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Lea County Fair and Rodeo  
[www.LeaCountyFair.net](http://www.LeaCountyFair.net)



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# Charro brings passion to Lea Co.

LOVINGTON, N.M. – In this part of the world, the Mexican culture is alive and well, and the people of Lea County, New Mexico, celebrate it.

It's a salute to many ancestors who once roamed this part of land when it was the Mexican territory. From hard-working individuals who toil in the heat throughout most of the summer to those who offer their service to the community, Hispanic men, women and children have proven vital to southeastern New Mexico.

The Latino culture is celebrated every year during the Lea County Fair and Rodeo, but fair board members are expanding that to the festival by showcasing Tomas Garcilazo during the four nights of this year's rodeo, set for 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 3-Saturday, Aug. 6, at Jake McClure Arena.

"Tomas has been around for many years and is one of the most celebrated specialty acts in rodeo," said Trey Kerby, vice chairman of the Lea County Fair Board and chairman of the board's rodeo committee. "I think he will be a great fit for our rodeo, our fans who come every night and to the people in the Hispanic community that want to celebrate their culture at the rodeo."

Garcilazo not only lives in his Mexican culture, he thrives in it and showcases it and performs before tens of thousands of fans a year with his wife, Justine, and his oldest son, Louis. When he's old enough, the youngest Garcilazo, Gaspar, will likely join the troupe.

Tomas Garcilazo is a charro and carries with him a family tradition of La Cherreria, a skill performed through the generations only by the Mexican charro. As did his elders, Garcilazo takes pride in his horsemanship and roping skills, which will be on display during each of the three Stampede performances.

"When you bring someone to provide a treat, it's nice because you contribute something to the community," said Garcilazo, who has been selected to perform the opening act at the NFR more than a dozen times and has been named the PRCA's Dress Act of the Year four times. "It's going to bring more people together."

Lovington's rodeo is more than a competition. The stampede will feature the very best in the sport, but it's also an action-packed couple of hours of entertainment. To help make a rodeo even more entertaining, specialty acts provide theatrics, and Garcilazo is the best at what he does.

"It's an honor because specialty acts are so competitive," he said. "I'm very flattered that what I do as a charro and representing my culture and my tradition with my horses and myself has been recognized with those contractors, committees and contestants that are part of the PRCA.

"I emphasize the tradition a lot. The heritage is very strong. For me, it is big that those are being carried on in modern day and that it is a privilege for me to keep up with this way of life. Cattle, horses and roping were all involved in my childhood."

Those lessons learned decades ago are still vibrant in his mind. That's why he continues to entertain and show the world his talents.

"On my mother's side, they are all churros," Garcilazo said. "I grew up competing all my life. I picked my skill with a rope and had a vision to develop this with the horses.

“It’s a way of developing my dream. My rope, as a child, was a toy. Now, I develop the artistry with a rope in such an extensive way. It takes time, effort, patience and the (willingness to) develop all the desires to succeed in horse and roping skills.”

It is Garcilazo’s passion to share his talent and heritage with the world.

“Being in the entertainment business, you get to see the different traditions and different people from different personalities,” he said. “When you develop something with passion with your heart and express this on stage, it shows. When I see a performer, when they do these with their heart, it shows right away. I have a lot of passion for what I do, and I hope everyone sees that.”