



Gypsy Vanner Buyer's Guide

by Barbara Snyder

***You are finally going to purchase a Gypsy Vanner!
Congratulations! There are many things to consider
when purchasing a horse.***

Be Realistic About Your Abilities.

Be honest about why you are buying a horse and what your expectations are. Who wouldn't love to own that big moving stallion, or that amazing gelding you saw in the show ring, and what about that mare heavy in foal? Don't make a hasty choice; think reasonably about what you want to do with the horse you purchase and be honest with yourself. Do you really want to deal with the special skills and facility required for a stallion? Do you really need that top show gelding, or would a wonderful quiet trail horse better suit your needs? It sounds fun to raise a foal, but do you have the facility, the time and the money it takes to care for the mare and foal before and after the birth? It is a long time investment to raise and train a foal to adulthood.

Take the Quality of the Horse Seriously.

Ask if it has a score sheet you can review from a GVHS Evaluation. Not everyone has an "eye" for conformation, and it is nothing to be ashamed of if you do not.

Have someone you trust that has the expertise look at photos of the horse, or have them go take a look at it with you. If a visit in person is simply not possible, ask for video footage showing the horse moving at all three gaits. Photos can be deceiving. The seller may select photos taken at angles that mask conformation concerns. Unless you are planning to breed the horse, minor conformation flaws are not an issue. All horses have them. You do need to know about any that might affect the long term health or performance of the animal. If buying a mature horse, this is also the time to verify that the size of the horse suits your needs. If buying a young horse and the mature height is important to you, ask to see the sire and dam directly if they are on site.

Temperament is Important.

One of the most attractive attributes of the Gypsy Vanner horse is its temperament. Be aware that even in this breed, known for its quiet temperament, there are different degrees of that temperament

and what seems quiet and willing to one person, may not be manageable for another. The reverse also applies; a super quiet horse may seem too slow or too quiet for someone else, but perfect for you. This personality of the horse and the way it responds goes back to the question of what you want to do with your horse. One of the most important reasons you should go see the horse in person before purchasing is to get an assessment of the temperament of the horse and to see if it "clicks" with your personality.

Take the Horse for a Test Drive.

You would not buy a used car without taking it out for a test drive. If you are buying a trained horse to ride or drive, take a ride on it, or have the owner prepared to hitch it up to a cart if selling as a driving horse. Observe the horse being saddled and bridled, or hitched to the cart. Observe or take the horse through the gaits that the seller has advertised it has been trained for. If it is a young horse take it out for a walk on the lead, this will tell you a lot about its manners. Once again, be reasonable in your expectations and your ability. Decide if it is what you want, and what you can reasonably manage. Too many people buy a horse thinking they can improve their skills or those of the horse and it results in frustration. It may be more satisfying if you purchase a horse that is manageable with your current skillset. Training the horse and yourself is a big challenge and time consuming. Will you have that time, or do you want to purchase a horse already trained for your needs?

Arrange a Veterinarian Exam.

Once you have found a horse that you believe is suitable for your needs, schedule a veterinarian exam. It is a good idea to discuss with the seller's vet the history of care and any health issues the horse may have had. If possible, have another independent vet do the pre-purchase exam for you. You as the buyer will be responsible to pay for the exam, but it is well worth the cost in the long run. On a very young horse the exam may just consist of checking the heart, lungs, eyes and overall general health of the horse. A veterinarian is also a good source of opinion on the horse's temperament and overall willingness to cooperate. If you did not have the opportunity to see the horse in person and height of the horse is important to you, be sure to have the vet measure to verify. If purchasing an older horse you will want to have a lameness exam completed and it is a good idea to include basic x-rays of the knees and hocks. If this is to be a breeding animal you will need to have breeding soundness work done which can range from simply observing size and presence of testicles on a young colt to a full blown collection and semen evaluation on a mature stallion. If buying a broodmare, verify whether she is currently in foal. If not, why not? It is the Buyer's responsibility to get a vet exam done. If you choose not to do so, don't blame the Seller later. Most people selling a horse will be honest about any problems they are aware of, but ultimately it is the Buyer's responsibility before the sale is finalized. If purchasing a performance prospect or an older horse you may want to have a lameness exam

Color.

Everyone wants a pretty horse. Do not base any horse buying decision on the color of the horse.

Paperwork, OH NO!

You have now decided on a horse you would like to purchase. You have considered both your and the horse's abilities. You have completed the vet exam and the horse checks out. Now is the time for the dreaded paperwork.

It is surprising how many people pay thousands of dollars for a horse and then have very little to no paperwork with the transaction. After the fact they wonder if the horse is registered, and how do they go about getting it registered or transferred.

Following are some issues you need to consider before you finalize the deal.

Draw up a Purchase Contract.

It should include:

Name & Registration # of the Horse: Be sure to ask to see the original registration certificate. Make sure it describes, and the photos match, the horse you are buying.

Name of Seller:

Be sure the owner listed on the certificate is the same person you are buying from. If the horse has changed hands without being transferred you may have a problem getting the ownership transferred to you. If something seems not right, contact the Registry to verify (gvhs@vanners.org, 888.520.9777x1).

Name of Buyer

Total purchase price:

The safest and least complicated is for the price to be paid in money. Sometimes people do trade horses for other horses, or machinery, or other things. Be sure the details are clear. Sometimes you see a request that part of the purchase price be based on retained breedings, or future foals. This can be very risky because there is no guarantee that a horse can reproduce in the future, or that the same person will still own the horse. Things change over time in a person's life. Good intentions do not always pan out in the long term.





Terms of payment:

Both parties should be cautious about long term payments. If the Seller is accepting long term payments make sure every detail is spelled out in the contract, including exactly what happens if a payment is late or if the Buyer defaults.

Insurance:

The Buyer may want to obtain insurance to protect their investment. If the terms are on payments, or other special deals involved then insurance should be seriously considered. Include terms in the contract stipulating who pays the premium and how it would be paid out and to whom if collected.

Transport of the horse:

State in writing who is responsible for the transport and how long they have until the horse must be moved. Include detail of what happens if the horse is left longer. Typically this would be addressed with a per diem payment to the Buyer for room and board.

Registration and transfer of ownership:

The contract should state that the Seller will provide all information and documentation required to register and/or transfer the horse. It should say which party is responsible to pay the fees. The reasons why the sale or purchase of an unregistered horse is discouraged will be outlined later in this article.

Guarantees:

Most Sellers do not provide guarantees. This is where the contract states that the Buyer has the responsibility to do a vet exam. Some Sellers will provide for a buy back or require a right of first refusal. These should be explained in detail in the contract.

Signatures.

It is very important that all parties actually sign the contract

Document Payments with a Bill of Sale.

Get a receipt for each and every payment made. After payment is made in full for the horse, be sure to request a bill of sale signed by the Seller stating that you have paid in full.

Purchase a Registered Horse.

The purchase or sale of an unregistered horse is discouraged. A registration certificate can reveal much about a horse beyond just its name and numbers. A registration certificate will show you the pedigree and will indicate if the other horses in the pedigree have been proven by DNA testing, or if they are just hearsay. It will also show you a history of ownership of the horse. If you sell a horse that has not been registered and state a pedigree, you may be liable later if the pedigree is not as you claimed. A breeder will want to be sure their prefix is on each foal they produce. It is an asset to

have every foal produced recorded in one database to track them as time goes by. You can follow your foals to see how they mature in order to help in developing your breeding program. Offering only registered horses for sale is the sign of a professional breeder who takes their breeding program seriously. As a Buyer you are taking a risk that the horse with unknown history is what you really think you are getting. You are also taking a risk because the horse may or may not be registerable for any number of reasons. Do not hesitate to ask the Seller to get the horse registered as a contingency of the sale.

Transfer your horse. Now you have your new horse! Do not waste any time getting the ownership transferred. Send the ORIGINAL Registration Certificate, the signed Ownership Transfer form you received from the seller and the transfer fee to the GVHS. When the certificate is returned to you, keep it in a safe place the same as you do your other important documents.

Congratulations! You are now the proud owner of a wonderful Gypsy Vanner Horse.