



History of the development of the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society Breed Standard

Below you will find the Gypsy Vanner horse Breed Standard that Dennis and Cindy Thompson originally developed when the Registry was founded. This standard appeared on the first GVHS website, and still currently appears on Dennis Thompson's website.

1. Short back in proportion to overall body.
2. Broad chest.
3. Heavy, well-rounded hips.
4. Heavy, flat bone (flat at the knee) with ample hooves.
5. Hair: Feather beginning at the knees in front and at or near the hocks in the rear that extends over the front of the hooves, ample to abundant mane and tail. Ideal hair is straight and silky.
6. A sweet head with a strong neck in harmony with the horse's overall look; A sweet head is more refined than a Shire.
7. Disposition: The horse should exhibit traits of intelligence, kindness and docility.

"A Golden Retriever with Hooves™"- Dennis Thompson

When the GVHS was incorporated as a non-profit (2004), an expanded version of the original standard was requested by membership because they felt the original was too vague for breeders. This was developed by a group of members which included GVHS founder, Dennis Thompson.

Gypsy Vanner Horse Breed Standards Stallions/Mares/Geldings

1. **Color:** The Gypsy Vanner Horse is not a color breed, it is a body type. Therefore, all colors, markings and patterns are acceptable. In honor of the British Gypsy heritage of the breed, the following names will be used to describe a Gypsy Vanner horse's color.
 - A. Piebald: Black & White
 - B. Skewbald: Red & White, Brown & White, Tri-Color
 - C. Odd Colored: Any other color
 - D. Blagdon Solid color with white splashed up from underneath
2. **Height:** No height limits, all sizes have the same standards, all equally acceptable.
3. **Body:** The Vanner has the look of a small to average size horse with a draft horse type body.
 - A. Back: Short coupled and in proportion to overall body.
 - B. Withers: Well rounded, not high and fine.
 - C. Chest: A deep, broad chest with well-sprung ribs.
 - D. Shoulder: Sloping shoulder with well-developed muscle.



- E. Hindquarters: Heavy, powerful hips with a well-muscled rounded croup, tail not set too low. Slab-sided or severely sloping hindquarters are considered a fault.
 - F. Neck: Strong and of ample length. Stallions must display a bold look with a rainbow (well arched) crest.
4. **Legs:** Clean, heavy to medium heavy bone set on medium to large hoof.
- A. Front: Set square, muscular with broad flat well-developed knees.
 - B. Rear: Hocks that are broad and clean. A Vanner will have the modified closer hock set of a pulling horse, but not as close as the modern draft horse. Set back or sickle hocks are a fault.
 - C. Hoof: Large round hoof, open at the heels with well-developed frogs. Small contracted hooves are considered a fault.
 - D. Leg movement: Clean, straight, and true, with energy and a distinctive and effortless trot.
5. **Hair:** Ideal hair is straight and silky, with some wave, curl and body being acceptable. Kinky hair is a fault.
- A. Abundant feathering should begin at the back of the knees on the front legs and at or near the hocks on the rear, extending over the front of the hooves.
 - B. Mane, forelock and tail should be ample to profusely abundant, double manes are common but not required.
6. **Head:** A sweet head is a more refined head than a typical shire might have, set on a strong neck in harmony with the horses overall look.
- A. Throat and jaw: Clean throat latch and jaw.
 - B. Nose: Flat and tapered. A slightly roman nose is acceptable if it goes with the horse's overall look. A heavy roman nose is not acceptable.
 - C. Eyes: Any color, wide set, bright, alert and kind.
 - D. Ears: In proportion to the head, not too large.
7. **Nature:** A Vanner should be alert and willing with traits of intelligence, kindness and docility. *A Golden Retriever with Hooves™*

In 2009, show opportunities were increasing and the GVHS started getting feedback from judges that they needed a more extensive breed standard in order to do their job. Additionally, the GVHS Evaluation program required the development of more explicit language for each area.

To meet the professional demands of a growing organization, judges and breeders, the current Breed Standard was completed in 2010 by a committee of members with the professional input of Wayne Hipsley.

It is important to note that all three versions of the Breed Standard are intended to be descriptions of the same breed/ horse.