

## Conformation

*an Analysis by [Liz Graves](#)©2001*



In this Photo we will look at the entire horse and how everything ties in together. I will ask you first before we start to break this horse down in to evaluating the different parts to look at the overall picture and ask yourself, what is your very first impression of the horse as a whole?



*(See note below)*

In many cases when evaluating horses the overall picture can be one of excellent, good, fair or bad.

As a judge many times in the show ring I have found many people that immediately wonder why the prettiest, nicest turned out horse did not win. It takes a developed and educated eye to start breaking a horse down in to parts and see the real picture. Don't always be fooled by that pretty horse, take your time and after that first impression put it aside and start to evaluate each part separately and then go back and look again at the horse as a whole. Will the horses strong points

compensate for the weak ones, will the weak point over ride the strong points. Look at the horse, not the long flowing mane or tail, the fancy halter or the handler that is showing themselves more than

the horse. Look at the horse's body, its balance, lines, muscling and structure.

Sometime you will be right on with your first impression and sometimes when you start to break it down you will be very surprised.

My first impression of this horse is excellent. Right away I really like this horse. I see balance and flow of all this horse parts. The lines over all are clean and smooth.

Let's start by going from front to back in evaluating this horse. First is the head, this horse has nice short proportioned ears, wide between the eye and a very nicely chiseled head. The horse's eyes look

to be right on the corners of the head where they should be and look large and soft giving an impression of intelligence and pleasant temperament.

In this picture the horses head is turned toward us making it difficult to see exactly how thick the horse is at the throat latch but it does look well attached not to thick or to thin. The neck looks to be of a good length not to long or short, a nice length in relation to the functioning back. The neck on this horse is set on high into the shoulder and looks to have a nice natural rounding to the crest on the top side of the neck and a clean line on the bottom not showing being ewe necked or muscle built up on the underside of the neck from possibly being asked to hold its self in an overly ventroflexed position.

The shoulder angle on this horse is 50 degrees and shows a nice long shoulder as well as having a humerus that is well past 50% of the shoulder length giving this horse reach but also limiting the amount of scope due to the laid back shoulder. The angle of the humerus also shows being steeper, giving this horse the ability to also have some height in action of the front legs as well. This horse up front looks to have all the elements of a nice mover with a moderate reach and nice lift.

This horse tends to have a shorter back with the croup lying lower than the wither. This horse has a nice gentle rounded slope at the croup also. The lumbar sacral junction is almost over the point of hip. The hip socket looks to be just a bit behind the center of the pelvis. The pelvis is one of some length while the femur is relatively short compared to the length of gaskin. This horse is also standing camped out behind. The length of the gaskin of this horse will compensate for the lack of getting the hock up under the horse due to being camped out. This horse should have some reach behind.

All these elements behind make for an interesting combination making for this horse possibly to be able to do a few different gaits. Starting with the dorsiflexed (trot) to a level backed gait with some

animation up front. It may also be possible due to this horses high neck set, steeper humerus and shorter cannons in the back, to be held in a ventroflexed position making it possible for this horse to do a rack type gait although I think if over done for too long without proper conditioning could over stress the structure. This horse also shows a nice balance of bone and muscle to support the whole body.

Remember though there still needs to be some genetics to gait so the structure of a horse can influence and support a gait.