

Horse Buying Checklist

Print out our shopping checklist and take it with you.

September 23, 2002

Shopping Checklist Have a vet evaluate your prospect for soundness before purchasing, but be realistic: The age of the horse is a big factor. Pay attention to the horse's attitude and disposition. If your horse has an attitude problem, it will be extremely difficult to ride. Choose your discipline and objective, and stick with it. Choose a breed you prefer, but be willing to look at other breeds for comparison. Set a price range, but be willing to go above the range by about \$1,000. Set an age limit, but be open to a span of five years around that age. Figure out ahead of time what questions you want to ask the seller. Choose a horse with good, quiet ground manners. Choose a horse you can develop a relationship with. Decide what perfect-horse aspects you can sacrifice in order to meet your budget.

No-Nos for the Novice Shopper Auctions: Horses that are auctioned off usually wind up there for a reason, rather than being sold through the general market. You don't need to find out why. For the most part, these are mystery horses and not much is known about them. You often won't have much chance to ride them or talk to their owners. Unless it's a reputable breeding farm where its reputation is at stake, stay away from auctions. Buying a horse that has "potential": Buy a horse that has potential only if you are the gambling type. That is what equine potential is - a gamble. You may have to fork out a great deal of training money to get that potential out. Weigh this against the asking price of the horse, your goals and your abilities before you jump at a horse with "potential." Buying a horse that is green: The old saying "green horse, green rider" is very true. A novice with an untrained horse can be a terrible combination. You may end up spending a lot more money for training your young horse than you ever dreamed possible.