

Horse Identification: Colors, Markings, and Some Breeds

When describing a horse, it is important to be able to make another person "see" the horse. Color including shade, facial and leg markings, distinguishing markings (such as brands), breed characteristics and gender all play a part in the description of the horse.

COLORS:

Bay: reddish brown coat with black points. *Points are defined as the tips of the ears, muzzle, mane, tail and legs.* The coat color generally varies from from red to



brown.



Dark Bay: dark brown body, black mane and tail.

Black: all black except with occasional white marks on the legs and/or head. No



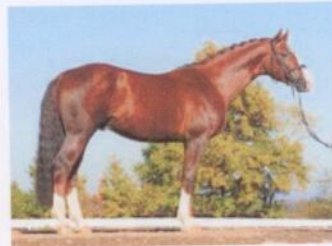
brown highlights. Friesians are black:

Chestnut: Varies from a pale golden color to a rich, red gold. The mane and tail



may be lighter or darker than the coat color.

A ***Liver Chestnut:*** has a dark purplish hue. It is the darkest of the chestnut shades.



Benny is a liver chestnut and so is this horse:

Sorrel horses are a light, red chestnut often with a cream colored mane and tail.



Grey: From dark grey to almost white, black or white mane and tail. Cody is



grey.

A grey horse is born as a darker grey and lightens with age, until he is nearly white.



Steel grey is a mixture of dark grey and white hairs;



dappled grey: light grey base coat with dark grey rings;



flea-bitten is a grey flecked with brown specks.

Roan: A dark coat with white hairs mixed in, which lightens the overall effect. Roans can be bay (bay and white), blue (black and white), strawberry (light



chestnut and white) or red (chestnut and white).

Dun: A light sandy-colored coat with a black mane, tail and legs. Duns have a dorsal stripe (extending from the line of the neck to the tail). Some Duns may have zebra stripes on the legs.



Buckskin: Dun with no dorsal stripe.



Palomino: Golden coat with a cream or silver mane and tail.

Appaloosa: Roan with patches of spots, dark with light spots, white with dark spots, or dark with a white blanket containing spots. Appaloosa is considered both



a breed and a color.

Leopard Appaloosa: large dark spots covering a white body

Snowflake Appaloosa: a dark body with light spots or small speckles

Blanket Appaloosa: White on hips and/or loins. Darker spots may or may not appear on the white blanket.

Pinto: Large colored patches of any color and white. Paint is the name of the color breed, while a pinto horse is not necessarily a paint. Black and white pintos are known as piebalds. Any other color color and white is a skewbald



Face Markings: A horse may have one or several markings on his face.

→star: white marked between the eyes

→snip: white or flesh colored mark on the muzzle that may be connected to a stripe

→stripe: also known as a strip or race, it is a narrow facial marking that runs down the center of the horse's face and may be connected to a star or a snip.

→blaze: wide white marking that runs the length of the horse's face.

→bald face: wide facial marking that extends to or past the inside corner of one or both eyes.

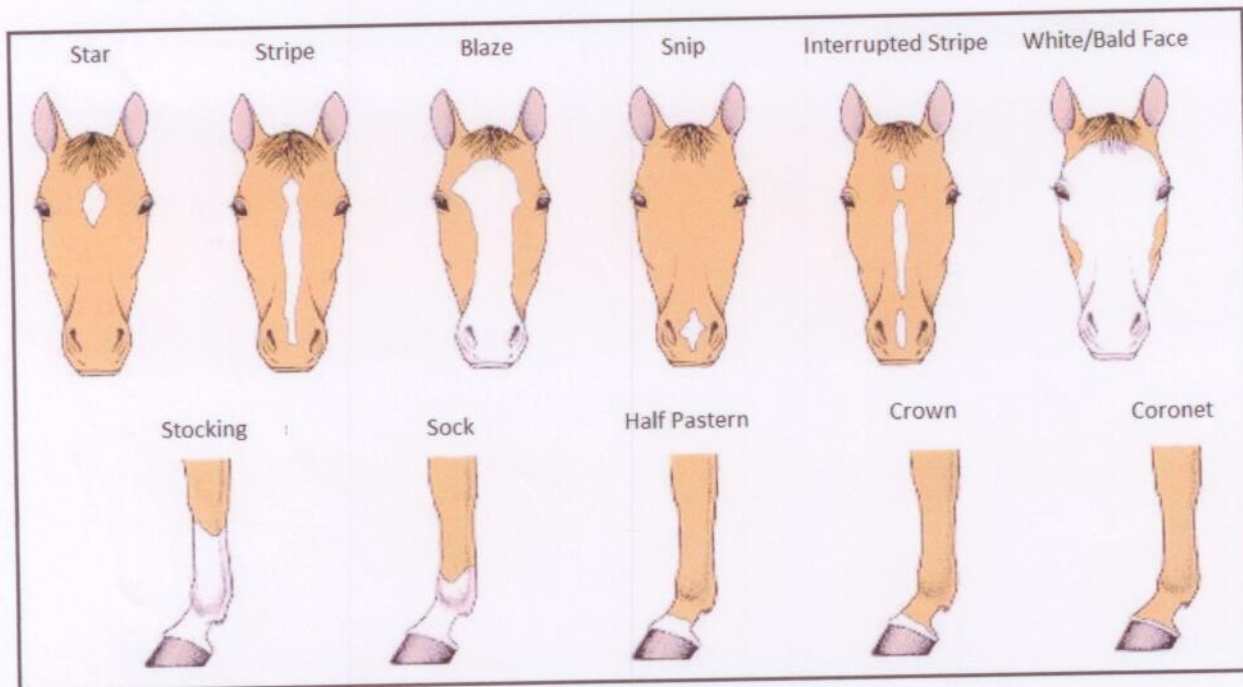
Markings can be further described as:

→faint: a marking consisting of only a few white hairs

→interrupted: a stripe or blaze that is broken (not solid) for the entire length of the face

→connected: a star and stripe, a stripe and snip, or a star, stripe and snip that are attached

→irregular or crooked: refers to stripes and blazes



Leg Markings:

Heel: white marking on one or both bulbs of the horse's heel

Coronet: white marking that encircles the coronet band

Pastern: white marking starting at the coronet band

Sock or half stocking: white marking that extends higher than the fetlock but not as high as the knee or hock

Stocking: white marking that extends to, or above, the knee or hock

Ermine: black dots within a white leg marking

Body Markings:

Dapples: Round markings that are discolorations of the rest of the body color, occurring in clusters around the flank and underside of the belly

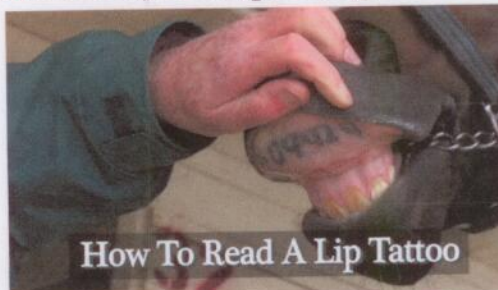
Prophet's Thumb: an indentation in the horse's neck made from when the foal was in the womb and the hind hoof rested firmly against the neck.

Whorls: Also known as Cowlicks. These are permanent areas of hair around a central spot which cannot be brushed or clipped out. They look like small wheels. They are especially common on the head, neck, chest and flanks.

Chestnut: a horny growth in the inside of the limbs above the knees and below the hocks. Chestnuts are like human fingerprints because no two are alike, and they don't change in size or shape throughout the horse's adult life.

Brand: A brand is an identifying mark made on a horse's shoulders, neck or hindquarters through a burning process.

Tattoo: Thoroughbreds usually have a tattoo under their top lip. The Thoroughbred's tattoo consists of a letter, corresponding to the horse's year of



birth, and four or five numbers.