

Parade Primping

Add fun and flash to your prancing parade mount with special tack and grooming ideas.

By Horse Illustrated Editorial Staff

Traditional horse and rider parade outfits, such as you might see in the famous Rose Parade, or of the type Roy Rogers and his mount Trigger wore, are awe inspiring with their incredible ornamentation. There's silver everywhere—conchos and shiny plating over beautiful leather saddles, bridles, breast collars and hip drapes or serapes behind the saddle, with silver accents and an ornate western costume for the rider as well.

Unfortunately, most of these parade outfits were made between the 1920s and the 1960s and are expensive collector items, out of reach for the majority of local parade participants. However, there are various ways you can decorate your horse to be noticed on parade day. That your mount should be neat, clean and well groomed goes without saying, but there are numerous ways to add parade-worthy shine and sparkle. Hooves can be painted with glitter polish made especially for horses. Equine glitter products can also be used on the coat, and consider some special horse paint applied with stencils for fun you don't get to have at horse shows. A mane and tail are perfect places to display ornamentation. You can braid, add colored yarn, ribbons, flowers, decorative jewels or butterflies, and don't forget some glitter.

If you plan on riding with a group or even a friend or two, coordinate your outfits. You may choose to dress alike, and colorful, coordinated nylon tack can help you stand out without the cost of silver. Matching saddle blankets and polo wraps also help unify your appearance. Depending on the parade and time of year, you may choose to ride in costume. Perhaps your group can come up with a theme appropriate to the holiday. (Be sure to practice riding in the costume so that both you and your horse are comfortable with it.)

Parades are the one place where you can dress up with your horse, so be creative and have fun. All eyes will be on you parade day—make your team a sight to be seen.