

BREED PROFILE

THE VERSATILE HANOVERIAN

Kathy Donnelly

Analyzing the history of the Hanoverian in international -competition is like reading a who's who list of equestrian greats. Flamboyant horses such as Flim Flam and Gifted, along with the rhythmical and brilliant Brentina are just a few of the Hanoverian superstars who have drawn crowds. In the Athen Olympic Games, 23 Hanoverians competed in all three disciplines. Hanoverians dominated the dressage competition with Salinero and Beauvalais claiming the gold and bronze medal along with Brentina who carried the fourth place spot.

European History of the Hanoverian

With the distinctive "H" brand on the left hip, the Hanoverian is rich in tradition with a legacy of German and European history. Until Germany was unified in 1871, each state was separate giving the Hanoverians their name from the state of Hanover. The state stud at Celle in Hanover Germany was established in 1735 and the studbook officially began in 1888. During World War I, the Hanoverian was bred primarily for carriage use and the military. This goal of breeding brought about the stockier, heavier horses that have now become known as "old style." Although blocky by today's standards, the Hanoverian's Olympic history began at the 1912 Olympics.

World War II was the beginning of the new breeding era. Horses were needed less and less for agriculture and military, allowing breeders to develop a performance horse with a refined build. For the evolution of this sport horse, many Thoroughbreds, Anglo-Arabs and Arabians were brought into the studbook to help lighten the breed. Many modern day stallions trace their roots to these lighter breeds, which can be distinguished on their pedigree by the xx for Thoroughbred, x for Anglo-Arabs, and ox for Arabians.



Regazzoni



Regazzoni Foal



Temperament for All Riders

Anne Sparks Whitten's stallion Pik L, is an example of an exemplary stallion with a generous temperament. By Pik Bube n by Pik Koenig, Pik L is example of a modern sport horse that carries a lot of Thoroughbred blood. With scores over 70% at CHIO Aachen and GDIs such as Dressage at Devon, Pik L demonstrates not only his athletic ability, but also an ability to stamp his get.

"We need quality horses with great temperaments and Pik L has proven he is consistent in producing all of that," explains Whitten, the owner of Horses Unlimited, a premier breeding center in New Mexico. "My goal as a breeder is to produce fantastic offspring that are rideable. I want a stallion that is a consistent producer. I want the stallion to produce three great gaits, be sound in the head as well as physically and to produce the best caliber horse that is rideable by any rider. We need horses that are not so hot that only the top professionals can ride them."

Besides Pik L, Whitten, has a couple other Hanoverian stallions including, Adonis and Glorioso Noir. Adonis has excelled in dressage while Glorioso Noir has excelled as a jumper. "When you look at the diversity of Hanoverians you can see why the breed is important," states Whitten.

Temperament was the key for Wanda Hage, owner of Paradigm Farms, in purchasing her Hanoverian stallion Mazarin, who excelled in his 100 day test, receiving scores of 10, 9 and 8.67 on his walk, trot and canter respectively.

"I was looking for a schoolmaster and wasn't specifically looking for a Hanoverian, but was steered in that direction because of their temperaments," stated Hage. "Mazarin has been a great schoolmaster. I am an amateur which shows his wonderful temperament. Any of these horses would be great for an amateur or a junior rider, but they also have what it takes for a professional."

Hage continues, "Mazarin's offspring are very intelligent, not flighty and have a lot of common sense. My goal is to breed these top quality horses and pass on their wonderful mind."

Megan Fischer, owner of Oldenburg Farm in Wisconsin, was drawn to her elite Hanoverian stallion ,Regazzoni, because of his impeccable temperament and his prepotency as a sire. By Rubinstein out of a daughter of Wether, Regazzoni is an excellent example of the Hanoverian breed standards.

"Regazzoni is known for his temperament and rideability. He scored a 10 on each respectively in his 100-day test," says Fischer. "He has a loveable personality and is easy to work around," said Fischer. "To me, temperament is the most important aspect as well as the willingness to work. If Regazzoni is crossed with a hot mare he will consistently produce a great temperament."



Refinement and the Future

Hanoverian breeders have continued to refine the breed. This trend can be seen in recent competitions as Hanoverians have been highly recognized in all disciplines, including eventing, which requires a lighter framed horse with stamina.

For Fischer, this is what attracted her to Regazzoni. "I saw a need for refinement in the Hanoverians. There is still a lot of heavier, old style Hanoverians which Regazzoni crosses well with," said Fischer. "At the same time Regazzoni crosses well with thoroughbred mares and will add bone to a lighter mare."

Whitten chose Pik L for many reasons, but the thoroughbred breeding on his dam's side was a factor in her decision. "Pik L is a refining stallion. He has not only produced dressage horses, but fantastic hunters as well," said Whitten who also has been selective with her broodmares. "I am looking for movement, correct conformation, and beauty in a mare. I want the mare to also have three correct gaits," said Whitten.

With many breeders following the same philosophies as Whitten, Hage, and Fischer, the evolution of the Hanoverian will only continue to be outstanding. This breed promises to have continued success and an enormous impact on the performance horse industry. lj