

Today's Show Ring

The American Saddlebred remains the ultimate show horse, high-stepping and elegant. A show horse is a spectacle of beauty and grace but is also an intense athletic competitor. American Saddlebreds compete in four primary divisions in the show ring: Five-Gaited, Three-Gaited, Fine Harness and Pleasure. Each division has its own "look", and competitors and mounts should be groomed to perfection. Five-gaited, fine harness and show pleasure horses are exhibited with full manes and tails. Five-gaited and fine harness horses also wear protective boots on their front feet. Three-gaited horses are shown with roached, or trimmed, manes to accentuate their long, fine necks.

The common denominator for Saddlebreds in the show ring is that they should be alert, showing with neck arched, head up and ears forward, projecting an attitude of "Look at me!" They are judged on performance, manners, presence, quality and conformation.

Winning Characteristics

Saddlebreds come in almost all colors, ranging in height from 14 to 17 hands and weighing 800-1,200 pounds.

The head and eye of the ideal Saddlebred suggest refinement and intelligence. Long, sloping pasterns give a spring to the stride, making Saddlebreds very comfortable to ride. High quality, smoothness and balanced proportions complete an overall picture of symmetry and style.

Perhaps the breed's most distinguishing trait is its mental acumen. Happy, alert and curious, American Saddlebreds possess that people-oriented quality called personality, endearing them to their owners and admirers.



Photo by Howard Schatzberg

The Versatile American Saddlebred

The characteristics that have contributed to the Saddlebred's reputation as the "peacock of the show ring" also make him a versatile horse. Smoothness of gaits, speed coupled with intelligence and powerful muscling enable him to do whatever is asked of him. Saddlebreds have excelled in many non-traditional disciplines such as dressage, eventing, show jumping, combined driving, and endurance, as well as recreational and competitive trail riding. A Saddlebred is capable of almost any task he is asked to perform and will do it with extraordinary style.

Description of Gaits

In the show ring, the Saddlebred is shown at the three natural gaits- walk, trot and canter. Judging at the walk is based on manners, quality and natural action. The trot is a natural, two-beat diagonal gait, in which the front foot and the opposite hind foot take off from the ground in unison and land simultaneously. The canter is relatively slow, lofty and fluid, with a definite three-beat cadence.

The five-gaited horses showcase the three natural gaits as well as two additional trained gaits- the slow gait and rack. The slow gait is a four-beat gait with each of the feet striking the ground separately. It is executed slowly but with true and distinct precision. The rack is a four-beat gait which is highly animated and performed with great action and speed.

The American Saddlebred Horse Association and American Saddlebred Registry

The American Saddlebred Horse Association and American Saddlebred Registry, located at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky, are at the heart of all activities involving American Saddlebreds.

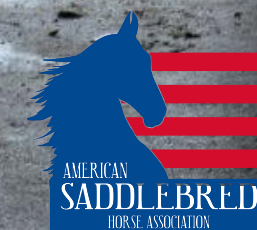
The Association supports all of the activities that make Saddlebred ownership pleasurable and exciting, while working to stimulate and promote interest in the breed.

The Registry ensures the accuracy of the records maintained for all pedigreed American Saddlebred Horses. To be eligible for registration, a foal must be sired by a registered stallion and out of a registered mare. The Registry makes available to the public a great deal of information concerning pedigrees, show records and produce listings, subsequently identifying outstanding performers and producers and helping breeders make informed decisions.



Farrell Palmer

For more information about the breed or membership contact us!



4083 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511
(859) 259-2742
www.saddlebred.com

Photo by Stevie B



Photo by Howard Schatzberg

Bold, Beautiful, Brilliant



Historical Evolution of the American Saddlebred

1600-1850

The history of the American Saddlebred began in the 1600's. Through selective breeding of Galloway and Hobbie horses, the hardy, naturally gaited Narragansett Pacer resulted. By 1776, an all -purpose riding horse, commonly called the American Horse, evolved as a definite type through crossing the Narragansett Pacers and Thoroughbreds. The American Horse retained the comfortable gaits and stamina of the Narragansett Pacer, and Thoroughbred blood added size and quality. Pioneers took the American Horse westward in the 1800's. During this era, the Thoroughbred stallion Denmark F.S. (foundation sire) was bred to a gaited mare, producing Gaines' Denmark and establishing the famed Denmark family. Harrison Chief has been designated as a foundation sire alongside Denmark. The Harrison Chief family possesses a preponderance of Thoroughbred blood through a stallion named Messenger. Infusion of Morgan, Standardbred and Hackney blood further defined the American Saddlebred. Horses of Denmark and Harrison Chief breeding trace eight generations to Blaze, a Thoroughbred. When breeders crossed back the two families in the late 1800's, some historians believe the American Saddlebred became a distinct breed.

1824 Kentucky horsemen quickly became commercial breeders. They continued to add Thoroughbred blood to their easy-gaited horses and developed a larger, prettier all-purpose animal, setting fast the "Kentucky Saddler" as a breed. Each year, hundreds of these horses were shipped South and East.

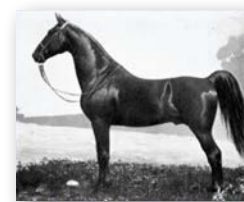
1856 The first national horse show took place at the St. Louis Fair, although the first horse show on record took place in 1816 near Lexington, Kentucky. After the Civil War, horse shows became an effective promotional tool for breeders and a popular form of entertainment for spectators.



General John B. Castleman on Carolina

1861 During the Civil War, the Saddler demonstrated his superiority on the march and on the battlefield. With better horses, the Confederate cavalry dominated until remounts became impossible to obtain. High ranking officers from both the North and South rode Saddlebred types. The Saddler quickly recovered from the Civil War because there was such a high demand for the versatile horse.

1891 What became the American Saddlebred Horse Association and the American Saddlebred Registry was founded in Louisville, Kentucky, as the National Saddle Horse Breeders Association. After 94 years in Louisville, the organizations moved to the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky. The Association works to stimulate and promote interest in the breed. The Registry regulates and records the registrations and transfers and maintains the records and integrity of the breed.



Bourbon King



Rex McDonald

1890 Rex McDonald was foaled near Mexico, Missouri. Nick named "King of Kings," he was a legend in his own time. His name was known around the world, as both presidents and kings visited him. Because of his dominating show record with only three known defeats, Rex McDonald was often banned from competitions. As an influential stallion, his blood continues to flow through the greatest show horses today, and his image is still used as a specimen of ideal conformation for the American Saddlebred.

1902 The first Kentucky State Fair Horse Show was held at Churchill Downs in Louisville. It has been held every consecutive year except for 1904 and 1942. It is now the Kentucky State Fair World's Championship Horse Show, and it has been held in Louisville's Freedom Hall since it opened in 1956.



Wing Commander

1943 CHWing Commander was foaled in Rochester, Michigan, and went on to win six straight Five-Gaited World's Grand Championships between the years of 1948 and 1953. The outstanding show horse went on to have an equally

astonishing career at stud siring 312 horses, including three World's Grand Champions, six members of the Broodmare Hall of Fame and many champions.

1967 CHMy-My won her third Five-Gaited American Saddlebred Triple Crown, meaning she won the open championships at the Lexington Junior League Horse Show, Kentucky State Fair and the American Royal in the same year, three separate times. Only two horses in any division have achieved this accomplishment (CHBellisima won her third Three-Gaited Triple Crown in 1969). The next year, the talented mare won her sixth consecutive Five-Gaited World's Grand Championship, becoming only the second horse to do so.



Blue Meadow Princess

1954 CHBlue Meadow Princess won her fifth straight Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship. CHBlue Meadow Princess and CHSultan's Starina, who achieved this feat in 1987, are the only two three-gaited horses to do this.

1988 CHImperator and CHSky Watch met once again for their final famous duel in the Five-Gaited World's Grand Championship. After a thrilling class, CHSky Watch emerged victorious. These two exciting horses won eight of the 10 Five-Gaited World's Grand Championships in the 1980s with four titles being awarded to each of them. Their popular rivalry is one of the most celebrated in Saddlebred show horse history.



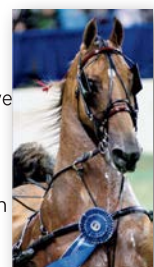
Sky Watch

1997 Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion (SA) Zovoorbij Commander In Chief became the first South African-born horse to win this prestigious title at the Kentucky State Fair. Hundreds of Saddlebreds from other countries have shown at the World's Championship Horse Show for years.

1998 Saddlebreds are displayed to the world as several American Saddlebreds participated in the closing ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. American Saddlebreds are often showcased in national parades and exhibitions because of their beauty and their "look-at-me attitude."

2006 Five-gaited gelding CHHe's The Man became the only fourth generation Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion when he won the title in 2006. He is sired by the 1989 and 1990 World's Grand Champion CHMan On The Town, a stallion who was sired by the 1970-72 World's Grand Champion CHYorktown. CHYorktown was sired by CHWing Commander, winner of the Five-Gaited World's Grand Championship a record-tying six times from 1948-1953.

2006 CHCallaway's Copyright broke all records when he became the first to win the Fine Harness World's Grand Championship six times with his sixth consecutive win in 2006. In 2005, he became the first gelding to win five World's Grand Championships in any of the three divisions. He was the fourth horse in history to win this title five times, and the first to achieve this in consecutive years since CHColonel Boyle, who won his fifth straight in 1964.



Callaway's Copyright

2008 The first ever Western Country Pleasure Invitational was held at the Kentucky State Fair World's Championship Horse Show. This was the inaugural year for the Western division at the show. Toreador won the qualifier and CHLike Thunder wore the blanket of carnations in the championship.



Like Thunder

2010 American Saddlebreds wow an enthusiastic sold out crowd in the Opening Ceremonies of the 2010 Alltech/FEI World Equestrian games, featuring special guest William Shatner driving his Fine Harness American Saddlebred CHCall Me Ringo.



William Shatner and CHCall Me Ringo