



Kalley Krickeberg with Linda and Pat Parelli, Catherine and Mike Sapienza, and Tom Atwood (middle) from Atwood Ranches.

# Brilliance in Breeding

## Joins Prior and Proper Preparation

by Kalley Krickeberg

Recently, two of the horse industry leaders have come together to influence the horse world in a positive way. Atwood Ranch, owned by Dr. Tom Atwood, has integrated the Parelli Preschool Program™ into what is one of the top Quarter Horse breeding programs in the country. Tom Atwood has the wisdom and mastery of decades of breeding the finest performance Quarter Horses. Combine that with the wisdom and mastery of Parelli Natural Horsemanship, a program like no other... I feel honored to be a part of what is yet to come.

The journey of bringing Parelli Natural Horsemanship to Atwood Ranches began some time ago in the hearts and minds of Mike and Catherine Sapienza. The Sapienzas have been Parelli students and fans for the past 10 years and they have been Atwood Ranch managers for the past nine years. Atwood Ranch has been one of the premier breeding facilities for top performance Quarter Horses for over 30 years. These horses have achieved high honors in various arenas, most prominently in the cutting, reining and cow horse events,

but Tom Atwood is primarily interested in breeding sound, versatile horses that people want to purchase and go on in whatever discipline suits them and the horse.

The Sapienzas saw the value of bringing these two programs together. Tom Atwood has known the value of early education in livestock and Pat has instilled the importance of it to be done and done correctly for a very long time, so it only seemed natural for this to come to fruition. That is where I come in. I had just returned to the USA from the trip to Australia with "River." I was at the airport checking my phone messages and there was one from Atwood Ranches. Long story short, I talked to Pat about various details and 10 days later I

was packing my bags in Florida and headed BACK to California to a town called Elk Grove, just south of Sacramento. Once there, I was to start and head the Parelli Preschool Program™ with the Atwood yearlings in a division of the Atwood Ranches called Atwood Ranch Naturally.

The first day on the job was approximately 3 days after I arrived. It was branding time for all the Atwood yearlings and Mr. Atwood asked that "all hands be on deck" as they say, to observe and be a part of the process. This was my first introduction to my future "students." They all were fairly wild and scared. A lot had happened between their pasture they called home and the pens they were in at the time, and they were pretty bothered. It became clear it was my job to catch and halter the colts for this project. I knew this was my first test, I had already felt a bit of skepticism amongst the group, but I was not worried. I had a choice to make at that moment and I chose to seize the opportunity. They say you only have one chance to make a first impression, and this was it. This was my first and most important chance to make a good solid impression not only for myself and my Parelli skills and abilities, but also (most importantly) my first chance to make an impression for the company and people I represent at Parelli. Everyone, including owner Tom Atwood, John Wells the Atwood Cattle Ranch Manager, Jack and Jody Elliot the Atwood Breeding facility Manager, and Mike and Catherine Sapienza observed as I went about my business and did my job as I have been trained to do through my years at Parelli. A few hours and no dust later, the task had been accomplished, goals had been achieved and best of all the principles had been maintained. I knew if I could impress the horses, I would have a chance to impress the people as a by-product. It was a good day for the horses and for Parelli. There were nods of approval all around and in ranch country that means a lot. It would be two weeks later when the yearlings would begin their education in Parelli Preschool. I look forward to sharing the progress as we all go... and so the Journey begins. ♣