

Morgan Horse



Assoc. of Australia

ANMS 2020 – Photo Show Results PUREBRED DIVISION

P1 Best Presented Pure Morgan – any age (7)

1. 42 Glentruin Tristan (NZ) (Karenza Apollo / Okan Missed Easter)
2. 79 Tui's Moana (Tuatahi Song / Myross Morgans Hine)
3. 54 Ballamara Royal Command (Watching Royalty / Red Bluff Talia)
4. 49 Red Bluff Evoke (Justin Morning Glory / Mt Tawonga Evonne)

P2 Pure Morgan Gelding Foal/Weanling/Yearling (4)

1. 35 Challa Station Spinifex (Mountain Crk Cartier / Greenstone Dandaloo)
2. 54 Ballamara Royal Command (Watching Royalty / Red Bluff Talia)
3. 48 Red Bluff Excalibur (Justin Morning Glory / Mt Tawonga Evonne)
4. 46 Wildu Nightwing (Mt Tawonga King / Island Honour)

P3 Pure Morgan Gelding 2-3 Years Old (2)

1. 49 Red Bluff Evoke (Justin Morning Glory / Mt Tawonga Evonne)
2. 51 Crystanby Soldanser (Crystanby Aqarian / Black Ruby of Belvue)

P4 Pure Morgan Gelding 4-5 Years Old (2)

1. 69 Morgan Dream Prince Romeo (MEMC Crown Royal / Myross Morgans Candy)
2. 24 Weemala Bookmaker (Briarlane Ebony Fortune / Equinox Tabitha)

P5 Pure Morgan Gelding 6-15 Years Old (6)

1. 20 Fernleigh Creek Antares (Mt Tawonga King / Myross Morgans Hine)
2. 42 Glentruin Tristan (NZ) (Karenza Apollo / Okan Missed Easter)

3. 33 Mountain Crk Qwaid (Mt Tawonga Howqua / Mt Tawonga Keep)
4. 15 Belvue Phoenix (Mt Tawonga King / Tui's Moana)

P6 Pure Morgan Gelding 16 years and over (2)

1. 63 Beau's Western Edition (Sumicaro Beau Geste / Mt Tawonga Tisha)
2. 55 Mt Tawonga Campbell (Marvelous Encore / Mt Tawonga Christa)

PURE MORGAN GELDING (EXCLUDE CLASS P2)

CHAMPION: 20 Fernleigh Creek Antares



RESERVE: 69 Morgan Dream Prince Romeo



COMMENTS ON PUREBRED MORGAN GELDING – CHAMPION AND RESERVE

Our purebred champion and reserve Morgan geldings are both good, structurally sound and handsome horses who are good ambassadors for the Morgan breed. They are a pleasure to look at, and give the impression of being a pleasure to ride or drive, whether at home or brought before the public.

Champion Gelding 20 is one of the two most outstanding horses in the field presented at this show and is to be commended for his low hocks and knees, long thighs, long forearms, and superbly shaped and attached neck. He presents a very strong coupling and a lovely head of classic Morgan shape. His owner is additionally to be commended for an outstanding job of conditioning and evidently very knowledgeable riding, as proven by the harmonious and correct muscular development of every part of this horse's body.

Reserve Champion Gelding 69 is a horse meant for a lighter rider. Here the coupling is set back somewhat with the telltale peak falling behind a line connecting the points of hip. However, the back and coupling are broad enough. Likewise, he does not present as long and powerful a pelvis as the Champion but has excellent hocks and knees with the additional asset of higher withers, a rarity among purebred Morgans. The overall balance is beautiful and I expect this horse is a lovely and lively ride under English tack.

Comments from the class:

1st: Entry no. 20. This is truly an outstanding entry, not only structurally correct throughout but redolent of classic Morgan type. Nobody could possibly mistake this horse for anything but a Morgan. He is especially to be commended for the beautifully made, exceptionally strong coupling and for the long, shapely pelvis with deep thigh and excellent muscular development. The shoulder is very good and the neck-to-shoulder/body attachment perfect. No question it would be a pleasure to either ride or drive this horse.

1st: Entry no. 69. Here's a gelding that likes to put on a show! He's not overly strong through the pelvis and haunch but makes up for it with good overall body balance and smooth integration of parts. I like the topline and commend the withers development. Praise also is due for substantial, well-constructed hocks and knees, short muscular gaskins, and long forearms. The long, "scooped" facial profile is not my favorite but is largely made up for by good breadth between the eyes, producing an overall wedge-shaped head.

P7 Pure Morgan Filly Foal/Weanling/Yearling (4)

1. 74 Leambro Reminisce (Leambro Gladiator / Haymeron Park Tiffany Anco)
2. 36 Challa Station Tarantella (Mountain Crk Cartier / Mt Tawonga Belinda)
3. 34 Wildu Ceridwen (Crystanby Aqarian / Blue Gum Bonneville)
4. 75 Leambro Lucille (Baptiste Levis Strauss / Haymeron Park Ruby Jane)

P8 Pure Morgan Filly 2--3YearsOld (4)

1. 19 Wildu Niamh (MEMC Tequila Cuervo / Fernleigh Creek Madralena)
2. 12 Watching Moonshadows (Mt Tawonga King / Mt Tawonga Sophia)
3. 45 Fernleigh Creek Ashadear (Crystanby Aqarian / Fernleigh Creek Deuce)
4. 81 Wildu Maialen (Mt Tawonga King / Fernleigh Creek Nena)

P9 Pure Morgan Mare 4-5 Years Old (3)

1. 41 Clover County Macey Grace (Mt Tawonga King / Gumbooya Mireya)
2. 13 Black Ruby of Belvue (Mt Tawonga King / Mt Tawonga Sophia)
3. 16 Island Honour (Karenza Astra / Mt Tawonga Tanjil)

P10 Pure Morgan Mare 6-15 Years Old (8)

1. 14 Fernleigh Creek Madralena (Mt Tawonga King / Fernleigh Creek Nena)
2. 52 Fernleigh Creek Orla (Mt Tawonga King / Myross Morgans Hine)
3. 70, 40, 61 (three-way tie)
Wilga Park Liana, (RanchBoss Cortez / Haymeron Park Ruby Jane)
Challa Station Captivate, (Koolaroo Klasique Ebony / Mt Tawonga Belinda)
Mt Tawonga Tranquil (Mt Tawonga Tarraji / Mt Tawonga Linda)
4. 21 Blue Gum Bonneville (Victory's Traveling Man / Eagleview Benita)

P11 Pure Morgan Mare 16 Years & Over (5)

1. 79 Tui's Moana (Tuatahi Song / Myross Morgans Hine)
2. 32 Eagleview Benita (Marveous Encore / Mt Tawonga Bea)
3. 67 Myross Morgans Candy (Chalk Mtn Nimble Sprite / Mt Tawonga Miss Suzy)
4. 10 Mt Tawonga Belinda (Mt Tawonga Tarraji / Mt Tawonga Linda)

PURE MORGAN MARE (EXCLUDE CLASS P7)

CHAMPION: 14 Fernleigh Creek Madralena



RESERVE: 52 Fernleigh Creek Orla



Comments from the class:

1st: Entry no. 14. Commendations for exceptional depth of chest, excellent shoulder, substantial hind limbs with broad hocks, shapely head with desired low placement of eye with good bone structure supporting orbit. She is also helped by breadth of hock, and wins the class finally on the basis of classic Morgan “type”. Warning to owners that this mare is overly fat; Morgans as a breed are highly prone to metabolic disease and I would hate to see her suffer for the mere sake of the old halter-class adage that says “fat covers a multitude of sins”. Rest assured, I would still be able to “see” her, and she would be equally likely to win, if she were 100 lbs. lighter.

2nd: Entry no. 52. Commendations for exceptionally strong, well placed, and shapely coupling and beautiful, long pelvis with visible ischium. She stands second to no. 14 on the basis of “type”; this mare exemplifies the rangier UVM-type suitable for cavalry officer’s mount. Note to owners: please clean camera lens next time before photography.

COMMENTS UPON PUREBRED MORGAN MARE – CHAMPION AND RESERVE

As in the case with the male horses, in championship classes I am valuing type; the animal must look like a Morgan and not an American Saddlebred, Thoroughbred, pony, or crossbred. In the case of mares, which tend in the horse species as a whole to be long-waisted, I look for a certain compactness of body and depth from loin to groin, and value the forward placement of the coupling and its smooth construction, breadth, and strength.

Our Champion Mare no. 14 presents all of these assets plus an adequate set of legs, beautiful shoulder, and well-attached and shapely neck. Her head is of the classic Morgan type, wedge-shaped with orbits placed low and an undulating facial profile. The only aspect of this entry which I fault is the photographic technique: despite the unfortunate American practice, NO horse ever looks better when “ears up” is achieved by startling the animal or spooking it back. Let Australians set a proper world standard by eschewing the suddenly opened umbrella and the can of rocks. Next time, use carrots or a bouquet of rich lucerne to pique the horse’s interest!

Our Reserve Champion Mare no. 52 represents that type of Morgan which was once most valued as a cavalry officer’s mount. The conformation, though still redolent of Morgan type, is rangier than the classic “Justin Morgan” model and the animal stands a bit higher on its legs. Despite that, this mare presents excellent “bone” substance and great hock and knee joints. Her coupling is flawless and her back high and strong. Her shoulder is a little more upright than that of the champion but still long and beautiful – of the “slashing” type which comes to the Morgan through its Thoroughbred ancestry and which always implies free and scopey movement. This mare would carry a cavalry-type or police-type breastplate to great effect. I also love the long pelvis with prominent ischium, structure that ensures speed and power. She has higher stifles (shorter thighs) and is just a little lighter through the britches and gaskins than is our Champion.

A note to the owner of Mare 52: Please consider adjusting the Weymouth, or any bit you may use, so that it lies a little lower in the horse’s mouth. The horse’s lips should not be stretched into any degree of grin, and zero wrinkles at the corners is the ideal. The bit should lie only just high enough to prevent the horse getting its tongue over it. When the bit lies at the proper height, you will find that suddenly the curb chain also “seats” in the chin groove much better and more comfortably and stops rubbing up and down. Unless this mare is a flat-out runaway (which I doubt), please consider shorter shanks also: the less bit the more you allow the horse to show you what it can do, and the more you show off the legendary good-mindedness of the Morgan horse.

Comments from the class:

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P12 Pure Morgan Entire Weanling/Yearling (2)

1. 58 Rosebrook Park Go Figure (Lord of Belvue / Crossmatch Unique Edition)
2. 18 Wildu Leroy Brown (Fernleigh Creek Leander / Fernleigh Creek Nena)

P13 Pure Morgan Entire 2-3Years Old (2)

1. 17 Quietude Cezanne (Cimarron of Quietude / Quietude Wild Tansy)
2. 31 Mountain Crk Cartier (MEMC Tequila Cuervo / Mountain Crk Helena)

P15 Pure Morgan Entire 6-15 Years Old (2)

1. 50 Crystanby Aqarian (MEMC Tequila Cuervo / Tui's Moana)
2. 56 Lord of Belvue (Mt Tawonga King / Tui's Moana)

PURE MORGAN STALLION (EXCLUDE CLASS P12)

CHAMPION: 17 Quietude Cezanne



RESERVE: 50 Crystanby Aqarian



COMMENTS UPON PUREBRED MORGAN STALLION – CHAMPION AND RESERVE

As with the Purebred Mare championship class in this show, the Champion and Reserve Stallion represent different “styles” of Morgan horse. Our Champion displays Morgan type primarily through head shape and expression and the deep, laid-back shoulder which is so characteristic of this breed. But we need to remember that this is also a male breeding animal who can potentially get hundreds of foals. Whenever judging stallions I therefore especially look for features which are needed as correctives in the breed as a whole. Champion no. 17 presents outstanding “bone” substance and well-constructed, broad hocks and knees – the Morgan breed could certainly use more stallions with legs to match these!

Champion no. 17 also stands over more ground than Reserve Champion no. 50, has a deeper thigh

and an absolutely spectacular, long and laid-back shoulder. Champion is not yet three years old and thus is still three years from full skeletal, dental, and sexual maturity, but I predict a long and useful career for this animal who is a real asset to Australian Morgan horse breeding, both pure and partbred.

Reserve Champion no. 50 presents good “bone” substance, broad hocks and knees, and a very well-shaped neck; overall however he is a less substantial animal. I appreciate his smooth coupling and short back, but the stifles are higher and because of this the thigh less deep than Champion. Reserve is shallower from loin to groin and the shoulder more upright than in Champion.

Comments from the class:

1st: Entry no. 17. A very strong colt whom I have made Supreme Champion of this show. Here we have an outstanding shoulder and arm combined with good back and topline structure and a rock-solid underpinning with excellent bone substance, width of hock and knee – assets I would like to see spread far and wide among the modern Morgan breed. Neck shape is OK in this horse although there is a break in contour at the junction of the axis or 2nd vertebra and the lower part of the neck. Generally speaking this is an acquired deformation created by riders who pull, by the over-use of shanked bits, or (especially) by the use of a training fork/running martingale. Since no horse of any breed is skeletally mature until six years old, and since the last part of the skeleton to mature is the vertebral column of the neck, I would like to see this horse again in a few years to assess neck length which will probably have increased by the time he reaches skeletal, dental and sexual maturity at the age of six years.

1st: Entry no. 50. A very good stallion commended for exceptionally good limb structure with broad and correctly-constructed knees and hocks, ankle joints of appropriate size, and good, open, well-shaped feet. These are assets much needed in the Morgan breed today. I also like this stallion’s overall body balance, short back, good withers, and strong, smooth coupling. The neck is lovely. The head is also excellent with good bone structure supporting the orbits. His faults lie in standing a little high on his legs (does not stand over enough ground) and lacking somewhat in depth of chest (tubular body).

SUPREME PURE MORGAN (From Champion Gelding, Champion Mare and Champion Stallion)

17 Quietude Cezanne



Comment on Supreme:

Most important factors in placement: Long pelvis with visible ischium; excellent bone; outstanding shoulder. Good neck length and attachment and superior withers structure (withers will get still higher and more sharply defined as this colt comes to full maturity).

It is to be noted that the Supreme horse stands at the top of some very strong competition. Entries 20 [Fernleigh Creek Antares], 63 [Beau's Western Edition], 14 [Fernleigh Creek Madralena], and 50 [Crystanby Aqarian] are also very well structured and 63 and 14 are classically "typey". Lower placing 52 [Fernleigh Creek Orla] and 63 [Beau's Western Edition] are also good, strong, useful animals.



PURE MORGAN Foal/Weanling/Yearling (INCLUDE CLASS P2, P7, P12)

CHAMPION: 58 Rosebrook Park Go Figure



RESERVE: 35 Challa Station Spinifex



COMMENTS UPON PUREBRED JUVENILE (Foal, Weanling, Yearling)

Entry no. 58 is a real pleasure to look at, from the very attractive head right down to big, well-formed knees and hocks. The shoulder/withers construction is superior. In judging juveniles, one is called upon to let experience predict what the animal is going to look like when mature. Champion no. 58 gives great promise of maturing into a breedworthy stallion, or at the very least, will make a handsome and athletic gelding.

Entries no. 35 and 74 are very similar through the forehead, so the Reserve Championship was won on the basis of Entry no. 35's shorter back, stronger and better-placed coupling, and an especially well-shaped pelvis and haunch.

Comments from the class

1st: Entry no. 58. This is an all-around excellent colt and potential stallion prospect.

Commendations for excellent hock breadth and substance and a very good set of knees. The pelvic structure is good and the gaskins already muscular. I predict that this colt will ultimately develop a very shapely set of withers. Can't help but be pleased by the shapely head and perky, curious expression.

1st: Entry no. 35. Commendations for exceptionally smooth, well-integrated bodyparts producing the impression of harmony; broad, correctly constructed hocks; and for the long if somewhat upright shoulder constructed upon a proportionally deep chest. I predict this foal will grow into a very nice riding horse.

Get of Sire and Produce of Dam

P17 Pure Morgan Get Of Sire (3)

1. 102 (Comprised of 19, 31, 50) MEMC Tequila Cuervo
2. 100 (Comprised of 12, 20, 46) Mt Tawonga King
3. 101 (Comprised of 34, 45, 51) Crystanby Aqarian

P18 Pure Morgan Produce Of Dam (7)

1. 110 (Comprised of 20, 44) Myross Morgans Hine
2. 112 (Comprised of 12, 13) Mt Tawonga Sophia
3. 114 (Comprised of 15, 50) Tui's Moana
4. 113 (Comprised of 14, 18) Fernleigh Creek Nena

GENERAL COMMENTS UPON PUREBRED GET OF SIRE & PRODUCE OF DAM CLASSES

Get of sire and Produce of dam classes are to be judged not only upon the quality of the horses but also – since the parent horse is ultimately the one being evaluated – upon the uniformity of structure and type which its group of offspring present. Originally in the 19th century these classes were held primarily so that potential buyers could be assured that they would get the kind of foal they were expecting to get when bringing their mare to a potential sire.

As a group, Entry no. 102 scores highest for uniformity of type – these horses are essentially carbon copies of each other, giving good indication that no matter what purebred mare may be brought to him, the sire will “stamp” his get. The quality is high in this group also, featuring animals with strong couplings, large and shapely hindquarters, and pretty, well-carried necks. The underpinning is good also, with every horse standing on stout canons and broad, correctly constructed knees, hocks, and ankles.

A comment to the owner of Entry no. 19: Raindrops on the camera lens! From what we hear in the news up here in the ‘States, one would think it never rained in Australia! Next time please see to it that the lens is clean before you start your photo session.

Let me tell you, folks, differentiating between first and second place in this [Produce of Dam] class was one of the toughest choices that I had to make. Horse no. 13, part of 2nd place Entry no. 112, pleases in a number of important ways, not least the spectacularly strong coupling, probably the best of any seen in this show – no problem with this horse going through many long working days bearing the maximum weight of 250 lbs. (rider plus tack), for it is breadth and strength of coupling that make a horse a good weight-carrier, not its height or overall size. Even a horse's legs and feet are less important for purposes of weight-bearing than the conformation of its coupling and back – although I have to mention that Entry 13 has only just enough limb substance and could use more “bone”. I like 13's half-sister, Entry no. 12, for her clean lines -- but note that nos. 12 and 13 could

not be more different in “style” of build, and this is a detriment in a Produce of Dam class where uniformity counts.

First-place Entry no. 110 contains horse no. 20, the gelding that I have made Champion Purebred. He is an extremely handsome, typey, and structurally correct individual who has been expertly ridden, conditioned, and presented. Out of the same dam, however, came no. 44, whom I assume to be a half-brother. Structurally (and you really have to look beneath the skin to perceive this) 44 and 20 are very similar, presenting similar skeletal proportions.

GENERAL COMMENTS UPON CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSES

First and foremost, in championship purebred classes the winner must present Morgan type. Winners should be handsome animals that could be mistaken for no other breed.

Of course, no matter how “typey” an individual might be, I would not place a horse who was not also structurally correct, because “type” is neither an elusive nor a subjective quality, but rather is founded upon the proportions of the underlying skeletal structure. Nor is “type” a mere matter of the shape of a horse’s head, the carriage of its tail, or the silhouette outline of its body, but an impression conveyed by the whole animal, which must present both a structural and a functional unity. Therefore, I also value horses with smoothly-fitted bodyparts and structurally strong and substantial build in which the integrated whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This is what is meant by “harmony” in the study of conformation.

In evaluating these animals per their wins in the qualifying classes, I place great emphasis on the strength and placement of the loin coupling (see recommended printed materials if you’re not clear what the “loin coupling” is). I also highly value a level or slightly uphill overall body balance. These two features are major determinants of the ease with which the horse will bridle and collect – and thus also of the quality of the ride (or drive).

I am generally concerned with the historical tendency toward loss of substance in hocks and forelimbs in the Morgan breed. I also put a premium on the correctness of the anatomical construction of all joints, particularly insofar as the modern population of purebred Morgans is plagued with offset knees, misaligned carpal joints, narrow hocks, and insufficient or barely sufficient “bone” substance.

GENERAL NOTES ON PRESENTATION RELEVANT TO SEVERAL ENTRIES

Note to owners: Australians, please do not adopt the silly American practice of “stretching” the horse for presentation. “Stretching” first began to be seen in advertising photography for Saddlebreds and Tennessee Walkers during the late 1920’s; it did not begin to infect Morgan practices to any great degree until the 1960’s. Because it flattens the angle of pelvis and croup, “stretching” is a way to disguise a steep croup/pelvis, and can also serve to disguise hind limbs that have either too much or too little angulation at stifle and hock. Stretching also lowers the whole rear end of the horse relative to the forequarter, giving the false impression that the horse “runs uphill”. For those with the tail-carriage fetish, stretching also forces the root of the dock into a higher position. However, although “stretching” may fool a naïve buyer, it can’t fool a knowledgeable judge. To these owners also, I repeat that I had to rotate the photo as submitted about 1.3 degrees to bring vertical background elements (and thus also the horse) to plumb.

Unless photos of horses are evaluated “plumb”, any idea about the horse’s real overall body balance will be invalid to the degree that the photo was rotated/tilted. Please, once again, let the Morgan horse speak for itself and eschew shady American practices.

I think it would be within the rules of this contest to allow you to adjust photo exposure before submitting, either with the camera itself or afterward in Photoshop. Notice the great amount of “fisheye” distortion [a phone] camera imposes – measured by how much naturally vertical background elements to the left and right of the photo appear to lean away from the horse. Please consider using a proper camera (not a cell phone)

Note to owners: [several] photos needed to be rotated to bring the image to level – please Australians, do not adopt the silly American practice of rotating (tilting) photographs of Morgan horses so that (to naïve viewers) the animal appears to have a more “uphill” body balance than it actually possesses. This practice does nothing but serve to disinform and mis-educate not only potential buyers, but the industry itself so that ultimately those who try this deception wind up fooling (and hurting) nobody but themselves. The practice is to the ultimate detriment of the Morgan horse. Let us permit the Morgan horse to speak for itself, and let us endeavor to breed excellent conformation rather than try to create any illusion of it. All competitors in this photo show are encouraged to take and present photos so that elements in the background which would normally be vertical – that is, fenceposts, Eucalyptus trunks, walls of barns or houses – are dead vertical. The horse’s forelimbs should also be plumb vertical.

Note to owners: Permitting or encouraging the horse to lean forward, so that the forelimbs are not vertical, causes the scapula to rotate into a more vertical/steeper orientation (which obviously does not flatter the horse). Differentiate between getting the animal to stretch its neck forward vs. permitting it to lean its whole body forward.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR MORGAN BREEDERS

I am totally excited about the prospects for the Morgan breed in Australia, despite the fact that it remains relatively rare in your country. From my many visits “down under”, I observe that so many people who want to go horseback riding seem to rely on clunky Clydesdales of average or even poor quality, in the belief that this would be the only way they can obtain a goodminded horse with an even temperament. Not so! As we who know the Morgan horse are only too aware – if you want intelligence combined with sweet temperament, there is no finer choice.

I am further pleased and honored to be your judge of the hour, because I am a fan of the OLD FASHIONED kinds of Morgan horses, and these are much more likely to be found outside of America, i.e. in Canada, Australia, and Brazil. Take a look at the recommended reading list which I have provided, for it includes my photo essays on the history of the Morgan which have been printed as a series in the very prestigious and well-edited EQUUS Magazine. Directions are given for how to obtain copies of these articles for those who have not seen them. In a nutshell, what I’m looking for in a Morgan horse is an animal that looks like Black Hawk (sired by Sherman Morgan). I also value the UVM-style, part Thoroughbred “cavalry officer’s” type of Morgan which is suitable more for cross-country riding than for stylish riding or driving but which is still redolent of Morgan type.

Unfortunately the Morgan breed went through several genetic bottlenecks since the beginning of the 20th century which have made it difficult now to get a purebred with a really sufficient set of legs. The breed is plagued with offset and badly-structured knees, and this is an area where the

partbred horse can really improve upon its Morgan parent. The purebred horse can also be an undersized, stuffy sort of pony; I need to see sufficient structure and “stretch” to bring it up to the Black Hawk body type, which is, as they used to say, “plump and pleasing” but also elegant and plenty athletic.

I’m happy to praise the Morgan X American Saddlebred horse to the skies, but I can only praise it as a crossbred. I’d take such a horse home in a minute because I happen to love the old-fashioned, heavier bodied and more substantial ASB which I knew from early on in my career as a horsewoman – and which is now, very unfortunately, almost impossible to find. Crossing ASB with Morgan can restore the fullness of body that the swan-necked, narrow-bodied so-called “extreme” Saddlebreds lack – almost all of whom are descendants of a single ancestor, the stallion Supreme Sultan. At the same time, I have hated to see the purebred Morgan move into what some Americans call “the modern type, like it or leave it.” Well – I don’t like a weedy-bodied, swan-necked and soft-backed horse that needs weights attached to its feet in order to “show” well, because no matter what its papers may say, such is not to my mind an authentic Morgan horse; the original type and concept, which are part of the breed standard are unique and highly valuable, have been lost.

In my experience, certain breeds cross well upon the Morgan, reliably producing handsome, proportionate horses useful for a variety of athletic tasks and forms of work. At the head of this list for Australians should be the Australian Stock Horse – I am speaking of the old type, that has little to no Quarter Horse blood. The ASH began with importations to Australia of horses which settlers imported from – guess where? – New England. In other words, the ASH itself shares ancestry with the Morgan and this almost guarantees a “smooth” cross that will produce very saleable young horses.

Two other breeds which cross well with the Morgan are, as I have already mentioned, the American Saddlebred and the Thoroughbred. TB’s are far more common in Australia than ASB’s, and the ASB’s that can be found in Australia are not always of the best type. However, ASB semen can be obtained and I would certainly consider this – not from America, but from Canada, where the older and more substantial style of ASB continues to persist (thank goodness).

In America, the Arabian is a popular cross with the Morgan to produce the so-called “Morab”. I am not, however, a fan of this cross and cannot recommend it. The horses, for whatever mysterious reason rooted in their genes, tend, alas, to inherit the worst features of both breeds. Some American breeders have the totally wrongheaded, silly and superficial idea that there is something wrong with the shape of the Morgan horse’s head, classically with its undulating facial profile that incorporates a rise or bump over the nose, and their incentive for producing Morabs is to “improve” the Morgan by sticking an Arabian head on the front end of a Morgan-shaped body. Frankly, I am not attracted to this sort of cross at all and I don’t have much respect for crossbreeding when it is carried out for such superficial reasons. There is nothing whatsoever wrong with the handsome, classic Morgan head, “thank you very much.”

Where you see me criticizing an entry’s head, it will be because the animal lacks prominent bone structure supporting the orbits and cheekbones, has a narrow forehead with insufficient breadth between the eyes, has the orbits placed too high in the skull, or has a shallow muzzle or jawbone. Notice too that you will never hear me say, “the horse’s eyes need to be bigger” or praise a horse for having large eyeballs. What we praise instead is the bone structure that supports the eyeballs. Too many misinformed breeders have produced trite parodies of “my little pony” – bug-eyed and

with bulging foreheads -- rather than handsome animals with correctly conformed heads with plenty of breathing room and space for the proper eruption of the teeth.

Another cross that is sometimes tried is Morgan X Quarter Horse, but again, for whatever reason in my experience this rarely works well. What tends to happen in this case is that we wind up with the Quarter Horse swamping out all Morgan type, so that you get produce with huge butts but also the upright shoulder and short arm typical of the Quarter Horse. We do not want to produce horses whose overall body balance runs downhill. It is possible to find Quarter Horses with level body balance – look for these particularly among ranch-bred, roper, and reining-horse bloodlines. A mare from these bloodlines will have a much greater chance of producing an acceptable foal to Morgan cover.

Draft crosses with Morgan can sometimes work, if you want a large horse; the tendency will be for it to be good-bodied, but you'll need to be very careful to look for adequate bone substance and correct construction among the Clydies and Percherons. Some of the best Morgan crosses are produced on pony mares: try Welsh or Connemara. Also, a good adopted Brumby can make a great part-Morgan producer, and for our friends in New Zealand, the origin of your Kaimanuas is, like the Brumbies and the original Australian Stock Horse, similar to the origin of the Morgan itself.

Warmbloods have been all the rage over the past forty years, and they can cross well on the Morgan, especially when the breeder realizes that most so-called "Warmblood" horses would be more correctly termed by the old German usage "halb-blut", because they are in fact 95% or better Thoroughbred. Stay away from the worst-tempered German bloodlines (G-line Hanoverians and Furiosos) – not even a Morgan sire can correct this problem, and why would you bother anyway? Instead look to the Dutch bloodlines, for the Dutch have been far more careful to produce tractable horses with outstandingly excellent structure, particularly with respect to limb substance and hock and knee breadth. Stay away, however, from Friesians; a duller horse you will never find, and many of them are rubber-backed, tubular-bodied, insubstantial animals that stand too high on their legs. Horse feathers are just that: horsefeathers. The silly current fad for very hairy horses, which has sold a lot of Friesians and Gypsy Vanners to foolish Americans, cannot be the basis for any sound or sustainable breeding program.

By contrast I'd like to suggest trial of American Standardbred mares for cover by the Morgan horse. Standardbreds (racing trotters) are cheap to obtain and thousands get retired from the track and go begging for homes. The Standardbred (along with several other kinds of horse already mentioned), shares Morgan ancestry, its mare bloodlines almost all being derived from late 19th-century Morgan sires. They are old-fashioned horses with good withers and substantial and correctly formed limbs, and they are as good-minded a horse as you can find anywhere outside of the Quarter Horse and Morgan. Cover by a Morgan stallion, especially of Standardbred mares selected for longer and more shapely necks, should produce foals that grow into horses resembling the UVM type of Morgan – the kind of horse that will stay sound and provide its owner long years of useful and pleasurable riding.

SUGGESTED READING MATERIAL

There is an old and highly useful literature pertaining to the study of equine conformation. The high period came in the 19th century when literally every societal function from warfare to transportation, agriculture to city deliveries of goods and services, in all countries around the world, required horses. Horse fairs and competitions were once much more highly contested, had many more entries in more diverse categories, and were considered very important for men (not

women) to attend (because it was almost exclusively men who bred, trained, evaluated, and purchased horses). That situation has, of course, reversed completely today so that now women are by far the majority horse breeders, trainers, owners, riders, and buyers.

I recommend three classic works upon which all modern conformation judging is based:

Hays, Matthew Horace, DVM. First ed. 1893, revised in 1904. *Points of the Horse: A Familiar Treatise on Equine Conformation*. Hurst and Blackett, London. 736 p.

Goubaux, Armand C., DVM and Gustav Barrier, DVM. 1892. *De L'Exterieur du Cheval*. Asselin, Paris. Simultaneous London edition in English, entitled *The Exterior of the Horse*. 916 p.

Rau, Gustav. 1935. *Die Beurteilung des Warmblutpferdes*. 62 p. Reprinted in English by Olmes Press, Hildesheim, Germany in 1992.

Any of these can be purchased used and/or in reprinted form. This costs about \$150USD for Hays, about \$100USD for Goubaux and Barrier, and about \$35USD for Rau. All of them should be in every horse breeder's library.

The reason these books are the classic works in the field is that their authors understood and taught the principles of conformation analysis. All of them had an excellent training in equine anatomy and they knew not only the equine skeleton, but understood how the skeleton within relates to the body contours and proportions without. They did NOT teach "judging contests" – as Gustav Rau said, "I am looking not for judges who can pick faults, but rather for horsemen who can pick horses."

In his books, Rau goes out of his way to present horses that have "supposedly" faulty conformation, who nonetheless were champions in Germany and Europe. He can do this because many of the traditionally-recognized faults are actually not faults at all. On the other hand, there are some aspects of conformation which are usually either misunderstood or else totally overlooked that are highly important determinants of the quality of the ride and of the horse's potential for long-term soundness under saddle or harness. Despite their status as classics, the books by Hayes and by Goubaux and Barrier both contain serious errors as to horse structure and function – errors which have been perpetuated, year after year for over a century, in books by other authors, in magazine articles, and in the influential handbooks of the F.E.I. and Pony Club.

I go to some effort in my 1986 book *Principles of Conformation Analysis* (originally published by Fleet Street/EQUUS and now available from Equibooks.com) to explain and illustrate the important but often-overlooked points mentioned by Rau, and to correct the errors in Hayes and Goubaux and Barrier. These relate to structure and function of the loin coupling, the base of the neck, the turnover from neck to head, overall body balance, skull structure, dentition, pelvic structure with long (visible) ischium, shield-shaped knees and hocks that are broad as measured in hind view from the inner to the outer surface. I also explain the true reason why horses "toe out" or "toe in" and why this is not a structural or conformation fault but a problem with carriage and posture. Likewise I explain what "cow hocks" really are – cow-hocked stance is NOT merely a question of having the hocks orient inward in rear view, which taken by itself is not a fault at all but rather represents normal hindlimb stance in all mammals. In "Principles" I teach how to properly evaluate the structural correctness of both fore and hindlimbs by assessing their alignment in a plane which is not, in either case, to be oriented parallel to the midline plane of the horse's body. Since I

repeatedly mention these points in the judging commentary for this show, I am in hopes that some Australian breeders at least will be interested in improving their grasp of equine conformation and biomechanical functioning by reading this book.

Since 1986, I have also produced a “new series” of conformation studies, published in EQUUS Magazine several years ago. These articles explain in more detail all the abovementioned points and have the advantage of larger-sized illustrations produced in color.

I have also very recently (2016) produced a new book, *Conformation Basic Skills: Workbook no. 1* (Equine Studies Institute publishing) which is designed to stand as a kind of practical laboratory manual for people who want to learn how to analyze conformation both live and from photographs. It is spiral-bound to make it handy to take along to the stable, and it contains good photos and illustrations covering both conformation and function. There are exercises for self-testing and a useful glossary of terms.

I have made arrangements with the Australian Morgan Horse Association to make these materials available to all members. Please contact the Association office to request copies, which I have made available for the mere cost of the postage from California to Australia, with no charge for the books and articles themselves.

My best wishes to all Australian Morgan horse breeders, and many thanks again for asking me to judge your photographic horse show for the “insight” year 2020.

Sincerely,

Deb Bennett, Ph.D., Director
Equine Studies Institute
and
Consulting Editor and Feature Columnist, EQUUS Magazine
and
Research Associate, The University of Kansas Museum of Natural History

