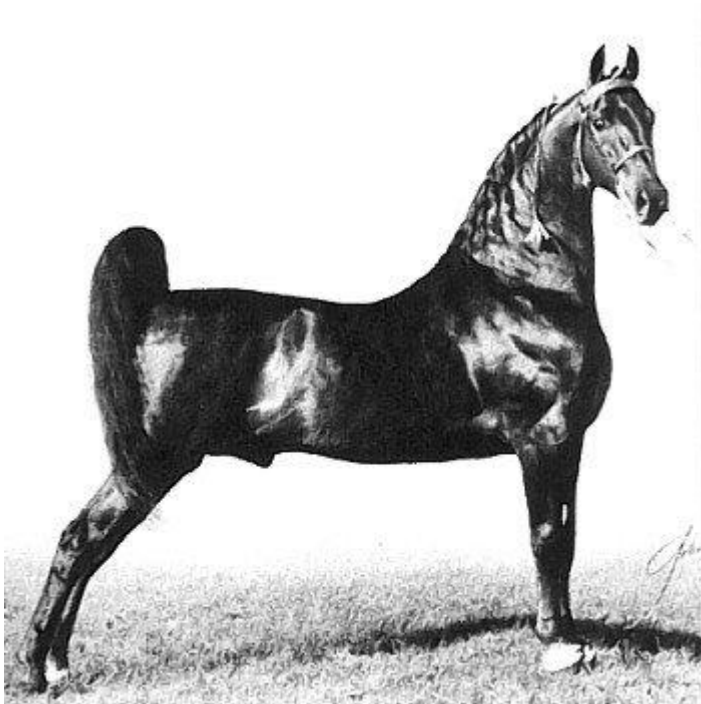


History of the Saddlebred in the UK

The American Saddlebred Horse traces its history back to the naturally gaited Galloway and Hobby horses from the British Isles. These hardy horses were imported to America with the early settlers and through selective breeding and crossing with imported Thoroughbreds, the "American Horse" was developed about the time of the Revolutionary War. These animals had the size and the beauty of the Thoroughbred but had retained the ability to learn the easy-riding gaits. They were used for all sorts of farm work and leisure riding/driving and were prized for their pleasant temperament, eagerness, strength and stamina.

There was continual crossing with Thoroughbreds, along with other breeds including the Arabian and Morgan Horse and so by the time of the first horse shows (which were held in Kentucky and Virginia in the early 1800s) the American Saddlebred was frequently judged the winners because of their beauty, style, and versatility.



Today, the American Saddlebred is best known for being the ultimate show horse, high stepping and elegant. As well as the walk, trot and canter which all horses can do, he also possesses the ability to perform two extra gaits - the slow gait and the rack. The slow gait and rack were developed from the easy-riding gait traits the Saddlebred had inherited and are more predominant in certain bloodlines - just like some Thoroughbreds are "chasers" and some are "sprint" horses.

To find out more about the history and development of the American Saddlebred Horse in America visit:
www.asha.net

Although the odd devoted Saddlebred owner had imported his or her beloved horse with them to the UK, it wasn't until 1966 that the Saddlebred found himself back in Great Britain from a breeding viewpoint. At this time, Mrs Jan Browne of Roundhills Stud near Oxford imported 8 mares and one stallion, Goldmount Bourbon Genius, to compliment her palomino breeding programme. "Genius" had the likes of Stonewall King, Montrose and Harrison Chief in his lineage. The mares carried the blood of CH Anacacho Shamrock, Chester Dare, Forest King and Kathryn Haines BHF. Many of these had the blood of Genius Bourbon King in their pedigree (see photo below). For the next 20-odd years almost every Saddlebred in the UK traced back to these few horses and the golden American Saddlebred held court in Great Britain. Even today, there are still Saddlebred classes at the British Palomino Society Championship Show. By necessity many were partbreds, but every purebred was diligently registered with the ASHA. As the Foundation Stud of the breed in the UK, Roundhills Stud still produces quality pure and partbred Saddlebreds, but not in the quantity of its heyday. During these early years, the first eleven Saddlebreds imported to Australia also resided in Great Britain for

their quarantine period.

Until the mid 1980's Saddlebreds were shown in the UK in hunter tack, at regular "English" shows and alongside all equines in classes like Riding Horse and Lightweight Hunters. At that time there were simply no specific breed classes, nor any saddle seat classes available for the showing enthusiast.

In 1984 a Morgan Horse owner, Gillian Eyre, established the American All Breeds Show, the first of its kind in the UK. This show catered for all types of American Breeds, and most importantly, offered saddle seat classes. In the early days all the breeds were shown together and classes of 20-25 in a saddle seat pleasure class were not uncommon. This show ran for many years until Gillian stepped down and handed it over to the British Morgan Horse Society, where it became the BMHS Spring Show and now caters exclusively for Morgans, Saddlebreds and occasionally Paso Fino's.

In 1988 a second "American" show was established by a Saddlebred owner, Lynn Jarvis – the American Pleasure Horse Show. This is still running today in its original format, albeit with a lot more classes on offer, which makes it the longest running show of its kind in the UK. This show offers a ring of classes for the traditional "English" showing enthusiast, one for the pinto enthusiast, one for the western and one for the "American" and foreign breed enthusiast. By holding these different types of classes alongside mainstream (British) classes many new spectators are exposed to the various breeds and riding styles.

In the early 1990's another show was established, the American Breeds Performance Show, by Saddlebred breeder Ann Farman (nee Blackaby). This show ran for approximately 10 years at the prestigious 3-Counties Showground on the foot of the Malvern hills.

Around about the same time, certainly from 1990 onwards, a new influx of Saddlebreds were imported into the UK. Some were used exclusively as ridden mounts and performance horses, some showed for a few years and then joined the breeding ranks to help increase the number of Saddlebreds in the UK. Whether this was due to the shows being available, or whether having more Saddlebreds made the shows a viable option is the classic chicken and egg question, but certainly they all occurred at about the same time. From the 1990's to the end of the century over 15 horses were imported and included Champagne Fizz, Wing Commander, Supreme Sultan and Calloway bloodlines which began to add to the genetic pool of the breed in the UK.

The United Saddlebred Association-UK (USA-UK) was formed in 1995 to help support both the purebred and the partbred Saddlebred owner and rapidly found favour among the Saddlebred world in the UK. Affiliated to the parent body in America (much like riding clubs are affiliated to the BHS in England), USA-UK is the only Saddlebred Club (to date) outside of America to have been named as "Charter Club of the Year" - an achievement we are quite rightfully proud of. Our main aims were, and still are, to support both the purebred and the partbred Saddlebred owner, to promote the breed by offering shows and clinics and encouraging other shows to hold Saddlebred classes and to maintain the integrity of the stud book, insisting on blood-typing/DNA to verify parentage.

Over the years what we offer has reflected what our members want, from a variety of schemes both competitive and non-competitive. We offered general knowledge quizzes and prizes for our Junior members, photo competitions for our non-showing members and annual classes and shows for our showing members. A variety of literature has been produced about both USA-UK and the American Saddlebred Horse in the UK, in addition to our extensive video library that is free to members. Newsletters, annual accounts and accountability to members are issued regularly and we feature articles in many magazines and newspapers, both here and in America, Australia and South Africa. In 1998 we were awarded the "Charter Club of the Year 1997 Award" by the American Saddlebred Horse Association at their annual convention - the first, and currently only time, this has been awarded to a club residing outside of the United States.

Although most of the purebreds were registered in America, prior to a British Registry being established many of the partbreds weren't. USA-UK holds a Stud Book for both pure and partbreds, as well as the Registry for National Show Horses - in 1997 the American National Show Horse Association-UK (and its Stud Book - the original National Show Horse Registry in the UK) was incorporated within USA-UK. USA-UK is a DEFRA approved Passport Issuing Organisation for Equine Passports. As well as catering for both pure and partbred Saddlebreds we also offer Passports for all other equines.

During most of the history of the Saddlebred in the UK, there have been far more partbreds than purebreds and so the majority are shown in the hunter style alongside other horse breeds at general shows in the UK. It was not until these first "American" shows were established that the Saddlebred owner was even able to compete saddle seat. Numbers have grown in this division over the years, but the hunter Saddlebred does still outweigh the show horse.

There are not enough horses competing for shows to be able to sub-divide into country pleasure, show pleasure, performance or park divisions and so in the UK Saddlebred classes on offer at the "American" shows will include 3-Gaited, 5-Gaited, Hunter and Western. In addition they all offer Amateur Owned Trained & Shown (AOTS) and Open classes in both the hunter, western and saddle seat divisions, which are open to both Saddlebreds and Morgans. Fine Harness showing for the Saddlebred has not taken off in the UK, although a Saddlebred / Morgan cross, Monnington Vision, owned by John Bulmer of Monnington Morgans is doing exceptionally well in open driving competition and became the youngest horse in history to compete at last years Horse Of The Year Show. Another difference in showing in the UK is that partbreds can (and do) compete on equal terms in the Saddlebred performance classes against their purebred counterparts, it is only the in hand classes where they are separated.

The late 1990's / early 2000's heralded the start of the popularity of the pinto horse in the UK. During this phase, the Saddlebred had an obvious advantage, as being one of the few breeds that accept coloured purebreds. With an obvious market, this started an increase in the breeding of pure and partbred Saddlebreds (including National Show Horses) and the importation of more Saddlebreds – this time with the emphasis on pintos.

Three of the earlier horses were pinto's and in the new millennium 9 more pinto Saddlebreds were imported and 6 pinto National Show Horses. During this time a new Saddlebred Stud was established by Lynn and David Herd in the Lake District, specialising in Pinto Saddlebreds. More pinto's have found their way to the UK since and the largest congregation of them can be found at the Herd's Stud in Cumbria.

Most of our imports come from America, but some from mainland Europe, in fact trade within Europe is a two-way thing for Saddlebreds, as many have been exported from the UK and many imported to mainland Europe from here.

Over 20 South African Saddlebreds have also stopped off in the UK en route to America. The majority were imported by John Bulmer of Monnington Morgans, Europe's Foundation Morgan Stud. These horses spent varying times in the UK, some in training, some being shown at the UK shows, before being exported and shown in the States. 2005 was a great year for them as their trainer Lionel Ferreira showed Gothic Revival (an American bred horse) to a World Championship in the Fine Harness division and Carlwald Prince's Domino to the 5-Gaited World Championship. At the 2007 Blomfontein Show, Lionel showed HHP First Nite Out to victory in the Open Stallion 5-Gaited Stake and then to Reserve in the Grand Championships. This game horse went on to do wonders at the 2007 Saddlebred World Championships in America. Recent stars include Marc Of Charm, who had a fabulous show at the 2009 event. Other notable South African horses who have been in the UK include Rock-Me Braveheart Warrior and Bridgewater's Nite An Day.

The new millennium has also seen the United Saddlebred Association organise our own Championship Show, which has now grown into the European Championships. This has a wide range of classes for the Saddlebred as well as breed classes for the Morgan, the Appaloosa, the Paso Fino, Iberians Palomino's and Pinto's. In addition there are Limit, Amateur and Open classes in each showing division, which are open to any breed. We also established our own British National Championships in 2009, held at Equifest in August at the East of England Showground. Both of these are annual events and cater for both the pure and the partbred Saddlebred. Our May Show has developed into one of the largest shows in the UK catering exclusively for "Foreign Breeds" and our BNCs at Equifest is a great showcase, with in excess of 10,000 exhibits in total at this prestigious 5-day event.

Classes for the Saddlebred can now also be found at both pinto society championships – the British Skewbald & Piebald World Championship of Colour and the Coloured Horse & Pony Society's

Championship Show, at the BMHS Spring Show, Highstead Shows, the American Pleasure (Star of London) Show and the Royal London Show.

- **Over the years we have run many events for Saddlebred enthusiasts. These cover every aspect of the Saddlebred, from those that like to compete in American Shows, to those that compete in FEI disciplines, through to those that simply like to admire the breed:**
- **Clinics and demonstrations**, both with UK and overseas trainers, starting in 1997 with a clinic by Gayle Lampe.
- **Leaflets** (free) for judges, owners, enthusiasts, breeders - tailored specifically for the UK market and often featuring our own UK Saddlebreds. Instigated in 1995 and reviewed periodically, with the latest versions being updated in 2012.
- **Newsletters** issued since day one and **Saddlebreds.uk** copyrighted in 1999, which since then has been the title of our newsletters. Over the years we have worked in collaboration with a number of companies and offered discounts to members, who are notified of these through our newsletters.
- **Saddlebred Futurity** - these were first instigated by USA-UK in 1995.
- **Open Days at Saddlebred Studs** - held on a regular basis and instigated by USA-UK in 1995.
- **Retirement Parties for Saddlebred Horses** - held as and when required, the first held in 1995 for Radiant Return TM.
- **Junior clubs** - aimed specifically for our youth members, with regular competitions and learning objectives not just about the Saddlebred, but about horse care in general. Instigated by USA-UK in 1995.
- **Photo competitions** - we have run many photo competitions over the years, for those of you that do not wish to compete
- **Stallion auctions** - raffle auctions whereby winners have up to 8 stallions to choose from, instigated by USA-UK in 1996.
- **Sire Ratings** - important for all those wishing to breed for a future star, we instigated the USA-UK Sire Ratings on UK winning get in 1995.
- **Liaison** with other breed societies and showing groups, influencing and informing others about the Saddlebred and formation of the "**Friends of USA-UK**" in 1995.
- **Year End Awards & Annual General Meeting** - every conceivable division catered for (see our awards page for more details), plus awards for our non-competing members, usually presented at our AGM, both instigated by USA-UK in 1996. Members surveyed regularly, the first being undertaken in 1997.
- **Show Awards for Saddlebreds** (SASH) and Championship Status started by USA-UK in 1997.
- **Showing classes and shows** - built up over the years from our pre-USA-UK days with the BPS, MIH and BMHS to latter years with RLS, Equifest and BSPA. The first UK-based annual 5-Gaited class for Saddlebreds was held in 1997.
- **European Charter Club Challenge** - cross country club competition for all ASHA registered horses, owned by any European Charter Club member - individual awards in separate categories, plus Overall Award. Joint venture between USA-UK and ASHA-Scandinavia, started in 2010.
- **ASHA Regional Championships (now known as their Hi-Point Awards)** - run in collaboration with the ASHA in America, open to all ASHA registered horses, owned by ASHA or any Charter Club member (e.g. members of USA-UK), started in 2011.
- **ASHA State Pleasure Awards** - for the United Kingdom / Great Britain are now distributed by USA-UK on behalf of the ASHA in America (open to all ASHA registered horses, owned by ASHA members), started in 2011.

If readers out there have any historic photo's of our early UK Saddlebreds, then please [EMAIL](#) them to us as we would love to include them on this page.

COLOUR IN THE SADDLEBRED

When someone says “American Horse” and “colour” in the same sentence, most people would be forgiven for thinking of a Paint Horse. This is a very common colour breed in the US and is a combination of Quarter Horse and TB bloodlines, with of course the characteristic coat colouration.

However, there are more “American Horses” that have colour than simply the Paint Horse. Disregarding the Appaloosa’s, Spotted Ponies, Cremello’s, Palomino’s, Duns & Buckskins and other types of “colour breeds”, apart from the Paint Horse the American Saddlebred Horse is also a horse of colour. Now that’s not to say that American Saddlebreds are only coloured, they are not – in fact the vast majority of them are varying shades of chestnut. However, they are one of the few “purebred” breed registries that allow for colour.

So, where does the colour come from?

Believe it or not the first recorded “coloured” Saddlebred stallion was foaled in 1882 and registered in 1891 (when the American Saddlebred Horse Registry was formed – at the time it was known as the Kentucky Horse Breeders Association). This stallion was called “Arabian Bill” and was registered as white with bay spots. (What we would call a bay tobiano or bay overo now). He was owned by Jacob Thomas & Son of Knox City Missouri. The first Saddlebred mare was foaled in 1884 (and again registered in 1891) – “Moonlight”. She was registered as white with spots, again owned by Jacob Thomas & Son. Another mare “Zenith” was also registered in 1891 and was recorded as “spotted” – no other colour was given. She was foaled in 1885 and was owned by J.D. & L.B. Smith of New Berlin, Illinois. After WWII the Elliott Farm and stable in Sedalia, Missouri became famous for it’s pinto breeding programme – however no-one is quite sure where the term “pinto” originated from. The only one of these three spotted Saddlebreds that had registered offspring was Zenith, who had a bay colt called Gold Ring.

Despite this early recording of “spotted” Saddlebreds, many were simply recorded by their base coat – e.g. chestnut. High whites (white above the knee and/or hock usually accompanied by belly splashes of white and lots of white on the face) were not even mentioned. A Saddlebred with these markings would have just been recorded as a chestnut (or bay ...) – offspring of these horses though could produce colour.

“Miss America” was an American Saddlebred born in 1929 and simply recorded as “bay”. However, she was indeed coloured, as photo’s of her prove – she had a large and quite distinctive white patch on her mid right flank – bearing more than a passing resemblance to the relief of South America in fact! Oak Hill Chief was born in 1935 and recorded as a chestnut, yet he had extensive overo type markings on his neck and his left side. At some stage it became “acceptable” to have a coloured horse and then true coat patterns and colourations were recorded.

Sabino markings also seem (relatively) common in the Saddlebred and it is not that unusual for a high-white or coloured offspring to be produced from the occasional mating of two solid parents. Obviously with DNA technology parentage is assured and so all are eligible for registration.

Passing on the colour

A breeders dream is always to pass on their sire or dam’s temperament, size, ability and in the case of pinto’s (or paints) their colour. In America pinto’s/paints can be tested to see whether they carry a homozygous gene for a coloured coat pattern (all foals produced will have colour).

Certainly horses are advertised in America as homozygous. I have also noticed that many of these carry distinctive “spots” – apparently this is a good indication that the horse IS homozygous before any tests are done. (Base colour spots appearing in the white area’s of the coat, often quite numerous). The picture below is of a black homozygous stallion, Spetz Sensation, owned by Cascade Colors of Oregon. You can see those homozygous “spots” on his neck in the picture below.



A lot of coloured American Saddlebreds and National Show Horses have been imported into this country. At present three are BSPA licensed – Flashdance Fever (a purebred black tobiano American Saddlebred), Even Worse (a chestnut tobiano American Saddlebred) and Razzle Dazzle Royale (a National Show Horse – 50% Saddlebred – Black Tobiano). Razzle is also BSPA Graded, as is Even Worse, who is also CHAPS-graded and USA-UK licensed. There are a number of coloured National Show Horses, originally imported by Ffos Farm Arabians in Wales, who can now be found around the country who are all licensed with the United Saddlebred Association (USA-UK). There is also a bay tobiano purebred Saddlebred standing at Spellbound Saddlebreds in Norfolk, Premier Color, and a chestnut tobiano purebred Saddlebred standing at Buckingawesome Saddlebreds in Cumbria, both of whom are USA-UK licensed. Go visit our “stallions” page to find out more details.

References: with thanks to the American Saddlebred Horse Association (ASHA) for their help with this article. Photo's: courtesy of and with thanks to Maridi Pletcher, Pinto International Brokerage, USA and the ASHA for archive photo's.

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