

The Appaloosa: The Total Package



If you asked the average person what the defining characteristic of an Appaloosa is they would say it's spotted color. The Appaloosa today is defined as a color breed with some bloodline restrictions. The Appaloosa Horse Club (ApHC) basically has 2 types of Appaloosas: 1. The blood breed Appaloosa (Appaloosa to Appaloosa breeding) with little or no out crossing and known as the Foundation Appaloosa or #2 the cross bred Appaloosa (Appaloosa to a Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred, or Arabian).

The Appaloosa is more versatile than most other breeds and has the genetic base for excelling at many types of activities. Its strong card is its versatility.

Something for Everybody

The Appaloosa Horse Club has stock horse types, racing and sport types, endurance types, recreational, trail, driving, roping, ranch work, parades, show, gaited. All of these sports of endeavor are here in one package. Dr. Deb Bennett, paleontologist and horse researcher, said, "Absolute uniformity of type within any breed is not desirable because horses have various uses." The Foundation Appaloosa Breeders (FAB) has kept the breed more versatile by not breeding for a specific type of Appaloosa. The Foundation horses have a leaner more rugged body build. They are a "jack of all trades" horse that are good at many different things.

The most common Appaloosa body type today is the outcrossed Appaloosa and it is a Quarter Horse type body build that is the dominant type Appaloosa shown today and is rewarded in the show ring.



Pictures by Kathy Hanson of Kalispell, MT, showing her Foundation Appaloosa stallion Neemepoo Rolln' Thunder #613660 performing a skijoring event in Whitefish, MT.



Kathy Hanson on Neemepoo Shuffle Chief #632334, a Foundation ApHC stallion, competing in an Extreme Trail riding competition.

Some History of the Appaloosa: Did you know?

After the Nez Perce War in 1877, the Appaloosa horse of the Nez Perce Indians was scattered hither and yon. The few that remained in pockets were bred randomly to other types of horses. By this time there were no “pure” Appaloosas and DNA markers prove that. A handful of men gathered up some strays and started the Appaloosa Club in 1938. Sixty one years had elapsed from the end of the Nez Perce War to the starting of the Club. Most people do not know that the ApHC in it’s early days from 1938 through the 1970’s was opened up to out crossing to many other recognized registered breeds to build

up the numbers of this new fledgling breed. The Appaloosas that were left had only their pattern coats to identify them as Appaloosas. Appaloosas that showed Paint and Pinto characteristics were barred from registration. The 7 breeds that you could outcross your Appaloosas to during that period were as follows:

Morgan's (AMHA), some gaited genes
 Saddlebreds (ASBA, gaited genes
 Standardbreds, a gaited breed
 Tennessee Walkers (TWH), gaited genes
 Arabians
 Thoroughbreds
 Quarter Horses (AQHA)

The breeding rules changed in the 1970's and out crossing was restricted from that time forward to just the Quarter Horse, Arabian, and Thoroughbred and that's how it is today.



Nez Perce Encampment; Photo by Jane Gay, 1889-1892

Courtesy of National Park Service

An example of a Nez Perce mixed bred Appaloosa and its Appaloosa-Paint colt

Apelusi by Dan Muller, 1936



This drawing preceded the ApHC but had the different spelling of the coming Appaloosa breed. Muller describes this type of Indian Pony as follows: “odd colored pony more or less blue in front and the rest of him white with blue spots, the size of a silver dollar over his rump. Can be found in most Montana-Wyoming, Injun Camps, and there are quite a few above the border in Western – Canadian Country. Usually has a ‘glass eye’. In build, not much different from the average run of Injun Pony. Were the white man owns him, and feeds him well, he gets to have size and bottom.” This logo shows a bald face and blue eyes. Many Indian tribes were fascinated with the color breeds, Paints, Pintos, and Appaloosas and the Nez Perce were no exception. Spots were spots. Big, small, round, or jagged. The Nez Perce herds consisted of Paints, Pintos, Appaloosas but mostly solid colored horses and there was no discrimination or separation of the mixed colored breeds by any Indians.

LUXURY RIDE – THE GAITED APPALOOSA

Another type of Appaloosa that goes unnoticed is the gaited Appaloosa. The word “Indian Shuffle” was coined by early promoters of the breed in 1940. There are a few

Appaloosas that have this gaited trait and it is most definitely a part of the history and heritage of the Appaloosa breed. Neemeepoos Redneck, owned by Susan Boyd of Arkansas, is a gaited Foundation Appaloosa who is winning ribbons at all gaited horse shows and producing beautiful colored gaited offspring.

This is an untapped market that needs more recognition and value. Today the riding public is comprised in large part of Baby Boomers who want smooth moving trail riding horses. Trail riding is the number one past time of many horse owners and is the trend in the equine market. Comfort and style are fast becoming very popular in all gaited breeds. But you don't have to be older to enjoy a gaited Appaloosa, just smart. The pictures of the Appaloosas in this article are on the move, pushing and expanding what an Appaloosa can do.



Neemeepoo Redneck #640035, ApHC registered Foundation Appaloosa being shown at the National Pleasure all gaited show in Missouri and winning ribbons.

George Hatley



Cheryl Palmer with George Hatley in 2008

George Hatley was the executive secretary of the breed and a longtime spokesman and advocate for the Appaloosa breed. He died Sept. 16, 2011 at the age of 87. He was a very intelligent, thoughtful, and reflective person who almost single handedly promoted the breed through the years. He would always personally respond to a person's request for information about the breed and answer personal letters. George started the newsletter that developed into the Appaloosa Journal.

In Conclusion

There is an Appaloosa for you for any endeavor you choose. Purebred or Crossbred it's all about choices. Sport horses, dressage, gaited, trail, endurance, pleasure or recreational, show horse, racing horse, roping, penning, you name it the Appaloosa can do it. You don't have to go outside the breed as the Appaloosa has all the spots covered. The Appaloosa is the **Total Package!**

Author, Cheryl Palmer, Bigfork, MT, 406 837-4419, www.leopardappaloosa.com
Kathy Hanson, Kalispell, MT www.rockinhappaloosas.blogspot.com 406 756-0688
212-8066
Susan Boyd, Beech Grove, AR, www.ifwisheswererhorsesllc.net, 870 586-9229