



PASO FINO HORSE ASSOCIATION, INC. “SO YOU WANT TO BUY A PASO FINO HORSE TO SHOW”

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE...

This guide has been prepared by the Paso Fino Horse Association (PFHA) Amateur Owner Committee in an effort to emphasize, educate and encourage the participation of Amateur Owners in the show ring. This guide is meant to provide topics a prospective owner should consider before purchasing a Paso Fino show horse. It is not a definitive source of all things related to horse buying. It provides a list of topics to consider during the sale process.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK...

1. Talk to many Paso Fino horse owners and trainers. PFHA has a farm directory that contains contact information on farms you can visit.
2. Visit the PFHA website at <http://www.pfha.org/>
3. Go to several regional and national shows.
4. Get price comparisons based on age, gender, bloodlines, show record and level of training. Is the horse entered in a futurity and eligible to compete for cash at shows?
5. Know all the costs associated with owning a horse such as boarding fees, hay and feed bills, veterinarian bills, farrier bills, medical and mortality insurance.
6. Know all the costs associated with showing a horse such as show fees, transportation fees, trainer fees, vet bills for health certificate and coggins tests.
7. Do you have adequate space and shelter for the horse (usually one acre per horse)?
8. Familiarize yourself with the PFHA Rule Book, the PFHA Tack Guide, the PFHA Amateur Owner's "Guide to Showing" booklet, and the PFHA Show Packing List. These items can be found at the PFHA website at <http://www.pfha.org/>



Photo by Greg West, Echo West Farm



KNOW YOUR OWN ABILITIES...

1. How skilled of a rider are you? The best horse is the one that you are skilled enough to handle. Work with a Paso Fino horse trainer prior to buying.
2. Consider paying for riding lessons. Don't expect the seller to provide free riding lessons. Be sure you can handle and ride the horse safely.
3. Be considerate of the sellers' time and assets, i.e. their horses, their tack and their training skills.
4. Do you know how to care for a horse?
5. Are you ready for a long term commitment? Horses can live to be 30 years old.



KNOW WHAT KIND OF HORSE YOU WANT...

1. Do you want a stallion, mare, or gelding? Do you know how to manage a stallion? Stallions require extra skill in handling them and extra boarding considerations.
2. Do you want a young horse or an older more experienced horse?
3. Do you want a horse with "brio" (spirit) or one that is laid back?
4. What color of horse do you want? Don't let color blind you to an otherwise perfect horse for you.
5. Are you looking for certain conformation characteristics such as one with a long neck, thin throat latch, short back, or long back? Discuss with a trainer/breeder how conformation effects the way the horse moves.
6. The great thing about the Paso Fino horse is they come in almost any equine color and have many different phenotypes, i.e. body types and ways of going.



KNOW WHAT KIND OF PASO FINO HORSE YOU WANT...

The Paso Fino breed is highly prized for its gait. The gait is totally natural and normally exhibited from birth. It is an evenly spaced, four-beat lateral gait with each foot contacting the ground independently in a regular sequence at precise intervals creating a rapid, unbroken rhythm. The rider should appear virtually motionless in the saddle, and there should be no perceptible up and down motion of the horse's croup. The gait is performed at three forward speeds and with varying degrees of collection.

Classic Fino - Full collection. The footfall is extremely rapid while the steps and extension are exceedingly short.

Paso Corto - Full to moderate collection. Forward speed is moderate. Steps are ground-covering but unhurried, executed with medium extension and stride.

Paso Largo - The fastest speed of the gait, executed with a longer extension and stride, and moderate to minimal collection.





KNOW WHAT TYPE OF PASO FINO HORSE YOU WANT (Continued)...

In show competitions, the Paso Fino horse is judged in the following divisions based upon the horse's natural ability.

Classic Fino Division: The only gait performed in a fino class is the Classic Fino gait. Gait is fully collected, with very rapid footfall and stride is exceedingly short. The Classic Fino gait is an evenly spaced, four-beat lateral gait that is smooth, animated, exciting and executed with brilliance and style. Flexion and extension should be harmonious in all four legs. The horse must present a picture of symmetry and fluidness of motion. Not all Paso Fino horses can perform the Classic Fino gait.



Performance Division: The gaits performed are collected Corto, collected Largo, and collected Walk. Performance gaits are executed with brilliant style, and collection. The horse is collected, fully balanced and exhibiting symmetry in flexion and extension. The extension is longer and the footfall not as rapid as shown in the Classic Fino gait. The horse should demonstrate pride, style, elegance and enthusiasm, along with good manners and ready response.

Pleasure Division: The gaits performed are mildly collected Corto, mildly-collected Largo, and flat-footed Walk. Pleasure gaits are executed with mild collection, moderate extension, style, and willingness. The horse's head carriage is natural and relaxed. The gaits should be fluid showing no tendency to labor or become "strung out". Manners and obedience of the horse are particularly important. The horse should be controlled with minimal restraint and the riders should appear to be enjoying themselves.

Specialty Classes: The Specialty Classes demonstrate the versatility and tractability of the Paso Fino horse in the following classes.

1. **Paso Pleasure Driving Class:** The horse is shown in light driving harness pulling a two- or four-wheeled cart. The horse must execute the Corto, Largo, and Walk.
2. **Paso Trail Class:** The horse must negotiate through obstacles such as opening a gate, backing, walking over a bridge and any other trail obstacles.
3. **Paso Western Pleasure Class:** The horse must exhibit the flat Walk, the Paso Corto and a Lope. The tack and rider attire is western.
4. **Paso Versatility Class:** The horse must exhibit the flat Walk, the Paso Corto, the Paso Largo, the Canter and execute a single rail two foot jump.
5. **Paso Costume Class:** Riders and horses wear costumes that celebrate the breed's Latin origin. The horse must execute the paso fino gait of choice.



Seek out an experienced Paso Fino trainer or breeder to assist you in deciding what type of Paso Fino horse you want. Ride a Classic Fino, a Performance, and a Pleasure Paso Fino. Each has a different feel.

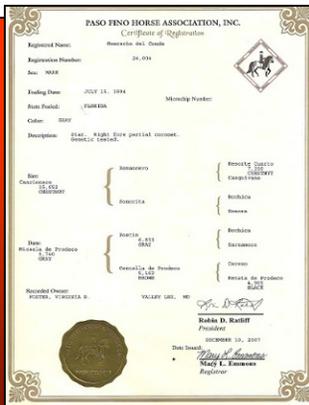


FIND THE SELLER YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE DEALING WITH...

1. Ask people you trust for referrals of breeders and trainers. Ultimately it is your decision.
2. The Professional Paso Fino Trainers Association is a good place to find a person knowledgeable in the Paso Fino breed. The trainers can help you find the perfect horse. Their website is <http://ppf-trainers.org/>
3. Take a friend who is knowledgeable in Paso Fino horses with you and ask for their opinion of the horse.
4. Be considerate of the trainers/breeders time. Be on time for your appointment.



INSPECT THE HORSE'S PFHA REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE...



1. Ask for a copy of the horse's PFHA registration certificate.
2. Ask for the name(s) and PFHA member numbers of the owner(s) and agent(s) involved in selling the horse.
3. Call PFHA to ensure the horse is in the PFHA registry and confirm the owner(s) are the ones on record with the PFHA.
4. Ensure the owner(s) and agent(s) are members in good standing with PFHA.
5. All horses registered with PFHA are blood typed so parentage can be confirmed with DNA.
6. The fee schedule for transferring a horse can be found on the PFHA website at www.pfha.org. Be sure you know who is paying for what fee.



IS THE HORSE HEALTHY?...

1. Ask for a copy of the horse's medical/health records from the veterinarian office that has cared for this horse. Ensure this includes a vaccination & worming history.
2. Have the veterinarian of your choosing perform a comprehensive (from ears to hooves) pre-purchase exam. Make sure it includes a lameness exam.
3. Try to speak with the farrier who has been maintaining the horse's hooves. If the horse has been shod, obtain one of the shoes to show to your farrier.
4. For breeding mares, make sure you include a breeding soundness exam which may include an ultra sound and/or uterine biopsy.
5. For breeding stallions, make sure the veterinarian tests the semen for viability.
6. Some pre-purchase exams include a blood testing for drugs, such as pain killers or sedatives.
7. Have the vet check to see if the horse's teeth need floating.
8. Ask about the horse's diet, feed, hay, supplements, special medications.





CHECK OUT THE HORSE'S DISPOSITION AND MANNERS...

1. Ask about the horse's disposition and manners under saddle, in hand and in the pasture with other horses. Is it the alpha horse in the herd?
2. Does it have any bad habits or vices such as cribbing, stall weaving, biting or kicking?
3. Will it lead quietly?
4. Will it stand quietly?
5. Will it load in a trailer? Ask them to load and unload the horse in front of you.
6. Watch as the horse is haltered, brought from the stall or pasture, tacked and ridden.
7. When the farrier works on the horse, does the horse need to be sedated or twitched?
8. How is the horse in the wash rack? Does the horse stand easy while being bathed?
9. Can you touch every body part of the horse?
10. Will it accept paste wormers?
11. Can the horse be caught when it is out in the pasture?



12. Never ride a horse unless the owner or agent rides the horse first.
13. Once you do get on, stay at a walk until you get the feel of the horse. Ride in a confined space such as a round pen for that first ride.
14. Once you are comfortable, ride the horse in and out of the round pen or arena.
15. Ride the horse away from the barn and his pasture mates. Is the horse skittish or confident?
16. Have a friend ride the horse for a second opinion.
17. Schedule your rides well in advance with

the seller. Don't take advantage of the sellers' time. Be on time for all appointments. Don't expect to have unlimited rides before the purchase. Many farms offer riding lessons and are willing to train you on how to ride the horse that you are considering.

18. Be sure you will be able to handle the horse once you get it home.





ENSURE THERE IS A SALES CONTRACT...

1. Formalize and put into writing the mutual expectations between buyer and seller.
2. Full disclosure is necessary at all times.
3. Get a copy of the sales contract to take home and read at your leisure.
4. If you can't take possession right away, can the horse be boarded with the present owner and at what cost?
5. Who pays for shipping costs?
6. Who owns the horse during shipping? This is important if there is trouble during the shipment.
7. Will the horse be insured during shipping? If so, who pays the premiums?
8. Read the following two articles prepared by the PFHA Ethics Committee. They are posted on the PFHA website at <http://www.pfha.org/>
 - Ethical considerations associated with the buying and selling of horses.
 - Ethical considerations associated with the trainer-client relationship.
10. Confer with other trainers/breeders on what should be included in the sales contract. At a minimum the contract should contain.
 - A 3-day full return of your money if not satisfied. By law a person is allowed up to 3 days to cancel a check and the full amount returned.
 - What is the specific date that you assume ownership and responsibility for the horse?
 - Who will pay the PFHA fee for the transfer of ownership?
 - What is the total price?

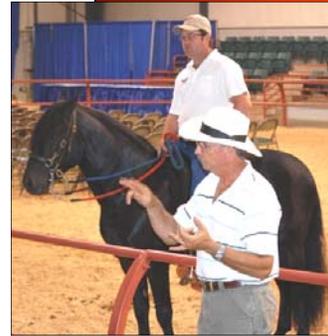


- Is there a commission? The commission should be formally disclosed and made explicit as to who is paying how much and to whom.
- Specify the seller's assessment of the horse's level of training and the skill of the rider needed.



AFTER THE SALE...

1. Know the return policy that should have been spelled out in the sales contract. Was there a trial period?
2. Consider purchasing medical and/or mortality insurance on the horse. Insure the horse during the trial period and definitely before transporting it off the owner's farm.
3. Ask if you can call the owner or agent after the sale to help work through anything that arises after the sale. Introduce the new horse to your herd slowly. Put the new horse in a stall or paddock next to the other horses where they can get to know each other over a good fence.
4. Many trainers and PFHA regions offer clinics. Attend as many as you can. They are an inexpensive way to improve your knowledge and network with fellow Paso Fino enthusiasts.
5. Horses may need a tune-up if they haven't been ridden regularly. Don't be afraid to ask for help from trained professionals.



REGISTERING YOUR NEW HORSE...

Chapter 8 of the PFHA Rule Book describes the registration process and the responsibilities of the parties. To transfer the recorded ownership of a registered horse, PFHA must receive the following.

1. The horse's original registration certificate with the seller's signature on the back. Ensure the registration certificate accurately depicts the horse. Has the horse changed colors? Has the horse been gelded?
2. The buyer's name, address and PFHA membership number. If this is your first Paso Fino horse you may be eligible to receive your first year of PFHA membership free. The membership forms can be downloaded from <http://www.pfha.org/>
3. The date of the transfer is the postmark date. Please send in transfers promptly.
4. Payment of the transfer fee to PFHA. Know if the buyer or seller will pay this.



BEGIN SHOWING...

1. Find a Paso Fino trainer that can help you show your horse to the best of its ability and yours. They will know the requirements of the classes you will enter.
2. Join a PFHA region. The list of the regions is on the PFHA website. The support of the members of the region is great.



3. Most regions have two or three regional shows where you qualify your horse to compete at the PFHA National Show in the fall. You must accumulate 20 points in a specific class to qualify to compete at Nationals in that class. You and your horse can qualify for multiple classes.
4. Read the PFHA Amateur Owners Guide to Showing.
5. Ensure the tack meets PFHA rules.
6. Ensure your attire meets PFHA rules for the class you are entering.



FRIENDS THAT CAN HELP..The Amateur Owner Committee members are here to help. If at any time you need to talk to one of us, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Other Web Sites of Interest...

- Professional Paso Fino Trainers Association <http://www.ppf-trainers.org/>
- There are 24 regions within the PFHA. Many have their own websites. A complete list of regional websites is provided on the PFHA website <http://www.pfha.org/>



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