



# TIR À CHEVAL

## THE FRENCH CONNECTION

*By Kenda Lenseigne*

*The audience is captivated as Kenda shoots off APHA gelding Doc, in front of a packed house*

To see parts of the world that most will never experience is incredibly fortunate. To travel thousands of miles outside of our comfort zone to a place with unfamiliar language, food and culture is brave. To seize opportunity like capturing a wild horse running in the wind is, well, what cowgirls do best.

This summer, I was invited back to France for the fourth time to ride at Equiblues, Europe's largest rodeo and country music festival, held in Saint-Agrève, France. The chance to be an American cowgirl in the Rhône-Alpes countryside, slinging my .45's and showing the world our sport was too much to pass up.

Contrary to popular misconception, French country-folk are as down-home, warm and welcoming as any small town American. I suppose the preconceived idea of rudeness or arrogance can be laid within Paris' city limits; perhaps much like one could say about vacationing in New York City. When I arrived at the rodeo grounds after a thirteen hour flight, a two hour train ride and a two hour drive up winding mountain roads, friends that I had made in years past greeted me with smiles and double cheek kisses followed by infectious excitement for this year's festivities.

It didn't take long to get settled. After all, even though it's on the other side of the globe, this place is more than familiar. The sounds and smells of the rodeo grounds are the same, with the frantic, whinnying of horses unsure of their temporary living arrangements, people unloading and setting up their stalls, bulls bellowing and the smell of frites hovering from the concession stands. Frites, more commonly known here

as FRENCH FRIES! Equiblues sells 4000 pounds of frites at this festival each year. The sound of excited chatter rings through the barns, but the words spoken to me come too quickly for my limited French vocabulary. Thankfully, horse people share a universal common language and it's easy to roll with the flow, using broken English and fractured French, along with a lot of nods and hand gestures.

Our week kicked off with a clinic, where it was evident that the last three year's glimpse into the world of mounted shooting has made a global impact. Riders came out of the woodwork from France, Italy and Belgium to participate and try their hand at our great sport. What they lacked in experience and gear, they certainly made up for in enthusiasm. Three clinic sessions over two days, with fifteen riders each day proves that **TIR À CHEVAL** (shooting from the horse) is a universal addiction of the cowboy soul.



**CMSA World Champion**  
**Kenda Lenseigne**  
**featured on the cover of**  
**American Legend Magazine**





***The language barrier didn't stop Kenda from teaching this 14 year old girl Bianca Costechareyre and her 10 year old brother Diego how to have good form! When things get difficult, we go tandem!***

For the remaining three days of the event, I ran two stages per rodeo performance, on a loudly colored American Paint Horse named Doc. As a seasoned roping and team penning horse, Doc performed like a pro, which was a relief as I was shooting in front of 25,000 sets of eyes over the course of the week. Encouraged by the announcers, the crowd was on the edge of their seats. The rhythm and energy was as electric as any American hometown PRCA rodeo, and the response to mounted shooting was epic.

The week's schedule also allowed me to host a 5-stage match, with all riders aiming to take the champion Equiblues Mounted Shooting buckle. This



***Sylvie Costechareyre showing her good form at the Equiblues Mounted Shooting match.***

year's overall winner was Gaëtan Costechareyre, the husband of Sylvie Costechareyre who visited my ranch for a month in Arizona last winter to learn all about the sport. Sylvie and Gaëtan own a western riding school in Crepol, France and have adopted Cowboy Mounted

Shooting into their program.

It's important to note that French firearms laws are very strict. Next time you find yourself swiping your credit card at a gun counter here in the US, give thanks. Up until this year, French citizens have been forbidden to own a cartridge-firing handgun in a military caliber such as .45 Colt. Although the venerable 45LC hasn't been used by any army since the Philippine Insurrection of 1898, it's still classed as a military round, which makes life difficult if you have a want to become a mounted shooter in Europe. While it was once impossible, now it is merely difficult. It can take a considerable amount of paperwork and time to be granted a permit, but at least it's a start.

The Costechareyres are currently filling out the necessary paperwork to start the first ever CMSA™ club in France. In keeping with CMSA™'s progressive vision, the association has granted a clause in the rules to allow French shooters to use cap and ball black powder revolvers in competition while they are waiting for their permits. This move by CMSA™ will open up the potential for growth within the European Union, making our sport globally known. The rule's condition is that the use of muzzle loading revolvers will only be CMSA™-legal in France. If French shooters come to the US, they must abide by the American rulebook and will only be allowed to shoot .45 S&W revolvers.



***Event promoter Philippe LaFont and Kenda present the Equiblues Overall Champion buckle to Gaetan Costechareyre.***

It's going to be an exciting adventure moving forward, with new people and new cultures jumping into the sport, and I hope that all of us extend a warm cowboy welcome to all who take that leap!

