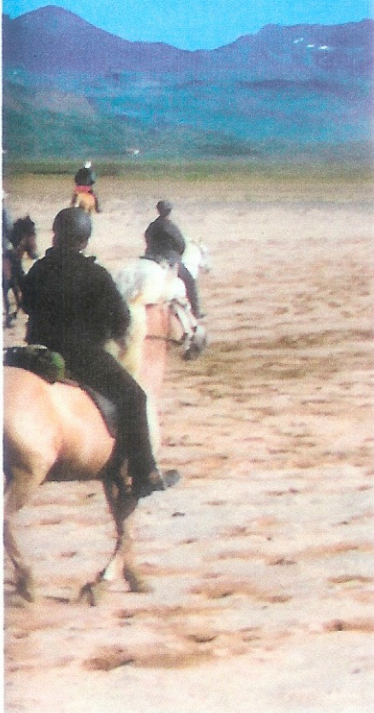


For something completely different try the Icelandic horse's unique gait — the tölt



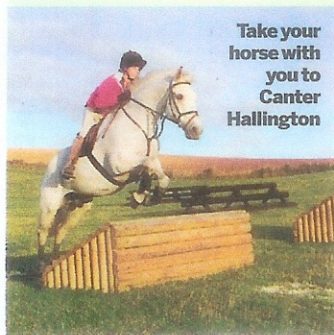
Budget busters

6 Gallop along a golden beach

WHERE: Coast to coast ride, Scotland
WHO: Highlands Unbridled
 NOTHING beats the thrill of arriving on an empty expanse of golden sand and letting your horse accelerate into an exhilarating gallop. Highlands Unbridled's coast-to-coast trail ride allows you to enjoy some of the unspoilt beaches round the North Highland coast as well as the spectacular moorland and lochside scenery in between. You may also come face to face with some seals in the shallows and beautiful red deer in the hills. Accommodation en route comprises comfortable hotels and cosy B&Bs — perfect at the end of a long day in the saddle.
CONTACT: 01408 622789
www.highlandsunbridled.co.uk
PRICE: ££

7 Take your horse with you

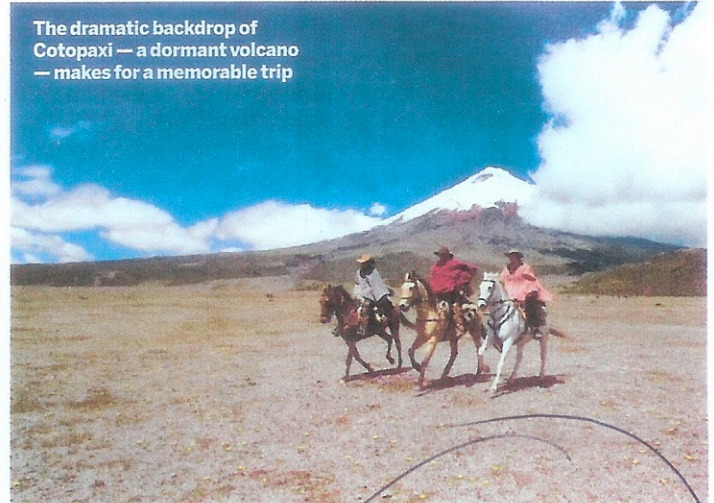
WHERE: Home Farm, Hallington, Lincs, England
WHO: Canter Hallington
 DON'T leave your horse at home — at Hallington you'll find a beach, off-road riding and a 50-fence cross-country course, all set within an area of outstanding natural beauty at the foot of the Lincolnshire Wolds. Stay in one of their comfortable cottages for a short break or a longer holiday. There are plenty of activities for non-riding family members, too.
CONTACT: 01507 605864
www.canter-hallington.co.uk
PRICE: £



8 Ride five gaits

WHERE: Golden Circle Ride, Iceland
WHO: Zara's Planet
 THE native Icelandic horse is well known for its unique gait — the tölt. Experience this smooth, four-beat pace for yourself on the Golden Circle ride, which takes you past the hot springs of Geysir and the Golden Waterfall at

The dramatic backdrop of Cotopaxi — a dormant volcano — makes for a memorable trip



12 See the big five from horseback

WHERE: South Africa
WHO: Wait A Little Ranch
 SITTING cramped in the back of a minibus is no way to observe the diverse wildlife and scenery South Africa has to offer. Wait A Little horse safaris specialise in trips for experienced riders around the private reserves close to the famous Kruger National Park (see box, overleaf).
CONTACT: 0027 83 273 9788
www.africanhorsesafaris.com
PRICE: ££££

9 Head into the unknown

WHERE: Armagnac Trail, France
WHO: Unicorn Trails
 ARMED solely with a map and route plan, experience the joy of an unguided ride with a group of friends. The Armagnac Trail through rural France allows you to set your own pace over terrain that varies from shaded country lanes to natural forests, sandy tracks and through picturesque villages.
CONTACT: 01767 600606
www.unicorntrails.co.uk
PRICE: ££

10 & 11 Ride up a volcano and ride with Richard Dunwoody

WHERE: Avenue of Volcanoes, Ecuador
WHO: Ride World Wide
 WHEN you've got a former Grand National winner at the head of your ride, you know you're in for an adrenalin-fuelled adventure. Combine this with the high-altitude thrill of navigating round Ecuador's Avenue of Volcanoes, including the perfectly conical, snow-capped Cotopaxi — currently dormant — and you've got a recipe for a challenge not to be missed. Richard Dunwoody, who has led trips all round the world, will accompany guests through fields of fighting bulls and beneath soaring condors, and everyone will be able to say they have done "the highest canter in the world".
CONTACT: 01837 82544
www.rideworldwide.com
PRICE: ££££ (12 nights)

Sleep under the stars on the Footsteps of Lawrence ride in Jordan



13 Sleep under the stars with your horse

WHERE: Footsteps of Lawrence ride, Jordan
WHO: In The Saddle
 NIGHTS are spent under star-filled skies on this trail ride through the Wadi Rum Desert aboard Arab horses. Every evening, watch the sand turn from pink to deep orange with an open fire before bedding down on your open-air mattress. This historical journey across sand dunes and deserts, scattered with nomadic Bedouin families, finishes with a night at the Dead Sea.
CONTACT: 01299 272997
www.inthesaddle.com
PRICE: £££

4 Try classical riding

WHERE: Tuscany, Italy
WHO: Il Paretaio
 SET in the heart of Tuscany, Il Paretaio is ideally located to explore the area, as well as experiencing the art of classical riding on one of the centre's Lusitanos, Anglo-Arabs, Arabs or Dutch warmbloods. Join Giovanni and Cristina De Marchi for some expert instruction or simply ride into the surrounding countryside with a picnic and a bottle of chianti.
CONTACT: 0039 055 8059 218
www.ilparetaio.it
PRICE: ££

5 Play some polo

WHERE: Estancia Los Potreros, Argentina
WHO: Unicorn Trails
 IF you fancy yourself as the next Henry Brett, test your skills on a polo week at this 6,000 acre working cattle farm in the Cordoba region, where polo sticks are part of the furniture. On your stay, you will receive daily stick and ball tuition, culminating with the thrill of some real chukkas as you take part in the in-house tournament.
CONTACT: 01767 600606
www.unicorntrails.co.uk
PRICE: ££££