

FINDING THE PERFECT HORSE

Part 1

When you are looking to buy a horse, it is easy to get excited and start to imagine and dream about all the amazing and wonderful things that you will be able to do with your new best friend.

But, if emotion gets in the way of common sense, the situation can be not only disappointing but also dangerous if the horse is beyond the rider's capabilities or is not suitable for what the rider wants to do.

If done incorrectly an experience that should be exciting, rewarding and enjoyable ends up in disappointment and distress when people buy a horse using too much emotion and not enough common sense.

So what do you do to make sure you end up with the horse of your dreams? Well there are a list of simple steps you can take to ensure that you do not end up disheartened and disappointed.



Take someone you know and trust (who has your best interests at heart) with you to look at the horse.

1. Create Your Unicorn

Before you start to look write out a list of what your perfect horse would be; make it as precise as you can (you can always change it later if you find something on your list is unobtainable).

In your list include every little thing that is important to you; for example things such as height, age, sex, colour, breed, even possibly what size rug he or she might take; this will help to ensure you are happy with your new horse.

Include any behavioral traits that are important and what you need the horse to do eg be good to ride after a spell.

Once you have written the list, go back through it and work out what things you can forgive eg if you are only a nervous beginner you can forgive some conformational faults if the horse is super quiet and you feel safe.

Once you have worked out what is important to you list each item in order of importance.

It is easy to let emotion get in the way of rational thought when doing jobs such as these, so be sure to show your list to at least one instructor or friend and ask them for their honest opinion.

2. Take Your Time

So often when people buy the first horse they see, they end up unhappy (not everyone marries their first boyfriend).

The more time you spend and horses you look at, the better feel for what is out there and what suits your needs.

There are so many places to look at horses for sale, so be sure to spend time utilizing each of them.

3. Be Prepared Before You Get There

When you go to look at a horse, the better prepared you are before arrival, the better the chance of success (and remember success is not necessarily measured in whether or not you buy the horse, but on how happy you will be with the purchase in twelve months' time).

Your questions should help you work out if the horse meets the requirements of your unicorn list and should be written down so that in the emotion of the moment you do not forget any of them.

Make sure the questions relate to every little thing you want to know; from what name the horse likes to be called to what he is like for the farrier and if you feel awkward asking them, get a friend to help you on the day (see next point).

It goes without saying to take the list with you! It's like your helmet; it won't save your life sitting in the shed!



Colour-blindness is real when looking at horses. Which horse did you see first? Probably the buckskin. But colour is not a good indicator of temperament or performance!

4. Get Good Advice

When you go to look at the horse be sure to take someone with you.

But choose carefully; don't take your local horse collector who will be too keen for you to purchase simply because they get to live their horse collecting dream through you.

Someone who has an objective view on the horse and the potential purchase is ideal, perhaps your instructor or an experienced friend or someone else with a large amount of experience in the industry.

If you are new to the horse game and are not sure who to ask pay someone if need be; it will be a cheap investment in the long run.

Before you and your assistant look at the horse, make sure you are on the same page; show them the list and talk it through so you know that they are shopping for you, not themselves!

Article: Michelle O'Neill

Photos: Judy Goggin and Bec Bell



No matter what you want your new horse to do, as soon as you get on, ask the horse to flex laterally. This will tell you a lot about its training and mind set



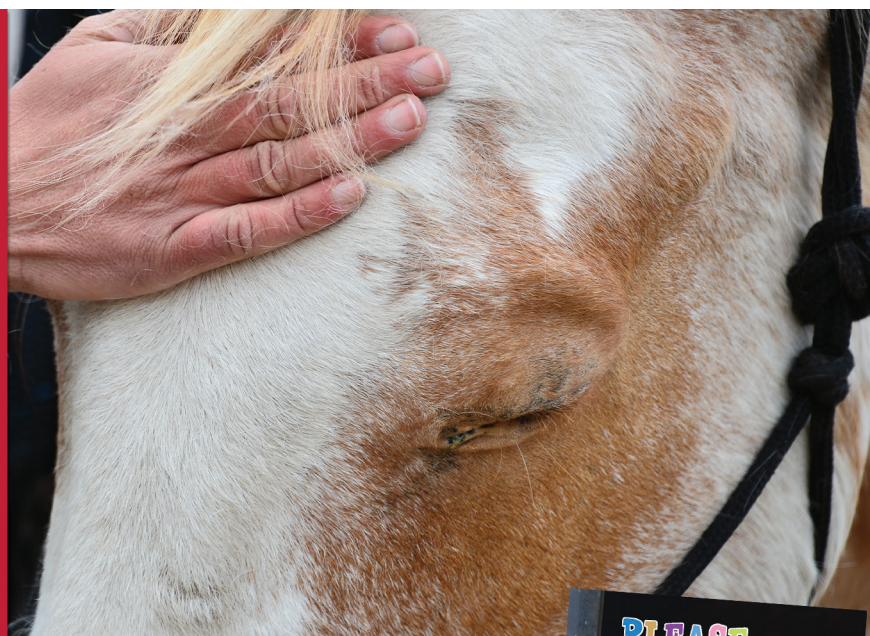
"Please... can I have a pony?" DVD

A quality, Australian made DVD for horse lovers!
A Double Disc Set with bonus activities!
Easy to understand horse safety and horsemanship tools!

For information on services, products & clinics
Call: 02 6454 3030 or 0413 609 880
Email: info@cherrytreeequine.com.au
Web: cherrytreeequine.com.au | YouTube: Cherry Tree Equine

Cherry Tree Equine

Ad by Show Pony Graphics



Subscribe & Win

Australian Performance
horse
magazine



CHERRY TREE EQUINE

Give you the opportunity to win
"Please... can I have a pony?" DVD
when you subscribe during the March / April Issue

www.performancehorsemag.com.au

