



# Buying & Selling Horses

By Tim Hayes

**T**he buying and selling of horses has been a business since man first discovered he could use them for more than food. Although the "horse trader" has been around for thousands of years he has sadly never obtained as much respectability as his cousin the horse breeder. Even the name: "horse trader" has acquired a rather undesirable connotation.

Buying a horse can be a complicated endeavor with inherent risks, rewards and usually no guarantees. There are those who will buy a horse from a reputable breeder where equine lineage, breeder reputation and money can all increase the prospects of purchasing ones dream-come-true horse.

However the vast majority of the horse owners I have known or met have bought their horse from either a small sale barn or a private individual seller. Today with Internet access there are thousands of people buying horses they have not only ever ridden but have never even seen in person.

Although there are many sales where both buyer and seller are happy with the outcome there are probably just as many where either one or both is extremely unhappy. The vast majority of the time the root cause of this unhappiness emanates from the seller and is quite simply: money. When making money is the primary motivation in any choice or decision everything else becomes compromised i.e. the truth about the horse, the safety of the rider or what's best for either in any area of consideration.

There are some sellers that make an honest effort to be truthful about their horse and to match him or her with an appropriate buyer. Unfortunately, there are probably many more who just want to sell the horse to get rid of him and make the most money they can.

A few years ago there was a study reporting that 80% of new horse owners sell their horse within the first year after their purchase and of the remaining 20 percent, 80 percent of those people sell their new horse within the next 4 years. To put it another way if 100 people bought a new horse the number of those who would still have their horse after five years would be 4!

There are many reasons people tell me they think they've bought the "wrong" horse i.e. "he's too much horse for me (read: I can't control him) I rode him the day I bought him and everything was fine, but now he's like a different horse doing things he never did until I got him home - he's fine when I ride him but he's difficult on the ground."

I've also heard many other reasons that have created unhappy buyers. Unhappy buyers in turn become unhappy sellers. They then try to resell the same horse and not let on that they too have become unhappy. The cause of buyer unhappiness in the vast

majority of these situations is the lack of knowledge in good horsemanship.

Horsemanship is a combination of mutual understanding, knowledge, trust and respect between human and horse of which riding is only one part. Unfortunately the vast majorities of domestic horse owners of both English and Western disciplines take lessons, study or are schooled in usually just the art of "horseback riding."

Today "Natural Horsemanship" has become enormously popular in all equine disciplines not only for its more humane methods of riding but because it also teaches both people and their horses good basic horsemanship. Humans learn how to establish mutual trust, respect and communication both on the ground and when riding. The secret of its success is learning how to do all of this by creating a horse/human partnership where the horse willingly accepts the human as his leader before the riding begins. Simply put, good horsemanship is the cake; riding (Dressage, Trail Riding, Jumping etc.) is the icing.

Years ago, when I first began teaching Natural Horsemanship, most people had never heard of it. Today not only are most people



Waiting for breakfast. Photo by Tim Hayes

in the horse world familiar with the term but the presence has exploded internationally as well as right here on Long Island. And just as with any other product or service, the quality, reliability and reputation of its teachers can run the gamut from excellent to dangerously inadequate.

The good news is that if one takes their time and does their homework there is not only a market for quality teachers of Natural Horsemanship there is also a new market that has just begun for horses that have been successfully schooled in its principles and training methods. Aware of the enormous benefits of Natural Horsemanship there are now people who either wish to buy only a horse that has been started naturally or sell their horse to someone who only practices the natural principles and methods.

Over the last few years I have watched as websites for the buying and selling of horses started or trained with Natural Horsemanship have begun to appear on the Internet. I have taken the time and done my homework to establish the quality and reliability of a number of these operations. While some appear to be worthwhile, some seem questionable.

Recently I was asked to contribute some of my articles to an organization called [www.naturalhorseforsale.com](http://www.naturalhorseforsale.com). As with other similar requests I was quite flattered but before I would contribute my support, I again took the time and did my homework to verify the quality and reliability of this organization.

I am pleased to report that after serious consideration and obtaining quality references for this site not only am I honored to be a contributing member but gratefully supportive in the purpose and goals of its undertaking. I believe this website will become one of the most popular and successful Natural Horsemanship sites for horse buyers and sellers in the country. I say this because they

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In other July 26 races, Forever Together won the \$500,000 Diana, a 1-1/8 mile turf race for fillies and mares, by 3/4 of a length. Trainer Jonathan Sheppard switched her from the dirt to the turf after the 4-year-old daughter of Belong to Me lost her last five races. Rider Julien Leparoux said, "It was a very tough field."

Dynaforce was second, Rutherienne third. Abraaj, the favorite in the 6-furlong Alfred G. Vanderbilt Handicap, made a late run to win over First Defence, second, and Sanmarco, third. Jockey Alan Garcia said, "He finished very strong." Abraaj, a 5-year-old, is trained by Kieran McLaughlin. The unbeaten Bustin Stones was scratched from the race because of a bruised foot.

Although Ginger Punch, the heavy favorite, got bottled up near the inside rail in the 1-1/8 mile Go for Wand for fillies and mares, she found her way through and triumphed over Copper State, second, and Indescribable, third. Trainer Bobby Frankel said of the 5-year-old by Awesome Again, who was an Eclipse Award winner last year, "She is a champion." Ginger Punch is owned by Stronach Stables and was ridden by Rafael Bejarano. Look for the July 26 winners on Breeders' Cup day in October.

Macho Again held off the favorite, Pyro, to win the 9-furlong Jim Dandy July 27 by half a length. The Jim Dandy is considered a prep race for the Travers. The last three Jim Dandy winners went on to victory in the Travers: Street Sense in 2007, Bernardini in 2006 and Flower Alley in 2005. Dallas Stewart, trainer of Macho Again, said, "This is my first stakes win as a trainer at Saratoga, so I am very excited." Jockey Julien Leparoux said, "He's game. He tries all the time." Tiz Now Tiz Then was third and Tale of Ekati fourth. Belmont Stakes winner Da' Tara finished a dismal seventh in what trainer Nick Zito called a "suicide mission."

Fans visiting Saratoga this summer will notice many improvements, including new dining facilities, flat screen TVs, daily posting of the jockey standings during the meet and much more. There is a full calendar of big races during August, highlighted by the \$1 million Travers Aug. 23.

For Saratoga racing information call 518-584-6200.

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dressage show? "A dressage show?" you asked. "Isn't that when they go around and around in dusty circles? Augh!" But there you were, in a sea of white pants, black jackets and top hats. And the horses, the magnificent horses. "How do they make them move like that?" You were hooked.

And so it happened for Mona Corrente. A confirmed hunter rider ("Gotta jump!"), Mona happened upon dressage a few years ago, and never looked back. Fortunately, an early trainer had planted the seeds of precision, bend and impulsion, so perhaps it was destiny.

To begin her journey she decided to join forces with another neonate, November's Oyster Moon, better known as Victor. Victor, a 4 year old Percheron/TB dark bay cross hails from Wisconsin. He was sent all the way down to North Carolina's Smokey Hills to Cathy Schwartz to be sold. Mona spotted him on line, and is so common for us, "just knew".

In fact, when Mona got out of the car and Victor popped his head out of the Dutch door, trainer Vicky Mortimer exclaimed, "There's your man!"

The sale trainer rode him and Victor bucked while he cantered. Vicky rode him and he went just fine. Mona rode him and the ears went forward. Afterward, Victor wrapped his head and neck around Mona and told her she was his. He arrived at Willow Spring Farm a year and a half ago, after never having lived in a stall.

After a pit stop at B.J.'s in Jamesport, Victor went home to Mona's. He lives the life of Riley in the backyard of an extended family. Grandparents, Mona, and Mona's children dote on him. Her 14 year old daughter plays tag with him, and Mona's son, an Irish step dancer, helps with the work. If Mona ever rides a Kur,

I'm sure it will be to Irish step music. Mona and Victor go on a lot of trail rides and really enjoy being together.

After having ridden so many problems, Mona absolutely loves the purity of a young horse and the constant challenge of learning dressage. She is struck by the fact that in dressage, the horse's mental well-being is so important. "It is so vastly different from anything I've ever experienced!" With each dusty circle, with each ride, Mona and Victor are learning about that special connection and the endless challenge that is dressage.

Their first show was last month at Knoll. Victor acquitted himself with aplomb, although his final halt in Intro was that of "a field hunter looking for the hounds!" Despite Victor's momentary lack of focus, hey, he is only 4, the pair did well enough to impress the judges. Mona feels that dressage judging is very kind and accurate. Hunter riders cover your eyes: not only has Mona decided to devote herself to dressage, she has vowed to never show again in anything but. She's one of us, riding in dusty circles.

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have created a non-partisan source for horses built on a foundation from not one but nearly 100 of the countries most respected Natural Horsemanship teachers some of whom I am honored to call my teachers. [www.naturalhorseforsale.com](http://www.naturalhorseforsale.com) does not endorse any one particular trainer or clinician. It allows everyone to discover and learn about each one of them by listing the best of the best of some of today's Natural Horsemanship Clinicians. The site is devoted to improving all horse/human relationships. It is a resource for Natural Horsemanship articles, literature and information.

A buyer looking for a horse who not only meets his riding requirements but who is also a willing partner will be able to find horses started naturally whether from the programs of Pat Parelli, Clinton Anderson or John Lyons just to name a few. Sellers wanting to place their horse in a new home where Natural Horsemanship is the norm not the exception will be able to comfortably sell to like-minded horse owners.

Once in a while some of the best horseman in the country leave their egos at the door and do something solely for the horse. [www.naturalhorseforsale.com](http://www.naturalhorseforsale.com) is one of these times.

To find out about Clinics, Group Classes or private Sessions, call Tim at: 631-329-5840 or visit: [www.hayesisforhorses.com](http://www.hayesisforhorses.com)



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