



# Hayes Is for Horses<sup>TM</sup>

Be A Better Human, Be A Better Horse

## Buying A Horse

By Tim Hayes

Of all the major decisions people are faced with; getting married, having children, buying a house, buying a car, changing jobs or getting divorced, buying a horse, unless you are a professional or have years of Horsemanship experience, has the highest rate of poor choices. Unfortunately making a poor choice with a horse not only results in unhappiness; it can also produce serious injury or death.

One of my teachers, Pat Parelli said that statistically 80% of all first time horse buyers sell their horse in the first year. Of the remaining 20%, 80% of those sell their horse in the first five years.

This means that 80 out of 100 people, who buy their first horse, sell it within a year after they've bought it. Another 16 people (80% of the remaining 20) will sell within the first five years. Only 4 people out of 100 still have their first horse after 5 years. When I heard this my first thought was; "That's amazing!" My next thought was, "Why?"

Pat went on to say that there were 4 major reasons for this, which he called the 4-F's: Fear, Frustration, lack of Funds and lack of Fun. Working with many people here on Long Island over the past few years I have unfortunately found this to be quite accurate. Even more remarkable is that many of these people buy their next horse and within the next year find themselves in the same or similar situations.

Buying a horse can be exciting and fun. It can also be complicated, expensive and stressful. It involves the buyer, the seller, the horse, the desired discipline or activity, the cost, the boarding arrangements and many other factors all requiring informed decisions. I believe the most important consideration in the decision process is safety. Following safety is fun and enjoyment. This requires matching the right horse with the right human. There are three elements that, if truly incorporated into the decision making process, will greatly increase the possibility of buying a horse that will be safe, fun and a life long partner: KNOWLEDGE, ABILITY AND AGE.

### KNOWLEDGE

Years ago, like most people, before I took the time to learn about horses, I thought a horse was not much different than a motorcycle. Kicking his belly was the gas, pulling the bit in his mouth was the break and pulling the reins was the steering. With this technology I could make my horse go as fast and slow as I liked and stop him at any time. I could ride him anywhere I wanted: on the street, on a trail, in an arena, at a show, on the beach, indoors, outdoors, at my barn or at someone else's barn. I could ride him in any of these places all by myself or with other people and their horses.

I was so wrong. Horses are nothing like motorcycles. They are more like children. Buying a horse is similar to adopting a child. In order for both of us to be safe and happy, I, the adult, must be the parent. Like children, my horse not only has physical needs, he has mental and emotional needs as well. Some of these needs are similar to humans, some are very different. To have a positive resist-

ance free relationship where my horse loves, trusts and respects me, I must know what is similar, what is different and have the knowledge to respond accordingly.

If I don't know, then just like a good parent, it is my responsibility to find someplace or somebody to teach me. This needs to happen before I buy my horse.

If my adoptive child was raised on the streets of a city and I took him to live in the country, he'd be lost and uncomfortable at first. If he had been living on a farm, he'd feel anxious and strange if his new home was in a city. A horse's natural environment is in wide-open country spaces living with lots of other horses. The closer his new home resembles this, the happier my horse will be. The less his new home is like this the more important it is for me (his owner/parent) to know this information so I can do everything to help him adjust and adapt.

Not only do I need to be knowledgeable about the nature of horses, I also need to understand that not all horses are the same. If I don't know the difference, I won't be able to choose the right horse for my desired purpose. Thoroughbreds are different than Quarter Horses. They're usually bred with high energy to run fast or jump high. Quarter horses are usually bred to have calm and gentle dispositions; good for working with livestock and going on trail rides. This little bit of knowledge becomes enormously helpful when I'm buying a horse.

A common mistake I see in buying a horse is not knowing what type of horse is the most suitable to a rider's goal. If you're not a horse trainer and what you desire is a confident, calm and gentle horse to take on long relaxed trail rides by yourself or with friends, a thoroughbred, like a retired race horse off the track, is probably not the best choice. Many of these horses have been bred and trained to run as fast as they can with almost no training on how to stop. A mature Quarter horse who has already been on many happy and successful trail rides would make much better sense.

### ABILITY

Horseback riding is the simple act of not falling off. Riding a horse that is a willing partner, that is fun and non-resistant, on whom I feel safe either at the show or on the trail, a horse who is confident, reliable and trustworthy: this is called Horsemanship. Buying the right horse is like choosing the right dance partner. At least one of us needs to already know how to dance.

Another common mistake when buying a horse is not knowing or telling the truth about the ability of both the horse and the human. Horses are born already knowing how to do just about everything we want them to do. What they don't know is how to do it willingly when we asked them while sitting on their back. Someone has to teach them. They're called horse trainers. Humans are born knowing nothing about Horsemanship. Someone has to teach them. They're called Horsemanship teachers.

When it comes to matching the right horse to the right rider I like to rate both horse and human ability on a scale of 1 to 10. One represents a novice with little or no ability, 10 represents great expertise with professional or high level ability. All horses and humans are somewhere between 1 and 10. If I'm a level 3 and the

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Happiness is matching the right horse with the right human.

**- ODDS AND ENDS -**

Mike Luzzi had four winners March 4, including Manchurian in the Stymie, and Ramon Dominguez had five in one day on March 9. Dominguez, who was engaged in a rivalry with Eibar Coa for leading rider in the Aqueduct winter meet, beat Coa in the Broadway Handicap March 12 when he guided Magnolia Jackson to victory.

Smokey Glacken, trained by Jimmy Jerkens and ridden by Javier Castellano, won the 6-furlong Distaff Breeders' Cup Handicap for fillies and mares March 25. It was the second win of the day for both trainer and jockey, and it was Smokey Glacken's first time on the Aqueduct inner track. The main track season began March 29. On March 26 Jose Santos rode Fleet India, trained by Todd Pletcher, to win the 1-1/8 mile Next Move for fillies and mares.

A statue of Secretariat was slated to be installed at the Kentucky Horse Park April 8. Owner Penny Chenery, rider Ron Turcotte and exercise riders Charlie Davis and Jim Gaffney were invited.

Post time was changed from 12:30 to 1 p.m. as the days got longer. The action continues at Aqueduct until the end of the month. Opening day at Belmont Park is Wed. May 3. This year's Belmont Stakes will be held Sat. June 10, and the World of Horses is being planned for Sun. May 28 (Memorial Day weekend). For information about spring racing call 718-641-4700.

*World Famous Lipizzaners continued from page 23*

**DRESSAGE: HARMONY BETWEEN HORSE AND RIDER**

The Lipizzaner Stallion is renowned as the world's greatest exponent of dressage. Although described in many ways, perhaps the easiest way to explain dressage is its purpose: that man and horse—a two fold bond—are two hearts with one mind.

Dressage is the art of perfecting the natural gait. It is the perfect walk, the precise trot, and the even canter. Long, patient training culminates in a work of art. Mutual appreciation leads to obedience, where delicate interchanges of subtle signals render obvious yet invisible communication.

In modern terms, dressage may be thought of an equestrian ballet or aerobics. The horse and rider work together as one unit, creating an enjoyable and graceful exercise to behold.

The law of dressage—for it is a law—is a law of nature perfecting the natural. It is centuries old. Xenophon, noted Greek historian and military leader, created the art in Greece in 400 B.C. Xenophon stated an exact principle: "If one induces the horse to assume that carriage, which it would adopt of its own accord when displaying its beauty, then one directs the horse to appear joyous and magnificent, proud and remarkable for having been ridden." Xenophon went on further to say, "If the rider is not in harmony with the nature of the animal, then it will perform as a burden with no display of pleasure."

In later times, the French equestrian, Francis Robichon de Le Guerniere stated a similar theory: "Suppleness and lack of constraint are the prerequisites for voluntarily offered obedience, not for agonized subjection of the horse." A spirited animal will die under harsh treatment and subjection.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe said, "Thou must learn the thoughts of the noble horse whom thou wouldst ride. Be not indiscreet in the demands, nor requiring him to perform indiscreetly. The horse is a wise animal. Let him show you the best and most natural way to accomplish a desired end."

Regarding young horses in training, another famed French equestrian, Antoine De La Baume Pluvinel, is quoted, "We shall take care not to vex the horse, or cause it to abandon its affable gracefulness in disgust. For this is like the fragrance blossoms, which never again returns once it has vanished."

The late Colonel Alois Podhajsky, the past longtime director of the renowned Spanish Riding School in Vienna, stated, "One can never, through violence, cause the horse to perfect the manner in which it expresses its skill, but only by delicate coaxing and subtle demanding, between much praise and little punishment."

While the Lipizzaner Stallion is courageous, spirited and strong, he is a sensitive being and responds to praise and appreciation and rebels immediately to force. The "World Famous" Lipizzaner Stallion presentation is a demonstration of a unique and admired relationship.

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horse I buy is a level 4, we are both going to struggle with each other. If my goal was to learn more and increase my ability to a level 7, it would help to have at least a level 6 to 7 horse that could teach me and tolerate my mistakes. That won't happen if the horse I buy has only a little more partnership ability than me. To buy the right horse I must know the truth about my level of ability. I must be honest with myself and not let my ego get in the way. I must also know the truth about the horse I'm thinking of buying. I must not base my decision on only superficial factor: "I always wanted a Palomino", "I love the way this horse looks" etc.

**AGE:** One common and dangerous misconception in the purchase of a horse is a young or inexperienced human buying a young and inexperienced horse with the belief that "We'll grow together".

— Old cowboy saying: "Green on green = black and blue." —

Age is a critical factor in the purchase of a horse. Just like humans, the ability of a horse is based on his experience. His experience is directly related to his age. A young horse (a 2 or 3 year old) will have very limited partnership ability and experience and therefore be more suited to an experienced human. An older horse (9 and up) will more likely have "been there done that" experience and be a better choice for a person with less ability.

Buying a young horse because it's a better financial investment makes sense if you're a professional or very experienced horseperson. If you're not, you may not be around long enough to have your investment pay off. On the other hand, the age of a horse cannot always be taken at face value. Many older experienced horses can come with any number of negative experiences (baggage) and can be even more difficult and dangerous than a younger one. It's also possible to come across a young inexperienced horse that is exceptionally confident, gentle and intelligent. The key is to know and tell the truth about both you and your horses ability when it considering age in choosing the best match.

Like all big decisions, buying a horse can be filled with uncertainties. However making the best choice can be greatly enhanced by increasing your Horsemanship knowledge and knowing the truth about you and your horses' abilities. And finally and most importantly, if you don't have the knowledge and are not sure about you or your horses' ability; ask for help! Buying a horse for most people is a dream come true. Matching the right horse with the right rider will not only reinforce the possibility of the dream being safe, fun and deeply rewarding, it will help to prevent it from turning it into a "nightmare."

All Tim's event's are listed in either the event section of this magazine or on the net at [www.LLequune.com](http://www.LLequune.com).

## **Congratulations!**

to Horse Directory's  
"World Famous"

Lipizzaner Stallions Show Winners:  
**Katherine Golder, of Maspeth, NY**  
and

**Nancy Malone, of Baldwin, NY**

Each received a family 4-pack  
of tickets to see the show at  
Nassau Coliseum on April 30th.