

THE BRUMBY STALLION

22/12/2011

Glenn and I have just got back from a trip to the Victorian High Plains with our horses, and had another amazing and humbling experience with the brumbies up there.

For those who do not know, in many parts of Australia wild horses - called brumbies - roam in our national parks (1000s of square kms of wild country). Completely wild and totally free.

They are not native to Australia, but are decedents from domestic horses that escaped or set free in the early days of white settlement in Australia. They have adapted and thrived in the Australian wilds (both in the desert and in the alpine country). Some people see them as pests that are destroying our native habitats, some people see them as a symbol or national icon of Australia.

I have mixed feelings in regards to what I think about their presence in our natural wilderness. What I do know though, is that every encounter I have with them is stunning, and humbling and amazing.

This trip we rode our wonderful horses across the grass plains out the back of Falls Creek (for those who know Victoria), and after about 5kms saw dots on a far hill that was a herd of brumbies. They were probably about 1km away - just enough for us to make out their shapes with the naked eye.

We stopped to look; they noticed us and raised their heads. Because the brumbies are very nervous of horse riders (they get chased by them) we immediately hopped off to be less threatening.



We were standing watching them, and suddenly one of them broke from the herd and made a fast and straight bee line for us. It was clearly the stallion and he was clearly intent on coming and checking us out closely. He flew across the landscape at a fast and focused canter, mane streaming and head high. He was covering the ground as though he was in a smooth pasture, but in reality he was on extremely broken ground littered with small round

volcanic boulders, it was very rough going terrain and our horses had been carefully picking their way through it, as were we when we walked it. This stallion though travelled through it as though there wasn't an inkling of broken ground underfoot. It was beautiful.

He came cantering up to the group head arched, chest out, making a beeline for Glenn and MacGregor. At about 30 - 40m Glenn stepped forward and softly but firmly raised his hands in front of him and sent a clear thought to the stallion of "please stop". (We might have

wanted to see a stallion up close, but we wanted also to be a little cautious and not end up in a situation where he might be aggressive to us or our horses).

The stallion stopped short, startled by Glenn's sudden presence. He tossed his head, turned, and did a large extended arched head semi circle trot around our group, taking us all in carefully and intently.

After a moment he decided we were of no threat to him or his girls, and of no interest to steal for his herd (all our horses were geldings). He took one last look, turned and trotted purposefully off, pausing once to look back, before returning at a canter to his mares on the far hill.



It was breath taking, just breathtaking, words do not describe it.

It was amazing and incredible, he had that "something extra" you don't (or so very rarely) see in domestic horses. He was such a magnificent representation of a wild horse in the prime of his life, oozing the essence of freedom and spirit and confidence.

Yep, I still tingle remembering being in the presence of energy like that.

Kelly Bick © 2011

