

Paso Fino Riding Horses

With Guest Judge Elizabeth Graves

In my experience judging such a unique and extraordinary breed, there are some very important elements desired when these horses are presented to me. There are many factors this breed must have to execute their natural gaits with presence and agility, grace and suppleness, all while maintaining precision in an evenly spaced, four-beat gait.

In the natural gaits the Paso Fino exhibits, balance throughout the horse's structure is paramount. All the lines from one part of the body should flow smoothly into the next. They should be strong with a deep heart girth, well sprung in the ribs, with enough bone to be strong and hold their gaits, yet should never look coarse. I like to see structure that allows the horse to achieve the gaits with ease and without stress. Such structure also allows for the least amount of work for the rider to transmit that ultimate smoothness and pleasure-what this breed offers us as equestrians.

Horse #1

4-year-old gelding

This horse being only four-years old still has much more filling out and maturing yet to do. I see a young horse here with loads of potential, but he will need that finished maturity to achieve his best abilities when working under saddle.

This gelding has a nice shoulder angle and a wonderfully steep humerus to achieve that fine step of the gaits. In this photo he looks to have nice straight legs and good bone to the hocks for strength. The forearms look to be of a good length as well.

His neck is of a nice, medium length to create the flexion he will need in creating the correct frame for his gaits. This horse also has a very nice shapely head with a good jaw and eyes set nicely out on the corners of his head. When his muscles finish filling in, his total structure will be one of nice balance from front to back, providing the strength needed to carry the nice skeletal structure he is exhibiting now.



Horse #2

11-year-old mare

This mare looks to be nicely balanced in her body from front to back, with good muscling to support her. In this photo she looks to be a bit camped out behind, which makes for more effort for her to keep her hind legs working well underneath her. Her gaskins look to be lacking in development. A little longer forearm with shorter cannon bones in the front would help her to keep her front legs working with more animation. This mare shows good muscle in her shoulders, yet lacks it in her neck. This makes her look weaker on the topside and makes it difficult for her to flex well at the poll. This mare does have a nice top line giving her the look of strength.



Horse #3

6-year-old mare

This mare looks to have some good traits yet lacks the conditioning, as she appears in the picture, to work at her full potential. She has a very nice slope to her shoulder and attaches well at the head and neck. She has a good top line with nice length to her bottom line. She lacks a bit of the rounding at the croup, and also lacks gaskin development.

She also could have just a bit more length to her forearm, with shorter cannon bones in front. This mare shows a nice shape to the top line of her neck with good attachment at the shoulder. Her neck is of good length which helps for setting a nice frame for gait. Although this mare is standing with her right hind rather far out behind, I do not feel she is truly camped out behind, and with better placement of the hind legs she will be correct behind. This mare has a nice head and looks to be very expressive in her face.

To see how our Guest Judge places these three horses turn to page 64.

About our Guest Judge:

Elizabeth Graves is a highly motivated educator with over 30 years experience training and showing horses, she has been judging 23 years, as well conducting her very popular clinics on a national level since 1990. Specializing in all the gaited breeds, she now has two video series available for purchase to help every level of rider. These videos address a multitude of gaited horse issues.



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**Placements for Form Follows
Function, continued from page 50.**

- 1st place: Horse #1
- 2nd place: Horse #3
- 3rd place: Horse # 2

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hat!

Poor Betty. She just doesn't
understand that some
horses are BORN excited