

# COLOR & MARKINGS

## REFERENCE CHART

Following are examples of markings and 16 colors recognized by the American Quarter Horse Association. Notice that there may be extreme variations within a color category.



MARKINGS: Star, strip and snip. Left fore half pastern white. Right hind stocking. Left hind pastern white. (Note: This horse's flaxen tail is often found with the sorrel color.)

**Sorrel:** Body color reddish or copper-red; mane and tail usually same color as body, but may be flaxen; may have dorsal stripe.



MARKINGS: Blaze. White on lower lip and chin. Socks on fore feet. Left hind stocking.



MARKINGS: Star. Left hind half pastern white. Right hind sock.

**Black:** Body color true black without light areas; mane and tail black.



MARKINGS: Blaze. Socks on all feet.

**Bay:** Body color ranging from tan, through red, to reddish-brown; mane and tail black; black on lower legs; may have dorsal stripe.



MARKINGS: Left hind coronet white.

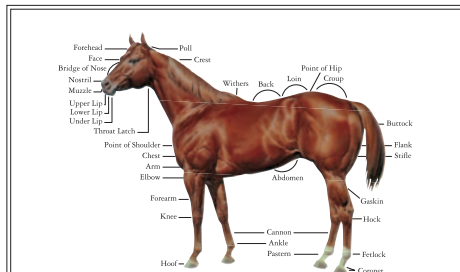


NO MARKINGS

**Brown:** Body color brown or black with light areas around muzzle, eyes, flank and inside upper legs; mane, tail and points black.



MARKINGS: Right fore pastern white



### RECOGNIZED COLORS

- These examples feature the 16 colors recognized by AQHA. Notice that there may be an extreme variation within a color category.
- The duns vary considerably because the dun characteristics (dorsal stripes, transverse stripes, tiger stripes on legs and yellow dilution of body hairs) may be superimposed over the basic color (red, black or brown). The horse's color will basically remain the same throughout his life, although there may be some seasonal variations.
- Often there is confusion between dun and buckskin horses. Both are yellow in body color and both may have black manes, tails and legs. A buckskin typically does not have a dorsal stripe and never has transverse stripes or tiger stripes.
- There can also be confusion between roan horses and horses with roan-like markings such as white hair scattered throughout the body, roan concentrations on the flanks, sides and between the fore legs, as well as white hair or white bands at the base of the tail commonly known as "coon tail." These horses should not be registered as roan but rather listing their base color (bay, sorrel, chestnut, etc.) with the white hair described on the certificate.
- The gray color factor can be superimposed over any basic body color. Therefore, not all gray horses will have a blue cast; some will have a tendency to be red, while others will have a tendency to look yellow. The common characteristics of gray horses are white hairs scattered over the head and body (often more prominent on the head in young horses). Each gray horse will vary in color throughout his lifetime, growing lighter with age. A horse may be dark brown or dark red at birth and have only a few white hairs on his head. With age, he will become a medium gray and finally a light gray which may appear to be white in an aged horse.
- A "throw back" is a horse which has a characteristic that neither of his parents had. Genetics have shown, however, that a throw back occurs only between those characteristics which are recessive. Therefore, a gray horse cannot be a throw back. Gray is a dominant characteristic, consequently a gray horse must have at least one gray parent. Another dominant characteristic is the black mane and tail along with black legs. Consequently, a horse with these characteristics (bay, brown, buckskin, black, etc.) will have at least one parent with a black mane, tail and lower legs. Only in very rare, specific instances would this not be true. A given stallion and mare may produce foals of several different colors (including some not indicated by either parent), but there are certain colors which two parents should not produce. Therefore, AQHA has a computerized program which evaluates the colors of the sire and dam to determine if the foal genetically can be the color listed on the registration application. Colors which are exceptions to the rules of genetics are then investigated to determine accurate color, and in most cases, it is determined that the wrong color was indicated for the foal, or the parents were registered with incorrect color. Either error must be corrected.

REV. 11/03



MARKINGS: Hind pasterns white. (Note: The head and lower legs have remained predominantly dark.)

**Blue Roan:** More or less uniform mixture of white and black hairs on the body, but darker on head and lower legs; can have a few red hairs in mixture.



NO MARKINGS

**Grullo:** Body color smoky or mouse-colored (not a mixture of black and white hairs, but each hair mouse-colored); mane and tail black; black on lower legs; usually has dorsal stripe.



MARKINGS: Star and strip. (Note: Roaning is primarily on body while head and legs have remained dark.)

**Bay Roan:** More or less uniform mixture of white with red hairs on a large portion of the body; darker on head, usually red but can have a few black hairs in mixture; black mane and tail and black on lower legs.



NO MARKINGS. (Note: Head and lower legs have remained dark while roaning is primarily on body.)

**Red Roan:** More or less uniform mixture of white with red hairs on the body, but red on head and lower legs; red or flaxen mane and/or tail.



MARKINGS: Stockings on hind legs.

**Chestnut:** Body color dark red or brownish-red; mane and tail usually dark red or brownish-red, but may be flaxen. Mane and tail may appear black, but lower legs will be red; may have dorsal stripe.



MARKINGS: Right fore sock.



MARKINGS: Left hind sock.

**Dun:** Body color yellowish or gold; mane and tail may be black or brown; has dorsal stripe and usually has zebra stripes on legs, and transverse stripe over withers.



NO MARKINGS

**Red Dun:** A form of dun with body color yellowish or flesh colored, mane and tail are red or reddish, flaxen, white or mixed; has red or reddish dorsal stripe and usually red or reddish zebra stripes on legs and transverse stripe over withers.



MARKINGS: Star and strip. Left hind sock.



NO MARKINGS

**Palomino:** Body color a golden yellow; mane and tail white. Palominos typically do not have dorsal stripes.



MARKINGS: Left fore half pastern white. (An intermediate stage of the graying effect. This commonly would be called a dappled gray.)



NO MARKINGS. (A relatively young horse with the graying effect most predominant on his head. Note that on roan horses head and lower legs remain dark though body is roaned.)



NO MARKINGS. (An advanced stage of the graying effect, often called flax-bitten gray.)



MARKINGS: Right hind stocking. Dark spots on right hind coronet. (Note that in this horse, the gray characteristic is superimposed over a basic sorrel or chestnut color, making this a gray horse. It is a common characteristic of gray horses to have patches of concentrated white hair which are not objectionable providing there is dark skin underlying the patches.)



MARKINGS: Fore pasterns white. Right hind sock.

**Buckskin:** Body color yellowish or gold; mane and tail black; usually black on lower legs. Buckskins typically do not have dorsal stripes.



NO MARKINGS

**Cremello:** Body color white or light cream; mane and tail white; pink or pinkish skin over entire body; blue eyes.



NO MARKINGS

**Perlino:** Body color white or light cream; mane and tail usually have a darker tint - pale copper or orange; pink or pinkish skin over entire body; blue eyes.