



Homeward Bound

Continuation of the “Brilliance in Breeding Meets Prior and Proper Preparation” Story

by Kalley Krickeberg

Let me see, where did we leave off? Ahh, yes, the 2007 Savvy Conference. Last time we visited, Mike and Catherine Sapienza and I were packing up to head home from the conference. Little did we know our “home” was about to move from Elk Grove, California, to a small town with big views, Orland, California.

And our Atwood Ranch Naturally team was destined to triple in number, from three members to nine members. We fast-forward six months from the Savvy Conference to late February 2008 for the continuation of our journey.

The Move

There were whispers in the wind before we left for the 2007 Savvy Conference that there was a possibility we would be moving once we returned home. (I have to admit I was crossing my fingers in hope that this was the case! I knew where we might be headed.) The

whole Atwood Ranch Naturally operation and the lives of Mike, Catherine and me were about to undergo a big adjustment. I am sure the great successes that were had by all at the conference were a contributing factor, and it made sense to move the Parelli Pre-School closer to where it all begins. That would be the main breeding facility for Atwood Ranch in Orland, California. There the stallions, mares and babies are housed, bred and raised on the beautiful hills of northern California. I had thought from the beginning how wonderful it might be if we were able to influence the young horses that were designated for the Pre-School as early as possible, maybe even before they

were born, through building a positive relationship with their mothers. I think someone must have heard my wish, because here we are 11½ months later, back where it all began.

The Orland ranch is nestled in the foothills of the Mendocino mountain range, with spectacular views of Mount Shasta, Mount Lassen and, on a clear day, the Sierras to the east. The sunrises and sunsets are breathtaking and leave you wishing they would last just a *little* longer. The 700-acre ranch in Elk Grove was a generous and wonderful start for Atwood Ranch Naturally, but beauty-wise a far cry from the scenic views of the 3,500-acre ranch in Orland. So there we were, back where this all started nearly one year ago. It was hard to believe a year had passed since this journey began. Time flies when you’re having fun, as they say. I think time flies when you’re *working hard* and having fun!

The Team

Once we made the move to the Atwood Ranch in Orland and settled in, Mike and Catherine stepped into ranch management positions. Their first task was to begin strategically placing people in important roles. We have added a few more Parelli students to the team, and a couple other highly qualified people who handle the mares and stallions and the breeding/foaling side of things. We now have a full-time veterinarian on staff who expressed her interest in what we were doing and wished to be a part of it. It has been like that famous movie line, “If you build it, they will come.” The team that has been put together is a fine one; everyone wants to be part of something special, and it is becoming just that.

The New Pre-School

The most exciting part of the move for me was the designing of the new Parelli Pre-School. I have been with Pat and Linda for a while now, and during this time I have been through a few facility setups, tear-downs, re-dos and do-overs. When we were studying a site for a facility, Pat would tell us to allow the lay of the land and what was already there to reveal its potential. This way we could find ways to naturally use and accentuate the land’s positive qualities and unique characteristics. This ranch had a beautiful setup already; it was originally designed to be a professional cutting horse operation. The facility included a 180’ round corral and a 125’ x 250’ covered arena surrounded by pens and paths galore. There was potential everywhere. All it needed was a bit of elbow grease and some polishing, and it would be *perfect* for a Parelli Pre-School! We added just a 50’ round corral, a couple of strategically placed pens and a playground equipped with natural obstacles, undulating ground and a view of the beautiful buttes this country is known for. And there you have it. Sometimes I even get to say what we hear Pat say quite often in Colorado: “Whew, shame about the view!”

The Babies Are Coming!!!

We humans are not the only ones enjoying our new home! The Atwood babies started arriving in late January. My goodness, how precious, pure and full of talent! Since we are so close now to the mares when they foal, we are planning on being a part of the foals’ lives starting in the early learning stage. By late February we had nine babies on the ground—four fillies and five colts—all strong, healthy and starting to be good puzzle solvers. By the end of August the foal crop will be nearing 70 strong—*wow!*

The Future

The future of Atwood Ranch and the Parelli Pre-School is bright and exciting. We are busy planning an open house for everyone to come and see our beautiful facilities firsthand. We have kicked off a Parelli Working Student Program for those Parelli Professionals who have interest in young horse development. And best of all, we are planning on attending as many scheduled Parelli seminars as we can to share with the world our latest stars and how we are doing our part to help change industry standards from yet another angle. We hope to continue to be industry leaders and make change where we can. We hope that when we see you in the future, we’ll be visiting with you in a pasture full of beautiful Atwood babies with arrows in their quivers and the world at their feet! 🐾

