on podcast. I'm your host, Warwick Schiller, and in this episode of the podcast, I'm going to talk about the gout show Derby. It's something I've signed up for. It's a 500 kilometer beast of a horse race in the Patagonian region of Argentina that I'm doing in 2023. And I've recently come back from a trip to Argentina where I did a five day gout show, Derby Academy. So I want to tell you all about that and tell you a bit about this crazy race that I've signed up for.

([01:23](#)):

I first became aware of the Gaucho Derby when I had Stevie Della Hunt on the podcast. Stevie is an adventurer. She goes by the Instagram handle of Adventure Barbie, and when Stevie was on the podcast, she told me about she had done both the Mongol Derby, which is a thousand kilometer horse race across the step of Mongolia, and she had also done the Gaucho Derby and now she cruise for both the Mongol Derby and the Gaucho Derby. So I had asked her a bit about the Gaucho Derby and at the time I was just being a podcast host just asking pertinent questions so people could hear about different adventures, Stevie he'd been on. But it kind of intrigued me. I thought, I've ridden camel's 300 kilometers across the Goby Desert. I could probably ride a horse 500 kilometers across Argentina. And there was something else that had piqued my interest too.

([02:20](#)):

A number of years ago, we got to spend a week in the British Ambassador's residence in Morocco and the British Ambassador, his name's Tom Roly, Tom had we'd been talking travel stories about different countries. Tom had been the British ambassador to Egypt and he'd traveled quite extensively and he said, have you ever been to Argentina? And I said, no, both Tyler and I said, no. And he said, you really need to go to Argentina. It's really an amazing country. So when Stevie was on the podcast and she told me about this 500 kilometer horse race, Patagonia, I said, sure. After that I thought, yeah, I'd love to do that. And so I signed up for this race not knowing very much about it, and the more I've learned about it, the scarier it is. So lemme give you the rundown on the Gaucho Derby. There's a lot to the Gaucho Derby.

([03:17](#)):

So it's a horse race, primarily it's a horse race covering 500 kilometers in Argentina in the Patagonia region of Argentina. But it's also a survival race, meaning you have to fend for yourself. So on your horse, you carry your tent, your sleeping bag, your mattress, your food, your little camp stove. You also have to be able to navigate using G P s. And so you are given a G P S, you are given typographical maps of the area and there are vet stations along the way. And I'll talk a bit more about the vet stations later because they're really big into the horse welfare, which is good. And you have to find your way to these vet stations and you've got to be able to navigate your way there. You've got to be able to read the topographic or map and figure out the best way to get there. You change horses, you ride five different horses during the race, so depending on how long it takes you to finish the race, you've got 10 days to finish the race.

[\(04:21\)](#):

I think the winners last year may have finished it in seven days and they averaged about 38 mile each day. So you're not necessarily changing horses every two days. You may be changing horses every day and a half, depending on how long you take to do a certain leg of the race. The official website of the Gaucho Derby, which is equestrian.com, says, imagine yourself thundering deep into the worlds of Patagonia and horseback. You've got your S speed and you're navigating across one of the wildest terrains on earth attempting to win one of the toughest and most unusual equine challenges in history. I don't think I'd read that last line when I actually signed up for Gaucho Derby. So I signed up sometime Earlyish last year. I was actually supposed to be doing the Gaucho Derby February. Right now it's late February, 2023, and I was actually supposed to be doing it this year.

[\(05:17\)](#):

And last summer I went up to Bend Oregon to spend a bit of time with Stevie Della Hunt and her husband Dylan, where they run a gaucho Urby bootcamp. And so we learned a bit of the part of it was learning some of the navigational skills that you need for the race. And the other part of it is, so Stevie competes in endurance, and so you get to ride endurance horses and you get to go out and you ride long distances. And I was up there for four days and I had never ridden the distances that we rode up there. So it was good to ride there. The endurance horses are amazing. I loved them, but it was good to ride them and start to figure out what parts of your body work, what part doesn't. My right foot would go numb the first few days and we adjusted a few things and I had a few practices to do while I was riding along, which almost turns into a moving meditation, but I got that bit sorted by the end of it.

[\(06:17\)](#):

But while I was up there, we got word that the gout show derby for 2023 this year had been postponed. They had to put it off till the next year. So what they normally do when they do the gout show derby is the 10 days before, the week before they have a thing called the Gout Show Academy. So it's people who aren't doing the race that year, but they come down and they get to experience what the horses are like, and they learn about the navigational part, they learn about wilderness survival stuff, they learn about medical emergency things in the wild. And so I thought, oh, well, I might go ahead and do that. So back last summer, I signed up for the Gacho Derby Academy and I had planned on being somewhat fit and somewhat riding ready, but life kind of gets in the way and I've been traveling and I was starting to get kind of fit.

[\(07:14\)](#):

And then I got covid later last year and things just got in the way. But that's just me making excuses. The bottom line is I just went to Gacho Derby Academy in Argentina and wasn't terribly ready for it. So I'm going to tell you all about my experience down there. And I guess before I tell you that I probably should say being in the public eye in social media, either with this podcast or with Facebook or whatever, it's an interesting space to occupy. And I know you can get people that say all sorts of things about you, and some of them you kind of go, that's your stuff, but sometimes it kind of makes you think, yeah, and I think I've learned probably at least as much from my detractors over the years as I have from people who are on my side. But one of the comments I got on social media when I first announced that I was going to do the gacho derby was, oh, they treat their horses terribly, and how could you do that?

[\(08:16\)](#):

You're supposed to be this attuned guy, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. At the time, I replied and said, well, I'm not going to treat the horses like they treat 'em. I'm going to treat 'em like I'm going to treat 'em. And I wasn't really sure how feasible that was just because I had no idea what I was getting into. But I did manage to do quite a bit of that stuff, and I'll talk about that in this podcast. But first I'll probably talk

about the preparations for it. So as you probably know, my son, Tyler and I, we like to do adventurous stuff together. So when I signed up for this Gacho Derby Academy, he decided he was going to come with me too. And while I was doing the academy, he was going to go hiking and camping in some of the most beautiful places in Patagonia.

[\(09:07\)](#):

He was actually going to go to a place called El Shaan, which is where the actual gaucho derby, when the race is run, it actually finishes. So you finish with Mount Fitzroy in the background. If you dunno what Mount Fitzroy is, look it up if you've ever seen any clothing from the Patagonia clothing line. And the logo is this jagged, this jagged shape that is actually the outline of the rocky outcrops there at Mount Fitzroy. And so like I said, while I was at the academy, Tyler was going to do that. Then we're going to meet up and we're going to hike this route called the W Route, which is some of them, I think it's, I looked it up, it's one of the 10 most famous hikes in the world. And so we purchased these big hefty hiking backpacks and we were going to do that.

[\(09:56\)](#):

But unfortunately Robin, my wife, her mother received a cancer diagnosis, a pancreatic cancer diagnosis back around Thanksgiving last year towards the end of November. And she's been steadily declining since then. So before I even left for Argentina, I said to Robin, you think I actually should go? And she said, well, yeah, go do the academy, but then come home, don't do the hike with Tyler. So I left Tyler to do the hiking on his own. He had some friends he was going to meet up with anyway, so it wasn't like he was doing it totally alone. So Tyler flew over from Hawaii and then the next day we went to drove to San Francisco airport to go to Argentina. And when we got there, Tyler realized he had not bought his passport with him. I'm so glad it was him and not me. So Tyler actually had to go home.

[\(10:55\)](#):

I went on because I was going to get there the next day and I thought there was some sort of meeting I had to attend to do with the academy. I didn't want to miss it. So Tyler was actually a day late getting in. So to get from where we live on the west coast of California, we have to fly to Houston, Texas, which is down there in the Gulf. And then from Houston, Texas, you fly overnight to Buenos Aires. So we had this huge packing list to take with us for the Gacho Academy, and a lot of it has to do with layers. You've got to have, it could be blizzard light conditions, you don't know. The weather down there is quite changeable. And so we have got all these warm clothes packs. So I get off the plane in Buenos Aires, and then you've got to collect your bags and you've got to walk down to another terminal, which is the domestic terminal.

[\(11:50\)](#):

Then you fly down to where we're flying, to which a place called Alte. And as I was dragging all this luggage from the international terminal to the domestic terminal, it is hot and humid in Buenos Aires and I'm sweating like a pig, and I'm thinking, why am I dragging all these clothes around when it's like this? Well, what I didn't realize is Buenos Aires is way up the top of Argentina. Argentina is very long and skinny and El Calafate is down the bottom where all the glaciers are. So I was kind of cursing, having to carry all these warm clothes around. But when I did get down there, I was quite happy to have the warm clothing. So everyone on the gaucho derby stayed in the same hotel and we all went out for dinner that night. It was kind of cool. There was a fellow there from New Zealand and he'd been to the glaciers that day and he had a Yeti water bottle with him and he'd scraped some of the ice off the glacier and filled this Yeti water bottle up with it.

[\(12:46\)](#):

And so that night we went to a bar there and he ordered some whiskey and we had whiskey on the rocks, but the rocks that it was on was this ice from the glacier there in Argentina, which was pretty cool. So the next morning we all get our gear and pack into a bus and we head off out for a 10 hour drive out to the Estancia where we'll be staying. So Estancia is actually refers to what is called an estate, but in America you'd call it a ranch in Australia, you'd call it a station. And the place that we went to, it's 20,000 acres or the one we were on was 20,000 acres. But Sergio, the guy that owns it, has a couple number of adjoining places. I think it kind of adds up to around a hundred thousand acres. But anyway, we spent 10 hours getting out there and at times the roads pretty rough and at times we were drew in about 30 kilometers an hour and the windows were shaking.

[\(13:44\)](#):

I thought the windows were going to pop out of the bus. We arrive out there late that afternoon and get settled into with there's this two story building and downstairs is a big dining hall with a big fireplace in it and upstairs is like sleeping quarters. So there's 20 of us on this Gaucho Derby Academy and all 20 of us are sleeping in cots upstairs there. So the first couple of days is going to be spent, we are going to have some medical training, we're going to have training on G P S and topographical maps, things like that. We're going to have a ride in the afternoon. And then towards the end of our stay there, what going to do is we're going to ride out one day. We're going to take all our camping equipment and stuff with this. We're going to ride the horses to his place camp overnight and the next day we're going to go on round up what they called wild horses.

[\(14:35\)](#):

They're not actually wild horses, most of 'em are branded, but it's the mares and stallions that they run on the place and they've got all their folds from the previous year. So we're going to bring all those horses in because they need to be branded and castrated and all that sort of stuff. So we are going to camp one night, go and first find those horses and then gather 'em and bring 'em in closer and then camp the night again and then bring them all the way back to home. That's towards the end of the week. So we'll spend two nights out in the wilderness testing out our camping gear, but initially we don't have to test it at camping gear. Like I said, we're staying upstairs in these cots. Well, at least the first night I did, there were 20 people in the room, three of them were pretty good snores, and one of them was a lady who got really sick and she was coughing up a lung.

[\(15:24\)](#):

So I didn't get some very good sleep that first night. But the lamb that they cooked us for dinner was amazing. They do lamb amazing in Argentina. It's like I've never had it before and it was amazing. So the first morning we get up and the first thing we have is our medical trainings. So the Gocho Derby Academy on the Gocho Derby in the Mongol Derby, they have medics along on that and the medics they use from a business called Intrepid Medics. And so there's three guys, two of them were with us, Andre and Andy. So Andre is originally from Transylvania in Romania and he was in the French Foreign Legion. He was in the alpine regiment of the French Foreign Legion. And eventually I think he got sick of causing harm and he started to want to repair harm. So he learned how to be a medic while in that.

[\(16:15\)](#):

And then Andy, who's a Britt, I think he was an ambulance driver in New Zealand before he teamed up with Andre, I think they met in Jordan working for an N G O, and they decided to team up. And then there's another third member of it who wasn't there. But these guys are fascinating. I'll have to get them on the podcast. Some of the stories they'll probably be able to tell are pretty amazing. So the first morning was medical training, wilderness medical training because when we're out there on the race, we might be the first person on the scene of an accident and you're a long way from anywhere. And a

lot of times vehicles cannot actually get to people who are injured on the race. And so when I talked before about we have GPSs and topographical maps, but you also have a tracker attached to you as well, and the tracker has an s o s on it.

[\(17:09\)](#):

So headquarters, they keep track of everybody during the race and during the academy when you're out riding, you've got this tracker on and where you are at all times, they know where you are at all times. Actually, it's interesting, during the race, they said, because it's kind of like an endurance race to where when you come into the vet station, your horse's heart rate has to return to a certain level after within the first 15 minutes or whatever. Well, in an endurance race, I think the heart rate is 65, whereas on this it's 54 I think. So they really want to look after the horses. But what the trackers do is instead of someone could ride their horse way, override their horse for 30 miles and then lead 'em in the last five miles or something or other, and by the time they get there, their heart rate's fine, but they've just absolutely flogged this poor horse for 30 miles.

[\(18:05\)](#):

So the tracker does that too. They can tell and they kind of track where you are when you're in the actual race. So they can tell if you're going too fast uphill, if you're moving in a relatively fast rate, they're going to look at the map and make sure that you're on terrain that you could move on a fast rate on. Anyway, so this first morning we had all this medical briefing and quite frankly, they scared the shit out of us telling us about some of the things that can happen. And shit got real during that medical briefing. It started to make me realize, holy cow, this race is a bit more than I had bargained for. Not that you're guaranteeing anything bad's going to happen, but just the remoteness of the whole thing. Then we had another delicious lunch and then it was time to go and meet our horses and ride some horses that afternoon.

[\(19:07\)](#):

And this is where I got to see, so before I go any further here, I want to quote Brene Brown, or at least Brene Brown's husband I think, and Brene Brown's husband's name is Steve, and he tells her that he assumes everybody is doing the best that they can. He says, and I don't know if they are, but it certainly makes my life better if I assume that. And I kind of like to go with that premise too. And so the Argentinians gout shows they do things a certain way with horses. It's certainly not the way I would do things with horses, but I was able to watch them do it without judgment of how they were going about things. I think there are ways you can do things differently.

[\(19:57\)](#):

So we went after lunch, we went down to where all the horses were in these two pens and the gout shows catching horses. There's a whole lot of chasing and yelling and running around and dust flying. And the horses basically don't want to get caught. And most of them have holters on, they leave the Holters on 'em when they turn 'em out. And most of the horses don't want to get caught. And it's really interesting, you can have 15, maybe 20 horses in a pen, and as soon as one of the gout shows looks at one of the horses, that's the one they want to catch. Those horses can feel that intention and they turn and they go to the back of the pack. And so there's a bit of chasing around there. And so we go down there and one at a time they catch our horses and bring 'em to us and probably at least half the horses they need to, well, I dunno if they need to, but they say they need to hobble them to saddle 'em.

[\(20:52\)](#):

And so they caught me, this handsome black gelding, he had a little half moon shaped white thing on his head and they bring him over and they said, you got to hobble him to saddle him. And so they put the

hobbles on and I basically hang on to him and the gout show saddles him for me. And this whole process takes quite a while because really the gout shows are basically saddle in everybody's horses because they don't know anybody's experience level or whatever. Something I did notice though, when they do the girth up, one of the things you don't ever want, I don't ever want to do to a horse is tighten the girth up and then get on. I'll always tighten it, move them forward a bit, maybe tighten a little bit more, move them forward, but I'll never tighten the girth and then get on.

[\(21:40\)](#):

Because some horses, and you dunno which horse it is, can just flip over backwards. As soon as they go to UNT track, when they girths tight, they might flip over backwards. Well anyway, these gout shows, I've never seen anybody tighten the girth up as tight on a horse ever. And when they first were doing it, I was thinking, why do you need it that tight? After we went out and rode in some of the country, uphill downhill is like, oh yeah, you need to have the girth pretty tight. But how they did the girth up was pretty interesting. They'd get it up pretty tight, and then when they couldn't pull it any harder, they would, I dunno if I can explain this on a podcast, but they would have the ladder go in their hand and they'd turn their back to the horse, bend their knees and squat down and pull that ladder, go over their shoulder and down and hold it by their chest, and then they'd stand up.

[\(22:28\)](#):

So they basically do squats. They'd stand up and that ladder go pulling over their shoulder. Here's what would tighten it. And so this is how they go about things. So I allowed all that to happen. And then there's 20 of us that are in the academy, and then there's probably six or seven gout shows and there's one of the medics is on horseback, Tom that owns the whole company. He's on horseback, Eric that runs the whole thing. He's on horseback. Stevie Dale Hunt, she's on horseback. So there's probably 30 of us or so on horseback. And so there's a lot of milling around before we get going. But I got on my horse and when I got on him and I pointed him away from the pen that he just came out, he almost shook his head and said, no, I don't want to. And I just put my hand down and let him do whatever he wanted.

[\(23:12\)](#):

And I was only probably 10 or 15 feet from the panty just came out of. And he walked straight back there and just kind of stuck his head over the fence like, no, I don't want to leave. And so I just started walking him in little circles right there. If you want to be over here, you can be over here, but we're going to walk circles. And I walked circles for probably a minute or two and then I pointed him away from there and he took a few steps and then he turned and went back to the edge of the pants. I just walked a few circles right there. And after a little while I pointed him away and he walked away completely relaxed and quite easy to do it. So these horses are quite, I'd say they're fairly herd bound and don't want to get caught.

[\(23:54\)](#):

And like I said, no judgment, that's what they're like. So we rode out for, oh, a couple hours I suppose, and came to another little, there was a little house somewhere out in the stanis. So we stopped there for lunch, tied our horses up, and they'd prepared us some lunch inside. By now the wind was howling before we went to Patagonia, Eric had told us, he said that the wind is biblical. They said, make sure you bring a buff, like something to wrap around your face, around your neck, make sure you bring sunscreen and chapstick because they said the wind is biblical. And I had no idea what biblical in relation to the term, the term biblical in relation to wind meant. But after riding that first day, it's what you'd think it would be. It's the craziest wind you've ever, ever experienced with a little bit of a chill to it as well.

[\(24:48\)](#):

And so then once we got out there, actually were down one person, by the time we got to lunch, one of the people on the academy actually fell off a horse and broke her arm, both bones and her forearm, and they punctured through the skin. So not a good break whatsoever. So the medics, they got to earn their keep that first day. One of the medics, Andre, he was on a horse and then Andy was in a support vehicle. So Andre was the first medic to the person and had to stabilize with them. They had to walk with her quite a ways to get to where the car was, where the support vehicle was, because the ground is just so uneven, you couldn't drive a vehicle across it. And they actually had to drive her 10 hours back to El Califate to get surgery. And then I think she stayed in Argentina as long as we were there.

[\(25:45\)](#):

Actually, I think by the time we got back to El Califate was the day she was flying back to the US to have another surgery. So yeah, the lovely lady that broke her arm was actually quite a fan of the podcast. So I was looking forward to hanging out with her and chatting about all things. Woo. But unfortunately that didn't happen. Luckily the medics were there to take care of it. That is a nasty break when the big concern the medics had was if you fall off and break both bones in your arm and you poke your bones out through the skin getting an infection in there, the broken bones are a no big deal, but if you have an infection inside there, that can get quite ugly. So anyway, after lunch, we rode back to the stanza again. And on the way back I asked, is there any chance I can, everybody was excited to get warmed up and start to drink some Malbec wine.

[\(26:41\)](#):

And I had asked on the way back, is there any chance I can work with this horse a bit? After everybody turns their horses loose, can I stay back there in the pen and mess them a bit? And they're like, yeah, yeah, no problem. So we get back there and everybody unsettled and they turned their horses loose out in the pasture for the night. And I, I named him bk. He had a big brand on him. It was a backwards B up against a K. And one of my favorite books I've ever read, novels I've read, is a book called The Power of One by Bryce Courtney. And the protagonist's name in that book is pk, P E K A Y P E E K A Y. And so I'd named it, by this point, I've been named my little black horse, bk, and he was amazing to ride.

[\(27:29\)](#):

When we went out riding, you'd be trotting along and the ground is so uneven, like every foot that every horse's foot is, all four feet of the horses are in on different elevations. You couldn't drive a vehicle across it and just trotting along. If you look at the ground as it's coming up to you, you think my horses are going to stumble in somersault, and they don't at all. There could be a foot, foot and a half difference between where right front foot lands and their left front foot lands as far as elevation one could be in a hole, and these horses will trot and canter across this stuff in riding them along. You'd think they're riding along flat ground. They're just the most amazing off-road vehicle. So anyway, we get back to the stands, everybody turns their horses loose, and I got an empty pen there, and I just got bk and I turned him loose in that pen.

[\(28:22\)](#):

And as soon as I turned him loose, he just turned and walked away from me and looked out over the fence, and I looked around in a garbage can there and found a piece of plastic. It was a plastic bag or something or other. So I just took that in the pen with me and I just stood over on one side and he was on the other side looking out through the fence, and I just take that bag out and I just kind of rattled in my hands a little bit. And if I could get him to flick an ear or look at me, then I'd just stop rattling the background. But it's what I'm not doing is putting any pressure on him. I'm not moving towards him or chasing him around or anything. I'm just attracting his attention. And as soon as his attention moves off, whatever it was on onto me, I put that bag away.

[\(28:56\)](#):

And I had mentioned before someone said, how can you go down there with the things they do with those horses? And you're supposed to be attuned. And so what I was doing here was, it's an exercise I do quite a lot. That's called creating connection through change in focus. And all you're doing is get to change. You use their curiosity. You use something that's curious to them to attract their attention, and as soon as their attention comes on, you put the thing away. And so you're really communicating your awareness of their change in focus. And so I did that, oh, probably took me about an hour, I guess probably there was a couple of people watching in the first half an hour, you could see him kind of scratching their head like, this guy's an idiot. He doesn't even know what he's doing.

[\(29:41\)](#):

But by the end of the hour, it didn't matter where I walked, BK would just follow me around. And then I thought, okay, well now that you are comfortable being around me, now I'm going to work on the saddling. And so I worked on saddling to where I didn't have to saddle in with the hobbles, and I don't even think he needed to be saddled with hobbles, but they made me settle in with hobbles the first day. But it's the only time I saddled in with hobbles after that, it's the only time I put the hobbles on him. And so then I just turned him loose. But what was interesting, the next morning when I went back in to catch him, he was, I tried to go in and get him before all the gout show showed up to get him for me. And he was in a pen with about 20 other horses.

[\(30:23\)](#):

And so I did the same thing with him I did the night before, except with 20 other horses in there. So I walked in there and I didn't actually, I didn't have bit of plastic with me, but I was wearing chinks. And so what I did was I walked in and I located him several other black horses in there too. I had, okay, he's that one there. And as soon as I looked at him, he would turn his head and move to the back of the pack of horses up against the fence. And so I would just keep an eye on him and I'd just start walking around slapping my leg, like slapping my leg on my chinks. And some of the horses moved away and I just kept wandering around. And if he looked at me, even if it was over the back of three or four other horses, I'd just stop.

[\(31:06\)](#):

And it probably took me about 20 minutes. But in the end, he stood there and faced me. All the other horses walked around behind me, and I just walked up to him and caught him. But there was no yelling, there was no dust, no horses, none of the horses picked up a trot. So there was no running around. And I just went up and caught him. And yeah, he was quite happy to stand there and let me catch him. I think he actually probably appreciative of not being chased around, but then I saddled him without hobbles and he was no problem to saddle at all. So before we went and caught them that day, we had G P s training. So we did quite a bit of training on how the G P s units work, how to put coordinates into the G P Ss, how to change coordinates, things like that, how to read typographical maps.

[\(31:58\)](#):

So that's what our education was that first morning was, I'm sorry, the second morning was on how to do that. And then when we saddle their horses up, we went out, they gave us a couple of G P s coordinates, coordinates to find, and so we had to go and locate them. And so they'd send us off in groups of three or four and you'd go and locate them. And then one of the vets was there. So they have vets along on both the actual race and the academy. The two vets we had there. One was a guy named Chris, he's from Canada. And the other lovely lady, she's from Mexico City.

[\(32:33\)](#):

So we had to figure out where these vet stations were in her G P s find, and then they checked their horses' heart rates to see how well we did on the way getting to those vet stations. And that night, once again, we had the most amazing lamb. Again, I'm a big fan of lamb, and we had lamb every night there. I had just got back from Australia where I think I had lamb almost every night too. So it was almost a month of lamb. So the next day is the day we rode out. So we spent quite a bit of time in the morning packing our saddlebags. During the race, you are only allowed a 10 kilo weight limit in your saddlebags. And so the rider fully clothed to ride, cannot weigh more than 85 kilograms, and then your saddlebags can only weigh 10 kilos or less.

[\(33:31\)](#):

And so we were trying to duplicate what the race is going to be like. So they weighed our bags and we had to figure out what we wanted to take, what we didn't want to take. They gave us some leeway. It wasn't the actual race, but people in the actual race said that they did things as far as cutting the handles off their toothbrushes just to save weight because you need every little thing you need when you're out there in the wilderness. So that afternoon we rode, oh, we rode quite a ways, and we went through up huge cliffs. We went down one rocky Shay Cliff thing. So steep that even the gauchos got off and led their horses down. Everybody led their horse down on this trail down the side of this mountain, and it was pretty amazing. But we ended up camping that night beside one of those beautiful rivers next to some trees.

[\(34:23\)](#):

It was a good experience to check out the tent, check out the jet boil. So a jet boil is a very small camp stove that you can heat water in, and when you heat water, you can pour it in your dehydrated food packets and stuff like that. We were camped right by some trees, so we're in an open clearing, but right up against some trees. And that night, the wind coming through those trees was absolutely biblical, kind of keep you awake. And I heard something that night I've never actually heard before. There was the wind had stopped, there was no wind at all. And then you could hear the wind coming through the trees like this wind is on its way and as this big, and then as it got to us, it disappeared like that. It was just one big gust of wind. I've never heard a gust of wind like that.

[\(35:19\)](#):

Just one huge big gust of wind. Sounded like a freight train coming and just went through and then it went back to being totally silent again. So yeah, that was pretty amazing. So the next morning we got up and they had decided we were going to camp in the same place that night. They weren't sure where we were going to that night, but they decided that was a good camp. We're going to camp in the same place, and we were going to go and start to gather these groups of these herds of wild horses out there. And so they split us up into probably, I don't know, three or four people with each gout shell. And we all went off in different directions trying to find horses. The couple of gout shows I was with, we were the first ones to spot horses, and we were up on this very high steep cliff that we couldn't get down on, but we could see the horses down there.

[\(36:07\)](#):

And I guess when the gout shows go and gather the horses, the spotters up on the hill to sea 'em, and they start making noises, yelling and stuff and get the horses running towards other people. But it was like the man from Snowy River, not so much the downhill part of the man from Snowy River, but just the beautiful scenery. We come up on this huge rocky outlaw up and look out over this valley, and then there's all these horses grazing down there. It was absolutely stunning. And that's as close as we got to the horses that day, at least me personally. Some of the other people got to get a lot closer to 'em. But

yeah, we spent quite a bit of time locating them, and then we had to get from where we were to where the horses went to where everybody else was.

[\(36:51\)](#):

So we rode, we crossed so many rivers and went down so many huge big steep cliffs and then up other steep cliffs. And yeah, it was a pretty big day's riding. I think we rode about 27 miles that day. I had my watch that tells me how far I run. I had it on and it kind of went on and went off, and then I turned it back on again. And the last thing it recorded was 20 miles. I figured we'd done about three or four miles before it went off. So I figured we did roughly 27 miles that day. Once again, camped in the same place by that beautiful, beautiful river. Had an ice bath. I don't think I did that night. The wind was blowing biblically the night before. A few of us went down and had an ice bath. Since I was up at Stevie Della Hunt's place, she has started into the ice bath.

[\(37:44\)](#):

And so yeah, we went down and got in the river, and the river is, it's a glacial fed River, so it's relatively cold and it's running, so that makes it colder still. So the reason Stevie got into the ice bath, when I went up to her place for the Gacho Derby bootcamp one night, we went out and we actually camped out as well. And we camped by a river, it was a snow melt Fed River in or creek in Bend, Oregon. And I made everybody there do an ice bath. And so that was Stevie's first ice bath, and she's a bit of a badass, so she's become a huge fan of them since then. So the next morning, it was the day, the day we're going to take all these wild horses home, and they had said that this is the crazy day, Sergio, the gaucho that owns the estancia, the translation from what he said about what was going to happen.

[\(38:44\)](#):

He said, violent speed. And so once you start chasing these wild horses, you've, you've got to go and the country, you've got to be able to gallop straight downhill. You've got to gallop across that ground. I mentioned before that is so uneven that I have no idea how these horses even get across it, but they just so hardy, they're just so, they're so fit and they grow up in this environment because when we bought this herd of horses all the way back to the estancia, half of them were folds. And they can, that's just how they live. It's just perfectly normal for 'em. So after being in Argentina and seeing what these horses are like, I kind of had some reservations about this race because it's like, yeah, that's going to be hard on the horses, but it's not hard on the horses at all.

[\(39:39\)](#):

These horses can go all day long. If you can ride them there, they can go there, no problem at all. So I really got really comfortable with the fact that this is not a hardship on these horses at all. They are certainly up to the task. And so we rode quite a ways that this last day to get to where the horses actually ought to try to find where the horses were. And the ches are really good when you ride up a big steep hill, they'll hop off at the top loose in the cinch, and they just hop off and lay around on the ground. They'd lay on a bush and give their horses a rest until they got the air back and then we'd go again. But I went with Sergio because there's 20 of us of different riding abilities, and people wanted to go slow.

[\(40:25\)](#):

You could just stay at the back, but if you want to go with one of the gouts who's going to chase these horses, you could go with them. But when you do, you have got to be prepared to go with them. And I ended up going with Sergio, the boss of the whole thing. And I'm thinking, this is going to be scary and fun all at the same time. And it was definitely that we were up on a big, big ridge, and Sergio went down off that ridge and he was just going a bit of an exploration, but while he was down there, the

horses showed up. So then we had to gallop down off the ridge and catch up to him and galloping up to that herd of galloping horses. As I first galloped up and got close to them, I got kind of emotional.

[\(41:10\)](#):

I had this emotion come up inside me just, I don't know, it was just majestic. It was just this spectacular scene of these mares and foals and stallions all just galloping along through this wild country. And I was on a horse pretty close to him following along. And yeah, it was really quite amazing to see. And it surprised me actually, if you're a regular podcast listener, that I've not had a whole lot of emotions and it just hit me. And yeah, it was very, very cool. Once we caught up to 'em and we got 'em to a fence and they got slowed down, then we basically just pushed 'em along relatively slowly after that. We're basically walking along with them. But it was so cool walking along with them. And there was this one little orphan fo that they named Gringer. And oh, she could have been a week old, I imagine she wasn't that old at all.

[\(42:07\)](#):

And she was tagging along behind that herd. And she actually would walk along beside our horses and tuck in behind 'em like they were a mother. She was an orphan. And when she finally got back to the estancia, they ended up getting some milk and they apparently they're bottle feeder and they're raising her now, and they've named her Gringer. But yeah, the hills, she went up and down and the rivers that she crossed were just absolutely amazing. She was the Swedish little thing. Tough too. Very, very tough. So yeah, we got those horses back to the estancia, put 'em in the pasture there by the house. And yeah, it was absolutely beautiful to see them. And then we got to turn our horses loose. And it was funny, right at the end, I took the saddle off and took the bridle off and I started scratching his head.

[\(43:01\)](#):

So he's loose and everybody else is turning their horses loose and they're all heading down the pasture. And he stood there and let me scratch on him for 30 seconds and kind of leaned his head into it like, oh, that feels good. And it was just those horses don't really communicate how they feel, and if you rub on 'em, they don't go, oh, that feels good, sort of thing. So it was really kind of cool to end up with bk actually opening up just a little bit to me. But what did I learn about the actual gait show derby? I think we only rode about 20 miles that last day. But when I got done with that whole trip, my knees were bugged, my knees were not good. So I've got to look into making sure they stay good for the race because the race hours at eight o'clock in the morning till six o'clock at night, so you could be, the day we did 27 miles, we stopped at three o'clock in the afternoon and we didn't leave till probably 9, 9 30 in the morning.

[\(44:02\)](#):

So the race is going to be quite challenging that way. And the thing with the race, when you get done for the day, you've got to stay there and hand graze your horse for a couple of hours so they get enough food to eat. You've got to camp beside water, so you've got to get water from the drink. Then you've got to set your tent up, then you've got to cook your food, then you've got to set up your bed and all that stuff. And then what you've got to do is figure out looking at your topo graphical map, figure out where you are, where you've got to get to tomorrow, and the best way to get there. What you don't want to do is jump on the next morning and head off in a wrong direction or, because you've got to be able to figure out the next vet check that I've got to get to, it's on the other side of that mountain.

[\(44:50\)](#):

Do I go this way? But if I go this way, there's a steep bit here or there's a river here. If I go this way, there could be a bog. So the bogs, there's these patches of flat green grass, it look a bit like a golf course and

you think, oh, this looks great. And you start walking on it as you walk on it, it all wobbles. And they say in the race, if you ride a horse into a bog, they could sink to their belly, so, so yeah, there's some crazy bits like that. So once you get done riding all day and get your horse fed, get your horse watered, get your tent set up, get your bed set up, cook yourself dinner, then you've got to figure out your plan for the next day. So at nighttime, they'll hobble the horses and then tie 'em up. But reading some of the accounts from last year's race, you've got to wake up every hour and stick your head out. They had the tent and make sure your horse is still there because those horses can even hobbled, they can cover quite some distance as anybody knows who's had a horse get good with moving with hobbles, they can move quite a distance while they're hobbled. Yeah, and at least now I know what I don't know. Before I had no idea what I didn't know. Now I know what I don't know.

[\(46:15\)](#):

I think the food thing will be okay, you're not taking in a great deal of calories, but these days sometimes I'll only eat at nighttime, I might not eat breakfast or lunch. So as I've gotten older, it's just gotten that way. So I don't think that's going to be a challenge. And I was not riding fit at all when I went there. And the riding towards the end of the day, you're getting a bit weary. I can imagine doing another three hours and then repeating that every day, every day, every day, every day would get kind of weary. So I think I'll have to be riding quite a bit more riding fit, but I'll have to generally be fitter, I think, because there's times when you're going to get off and lead horse, especially coming into a vet station, probably going to get off the last mile or so and hop off and lead 'em in.

[\(47:04\)](#):

But there are times where there's a hill so steep to go up or a hill so steep to go down. You can't ride them and you're going to get off and lead them. And then there's just the navigational part of it. But at least now I know what the countryside looks like, and I know I've got some forewarning about things like the bogs, things like that. I've got a fair idea how the horses are and how they've been handled. And if you know what's been done with them, you've got a fair idea about, oh, I've got a fair idea about how I can go about doing things maybe a little better, maybe a little easier. And the other thing I thought too, it's on this race. The first morning you're going to catch your horse saddle up and then off you go. But when you get to where you camp that night, I'll be able to mess with that horse a little bit while I'm grazing 'em and watering them and stuff like that.

[\(48:02\)](#):

I'll probably be able to get to where the next morning, the saddling up will be quite a bit easier. So when the race first starts, you draw for horses. So you're reaching a hat and you pull out a number and there's a number on there, Holter. So you got to go catch 'em then. And the horses aren't used to wearing saddlebags. So I talked to people who were in the race who said, yeah, that first morning when you first get on your horses, they can be a bit froggy. But I think that's all part and parcel of it. So anyway, that's my story about going to Argentina and how I managed to apply a bit of an attuned outlook on things with the horses and just some of the things I learned about what I don't know while I was there. So hopefully you guys enjoyed this episode of the podcast. Thanks for joining me. We'll catch you on the next episode.

Speaker 1 ([48:56](#)):

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