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Caleserinas

Named after the Mexican matador Alfonso Ramírez 'Calesero', this move starts with the *capote* behind the back of the torero, who stands facing the bull. As the toro charges in, so the man lifts the cape on the side of his body he intends to pass the animal, turning the wrist of the raised hand and pulling the cloth with his other hand so that the lure is withdrawn as the bull passes by him. [60]

Above: Gaonera



Caleserina



An opening pass from the estribo

or by his repeating the passes to form a series, the matador remaining on the same spot whilst the bull returns time and again and ever closer.

If the matador gets down on both knees at the start of the *faena*, there is likely to be a fair degree of ugly waddling on his part to accompany any bull which has still to be 'fixed' in the *muleta*. It probably signifies the begin-

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ning of a *tremendista* performance – one in which the torero is more concerned with exciting the spectators than with achieving profound *toreo*. However, taking the toro past whilst being seated on the *estribo* [94] (or whilst standing by the *barrera* with one hand resting on top of the fence) does have merit, for the torero is restricting his means of escape should things go wrong, the more so if a number of passes is given from this position, as the bull will return to charge in from a shorter distance and more closely.

A dramatic pase cambiado



Objectives of the *faena*

- To dominate the bull on one's own – to pass the animal in the area of the ring of the matador's choosing and to dictate, through passes with the *muleta*, where the bull goes
- To bring out the bull's best qualities and accommodate or overcome any difficulties that the animal presents
- To produce visually pleasing passes, ideally in linked series
- To show bravery: standing still in the face of the bull's charge and passing it closely, and mentally regrouping after any setback such as a tossing or the cloth being snatched away by the bull's horns
- To give a structured *faena*, passing the bull well with the cloth in the left hand as well as in the right
- To communicate one's effort and emotional responses to the spectators
- To end the *faena* at the point at which the bull has been prepared for the kill

Context

The chief focus of the bullfight is on *la faena de muleta* – when bull and matador face each other in a final encounter before the animal is put to death by sword. With the peons removed from the arena and the toro prepared as well as possible for this final *tercio*, the *faena* provides the best opportunity for a matador to show what he understands of the animal before him and what he is able to perform with it. This can range from mere practicalities to moving artistry.

Toreros have to display their professionalism most frequently with

animals which do not charge cleanly. A matador with 100 contracts a season may triumph with ten excellent bulls in that time – if he is successful in discovering the spot and the distance at which they should be placed at the start of a series and the precise speed at which the lure should be moved to accompany the toro's charges. He will meet a similar number of bulls with which it is impossible to do anything worthwhile. Whether he can manage to succeed with the remainder, the toros of middling quality, will determine his status with the public.

This is the measure of the true *lidiador* – to know how to resolve the

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problems of each toro; to take account of the animal's least suitable characteristics and, if possible, reduce them or make them disappear; to choose the most appropriate terrains to achieve this; to work out the ideal distance between man and beast, both in the initial cites and as the animal tires; to have a very keen sense of measurement and timing in order not to end the *faena* too soon, nor make it overlong, and to ascertain when the bull shows it is in the best condition for him to enter for the kill.

The best terrains in which to conduct the *faena* are the *tercios* and *medios*, as these are the places most removed from the majority of bulls' natural *querencias* in the *tablas*. Sometimes, if an animal has shown itself to have a strong charge, the matador may position himself on the central spot straightaway and incite the bull to charge there.

The *brindis*

On most occasions, however, following his *brindis* (a dedication of his performance) to the president, the public as a whole, or to an individual in the *callejón* or amongst the crowd, [89, 90] the matador will collect the bull from the *tablas*, give it some initial testing passes and then take it towards the centre of the arena, where he will intend the bulk of the *faena* to take place.



Above: The matador's *brindis* to spectators. Below: At the end of a *brindis*, the matador drops his *montera* to the ground; its landing upside down is considered unlucky.

