

Breed Profile: Holsteiner

Learn all about the Holsteiner horse.

By Cindy Hale

Origin: Germany

Use Today: Considered one of the world's premier sport horses, the Holsteiner can be found competing in the upper levels of dressage, combined driving, eventing and jumping. The modern Holsteiner has also found success in the show ring as a stylish hunter.

Color: All colors are acceptable, although chestnut and all shades of bay are the most common.

Height: 16 to 17 hands

Profile: Over 700 years ago monasteries in the Schleswig-Holstein region of Northern Germany began breeding the early Holstein horse. It was known as a reliable riding and work horse. After the Reformation, private horse breeders and the German government took over maintaining the prized pedigrees and treasured mare lines, known as "stamms." Over time, the breed was altered to meet a variety of demands: war horse, elegant carriage horse and eventually a prized show horse. In the 19th century Yorkshire Coach horses and Cleveland Bays were introduced to the breeding program, producing an elegant, animated carriage horse. After World War II, the demand for an athletic, multi-purpose sport horse led to the introduction of Thoroughbred, Selle Francais and Anglo-Arab blood. This drive to keep the Holsteiner relevant to the needs of an ever-changing market has helped the Holsteiner achieve fame as a versatile sport horse.

Characteristics: The Holsteiner's strong back, powerful hindquarters and arched neck contribute to the breed's trademark lofty, expressive movement. The breed is also known for a solid work ethic.

For more information: The American Holsteiner Association was formed in 1978 to maintain performance records and registration of breeding stock in North America. www.holsteiner.com.