BREYERFEST ADULT NOVICE SHOW 2022 CRITIQUES

Please click on a judge's name below to advance to the judge's critique.

Foals: Kelly Weimer | Draft/Pony Foal

Foals are wonderful creatures. Have you ever looked at a real foal and wondered, "What will this baby look like as an adult?" I approached this class similarly to other classes in this section. I looked at confirmation and how the foals are put together with acknowledgment that foals go through many awkward stages of growth. There are qualities of foals that don't change and are indicators of what the foal will look like as an adult – some examples include: shoulder angle and slope, neck set, placement and shape of eyes and ears, and length of back in proportion to rest of the foal. They still should maintain characteristics for their assigned breed in regards to what is desired (such as a concave or convex profile, coat color, leg feathering, etc.).

Once I have plausible foals narrowed down, I then look at the minor things that can really set a model apart including mold detail. Some of the smaller scale models like Stablemates have thick and smooth pasterns and legs which leads to durable play models, but may photograph as being "blobby" since they lack definition. This a good place to point out that your model may have done well (or not!) in this show, but may place differently in another show, particularly one which offers a SM scale division.

Lastly, I looked at aesthetics. Is the model in great condition? Is the paint job crisp? Is the model dusted? What is the quality of the photograph? A fancy background or set up isn't necessary, but harsh or dark lighting or a bright background can make the model difficult to see. The angle which the model is photographed affects placings too – if the feet are hidden in footing or the model is at an angle, it is difficult to evaluate the entire model.

For the Draft/Pony Foal class, I was pleased to see such a strong class. My placings did come down to the most minor details I pointed out above. My first place foal, Beltane, exemplified all of the qualities I described above, and eventually was awarded Draft/Pony Foal Champion for the section. The newer SM Clydesdale Foal mold is an exception to my commentary about SM foals above – the thicker legs were acceptable for the breed assignment and I was able to use several of them in my placings. I also want to point out that some vintage molds continue to show well and can hold their own against newer releases. The Traditional scale Clydesdale Foal is one of those molds and is able to represent a variety of breeds.

In summary, each model in this class had a believable breed assignment for the given mold. Thank you showers, for doing your research and providing an enjoyable class to judge. Good luck in your future shows!

Light: Melissa Shaw | Other Pure/Part Light

The first thing I evaluate when looking at a group of horses is which models have the best "ABCs" – that is, Anatomy, Biomechanics and Conformation. Which horses look the most correct, as if they could survive and function as a real horse? I also take into account breed standards such as type and build, as well as color and markings, since not all colors/patterns/markings are permissible across all of Horsedom. I also check painted details and look for flaws. Finally, this being a photo show, I take the pictures themselves into account – if only because a better photo (well lit, sharply focused, properly composed and framed) will showcase the model better.

1st and 2nd place: Sea Glass and Middlebury – let me just say that deciding between my first and second place models was a challenge! Both are beautiful examples of the run and are well photographed. I chose Sea Glass as my top model of the class because I felt that the flatter lighting and lighter background made it easier to inspect his details. He is also just a tiny bit more squared up which helps his proportions look correct. Overall, Sea Glass and Middlebury are, in my opinion, most correct for their assigned breeds and the molds with the best ABCs. They are also in great condition with good photo quality so they topped the class.

3rd place: Copper Sands – this is a great photo of a stunning horse. It can be tough to photograph glossy models but this hobbyist nailed it. The mold is also a very correct one with good ABCs, but I am not wild about the breed assignment. With these curved ear tips, this mold is extremely typey to a

purebred Marwari – and in my opinion I find it unlikely that this rare breed would be found crossed with an Arabian in modern times.

4th and 5th place: Kitty Hawk and Simon – these are two very nice models with excellent photos taken of them. Kitty Hawk is an example of how a "plain solid color horse" can be perfectly lovely. And I applaud the gumption to get Simon standing without the mold's trademark plastic disc! These two sculpts are not quite as correct as our top placing models in terms of anatomy and biomechanics. And if the Huck Bey mold is shown without his stand, I would prefer not to see the tape or sticky wax beneath his hooves. Attention to detail really comes in to play when all other factors are equal!

6th place: Elusive – this model is darling and definitely on my Want List. You have a great one too, with nice crisp masking around the spots! My issue with this guy, and the reason he's not higher in my placings, is his breed assignment. I think he would make a good Nez Perce but the crossing of that breed with a Moroccan Barb is not something I would expect to see in the real horse world. The modern Nez Perce registry exists to recreate the horse of indigenous people by crossing the Appaloosa with the Akhal-Teke. There is evidence that the original tribal horses were spotted Barbs brought to the Americas by the Conquistadors, but I do not believe Barbs are currently part of the program to bolster the number of modern Nez Perce horses.

7th place: SW Horse Called Music – this is such a pleasant looking little horse and I love the attention to detail in making an arena fence with a scenic backdrop! I find this mold to be more appropriate for a sport type breed assignment as it lacks the compactness and thickness I would anticipate from a Morgan/Quarter Horse cross.

8th place: Alchemy – what a superb photo of a small scale model! This is a great example of this model's run too, with exquisitely painted eyes and crisp markings. This sculpt, while darling, does not have super accurate muscling or biomechanics. He's a great artistic representation, but other molds in this class are more realistic and correct.

9th and 10th place: Secret Society and MEG Riverdale – I really like the choice of placing Secret Society against a blue backdrop. Blue and orange (well, in this case chestnut) are complimentary colors and it really makes the horse pop. This mold just always strikes me as very rectangular, and, for a horse in motion, rather stationary. The paintjob for this run also lacks depth to my eye, and keeps the model from wowing me the way others in this class have. Riverdale is very cute, but the mold is really better as a pony and the old style resist dapples do not lend themselves well to a realistic coat color.

Thank you for a stellar lineup of models and congratulations to all!

Gaited: Heather Bochonok | American Saddlebred

Hi everyone! I have finished judging Gaited, and decided to do a writeup of B13. American Saddlebred. This was my largest class with 33 entries. There were many Hamiltons, and I am able to provide insight into the factors that decided how I chose one over another. Let me know what you think! ☺

The American Saddlebred class had a nice variety of models that all represented the breed well. When looking for an ideal American Saddlebred, I am looking for a proud, alert horse with a upright ears, a refined head, and arched neck. Saddlebreds are found in many colors, including black, grey, bay, chestnut, and even pinto. I am also looking for an appropriate gait for the breed (for example, Hamilton is showing the "rack" gait of a five-gaited ASB) if they are sculpted in motion. It is common for a Saddlebred to "park" out during showing, which is seen with the standing Saddlebred Stallion mold. I also factored in things such as Hamilton having a "set" tail, and a partially roached and braided mane, which is something seen in the show ring. Breyer has many models that are correct Saddlebreds, so when placing the class there were many other factors at play. I looked for flaws on the models (I saw very few flaws!). I looked for overspray and crisp markings. I made sure I could see all of the model (a few models had hooves buried in footing or blanket piling) so that I could accurately assess the entire horse. I ultimately chose an exceptionally dark variation of Marc of Charm to win the class. The photo was clear, showed the horse in good light, and did not crop out anything important. The dark color and shading on the model made it stand out from several other Marcs in the class.

Spanish: Steffanie Bodamer | Other Pure/Part Spanish

Very nice class! Several of these models were excellent representatives of their breeds so great job! Just a few notes. When you are assigning a breed to your models make sure that the model is accurate for the breed. For example the amount of white markings that the breed allows. I would also recommend that if you choose a lesser known breed for your model that you include documentation. Just a few sentences giving basic information about the breed(conformation, colors allowed, disciplines the breed is used for) and one or two pictures is all you need.

For your pictures it is important that the judge has a clear focused view of the entire model; the hooves, eyes, and tips of the tail and nose. if you are

using grass or sand as footing make sure we can see the hooves. Your pictures should be taken at eye level and use a back ground that isn't distracting to the model. Overall this was a really nice class (and division) and with a few corrections you will all be ready to rock your next show!

Sport: Marci Driscoll | Thoroughbred

This was a very strong section as a whole. I am going to use the Thoroughbred class as my example class, but the comments would apply to all of the classes and entries in this section.

The Thoroughbred class had the most entries of all classes in this section. When judging this class, I first looked at both pages of thumbnails and took note of entries with strong presentation - the models looked well highlighted, and not too dark or too bright. This is a good thing to check when entering a photoshow, as the thumbnail photo is generally the first impression your model will give to the judge. I then looked at each entry individually, to look for a correct breed assignment, gender, and any necessary documentation - in this case, any notes about unusual coloring or patterns. I then looked at the overall biomechanics and anatomy of the presented model - many of the newer sculptures available, such as the Emerson mold, have better biomechanics and anatomy than older molds, such as the original Man O War model. When reviewing each photo, I looked to see if the model was in focus, and if I could see the musculature of the model in the highlights and shading of the photo. I also looked for the presence of flaws, dust, or marks on the models. Standouts in this class included models with strong anatomy and biomechanics, well shaded highlights that were not too dark or too bright, and presented without flaws. It was a strong class with many great entries!

Stock: Heather Jackson-Lain | Other Pure and Part Stock

This class was the smallest of the stock division but was varied with a wide array of different stocks breeds. I really enjoyed the creativity and research that went into the breed assignments in this class. Please keep in mind that when you are assigning breeds that breed type is very important. A stock horse can be noted by having a powerful build with heavily muscled hindquarters that appears suitable for work as a stock horse. They are usually compact of build and "stocky" with good heavy bone structure. Color does not make a stock horse. So even though your horse may have pinto markings or spots it does not automatically make it a stock horse. There is a

wide variety of color and patterns that are allowed in stock breeds. Make sure your chosen models color is suitable for your assigned breed.

Conformation and anatomy also play a very important role in model horse showing. You must look at anatomy, are all of the pieces there, and biomechanics, are all the pieces where they should be to function properly.

Clear, well-lit, in-focus photos are also key to success in photo showing. A clear, uncluttered, uncomplicated background that shows off your horse is your best bet. Remember sometimes a loud colored background can alter how your horse looks in photos.

Draft: Tanya Schulte | American Draft

This class had a variety of different breeds representing the American Drafts.

I started my judging by evaluating each horse and determining if it represented its assigned breed appropriately or not, and assessed the conformation and biomechanics of the horse specific to that particular breed.

Next, I analyzed the photography of the models. I encourage photo showers to assess their photos carefully to avoid cutting off hooves, noses, ears, and tails in the photo. There should be a clear focus on the model to avoid obtaining a fuzzy or blurry picture of the horse. Be aware of photos that are underlit or overlit; dark photos or photos with an excessive glare on the horse can be challenging to actively assess the conformation or condition of the model, and sadly detract from the horse. On the same token, a dark model against a dark backdrop or a light model against a light backdrop can make it very difficult to distinguish where the back, legs, face, or neck of the horse actually is.

Lastly, I studied the condition of each model. Please remember to dust or clean models off, especially dark or glossy horses as fingerprints and dust stand out rather clearly on them! Sadly, dust and rubs were a detracting factor that decreased the placings of some models. Just like you'd want to bathe, clip, and clean a live horse to utter perfection prior to a show, you want to be certain a model is clean and show worthy to put in its respective class.

Thank you for allowing me the pleasure of judging your beautiful draft horse models! Best wishes to you in all your future showing endeavors!

Other: Heather Malone | American Pony

American pony was one of my bigger and stronger classes with a lot of really amazing horses. I chose this class to evaluate because the top pictures have all the qualities I look for in photo show entries to place highly:

- A good body, meaning the anatomy and biomechanics of the entry are solid.

- A good shot, meaning the picture is in focus with and non-distracting background and lit/framed well.

- A good breed assignment, meaning the color/pattern -- and the type to a lesser extent -- work well and are correct for the breed the entrant has assigned.

- Good condition, meaning flaws are minimal and no breaks or chips

The top horse in the class had and a lovely image, a good body and an inspired breed choice that put her over the top. The top five were all very strong, hosting all of the criteria I mentioned earlier. As the placings went on, the entrant would have one of the criteria not quite hitting the mark, and some of these were very subtle. As I mentioned before, the class was strong and even horses that weren't placing only missed one maybe two criteria, but it was enough to knock them out of the top.

I commend every one that entered, the photos looked very clean and professional for the most part. The two biggest mistakes (that I see universally in all photo shows I judge) that can be avoided no matter the horse/breed/color are your choice of background is your actual image quality. Use neutral or uncluttered backgrounds that don't upstage or distract from your horse with strident colors or too much clutter. Take clear, well framed, high resolution pictures for your model and watch your focus. Don't lose points to something that is easily avoidable.

This was a tough class to judge and bravo to everyone that entered!

Collectibility: Robin Roberts | Modern Unrealistic Color

This was actually the hardest class for me to judge, because the entries were an amazing collection of older (1980s) extremely hard-to-find models and some modern (post-2000s) limited runs. I could honestly have pinned this class a few different ways.

When judging collectability, I always focus on age, rarity, condition, and desirability—but not necessarily in that order. Age and rarity are the least subjective criteria, but when you're looking at the rarity of older models, you have to wonder how many of the original run still exist. If it was a run of 200, how many of them ended up destroyed in carpet herds or repainted? These things matter for older models and a judge must keep them in mind. Newer limited runs are more likely to all be in the hands of collectors. Desirability is a fickle thing, and you can partially judge it by looking at the current market prices (since they define how many people want a model right NOW). But a judge must also be mindful of how hobby trends ebb and flow. Does a model stay popular and desirable over time? That's the kind of desirability that matters in collectability.

The standouts in this class were all incredibly rare models that any collectability nerd would be proud to own. I saw very few—if any!—flaws, even on older models. One note on collectability documentation (and this is important for all of the classes): it is important to make sure your documentation includes the information required to properly evaluate your model on age, rarity, and desirability. That means run years and run numbers (if known) are a must. Other information, like any special variation your model is or what event/vendor it came from, is also important for collectability documentation. Breed documentation isn't needed in collectability classes. Most collectability judges are very knowledgeable, but good documentation helps judges remember the little details.

Performance: Jackie Rossi | Other Performance

I selected this class to critique because it was my biggest class and had a lot of variety, so I thought it would be helpful for not only entrants, but others who might be curious about how a class like this gets pinned. This represents my thought process only- others may do things differently.

When I am looking at performance entries, I am looking for an entry that is doing what the documentation states it's doing, in a safe and legal way. I want to believe the entry is going to be successful. Tack should fit well, and be legal for the competition portrayed. In photo shows, the image needs to be well lit and focused. I do not take things like the background or footing into consideration at all.

All of the images in this class were really good-they are all well-lit with the model being the focus and filling the frame. I have judged a few open classes that didn't have images that hit all of those marks, so well done!

1st Ropemaster

I really love how much detail is in this picture. The rider appears to sit well and is very focused on the rope. Getting a doll to look more like a person and not just a doll is an advanced skill and gives this entry the edge. The horse appears steady and calm, and is an excellent choice for this entry.

The documentation is also to the point while giving me the information I need to understand the entry without being a book report. If this were live, I would like a photo as well, but really, that's icing.

There are a few things that can be tweaked-the cheekpiece on the bridle appears a little loose (I am not sure if it is loose or if this is the angle of the photo). The rope is also slightly out of scale.

Finally, this image is well composed with a simple but appropriate setting and pleasing lighting.

2nd Random Riley

Stablemates can be challenging to show as scale can be difficult to keep consistent. Scale is important when showing models, even when they are small and it's difficult. This entry stays pretty close to having everything in scale. The horse is well turned out with appropriate tack for a jumper. I might adjust the boots as they appear to be a little high on the leg from where they should be.

The jump is also appropriate scale wise, but a jumper jump should have a number and would have directional flags. These would be very easy to make and add.

This horse appears to be going a little slow to take a jump this high, and it also does not appear that he is actually on the approach to the jump. He should be perpendicular to that fence, and here he is at a bit on an angle. The documentation for this entry was a course map and a statement that the entry was on the approach to the first jump, and while I don't need a lot of information to judge a show jumper, this might be a place to explain why the horse is positioned like this. I do prefer entries that are actually performing the course over a starting circle, just for reference.

3rd Completely Framed Fella

This is another very good stablemate entry. I waffled between this one and the second place horse for quite a while, and I do feel you could argue switching their placings. In the end, the slightly out-of-scale saddle is what put this entry 3rd for me today.

The tack is very detailed and appropriate, but a tiny bit out-of-scale. The boots are slightly big, and on a reining entry I'd like to see boots protecting the hind legs during a slide like this. The saddle sits very high on the horse's back and the pad is a little large. Everything is very neat and well presented.

This image is also well composed and I like that the horse is settling into the footing a little. Documentation is to the point and concise.

4th Scamps Glory

This gaming entry is very well shot and clear, and the documentation is good and concise. This is a tricky horse to position correctly, but I feel he is well done here.

While you can use almost literally anything tack wise for games, this entry could use a bit of polish that would put it higher in my rankings. The bridle straps are twisted and could be neater. The nose band is very low on the face and western bridles typically don't have a nose band. If this is meant to be a hackamore or other bit less bridle, it's not really in the correct place. The short reins are appropriate here, and I'd love a breastcollar as an extra touch.

5th TS Argyle

Mounted archery is super popular in the hobby right now and I like the implied dynamic in this image. The tack first well and there's enough here to tell a story without having extraneous props.

The entrant did not include any documentation so I'm not sure if this doll just took her shot or not. The position of the doll makes it difficult to tell, as well. Dolls can be very difficult to position, this one is sitting well, and holding her bow nicely, but I'd like her to look like she is taking aim at the target. Alternatively, this is where you can use your documentation to explain why she isn't.

6th Kiss My Ash

This is a very daring entry- this model is sculpted to be in a spin, rather than a turn, but with clever positioning it can be made into a convincing turn. I would probably try a different camera angle to experiment. I very much encourage showing models in unusual poses beyond the one thing they are perfect for, but it does take more trial and error to pull off. This would be a place to try dolls to see if you can create the illusion.

The saddle is placed well, but the pad is slightly too big-it should not go past the point of the hip. The bridle doesn't fit quite right. I would remove the nose

band and use sticky wax to place the bit at the corner of the mouth. You could add a small silver bead to simulate the mouthpiece as well.

7th Strawberry Wine

Trail is one of these classes that can be tricky to learn as placing the poles relative to the horse is an easy place to trip up. When I set up poles, I actually put the horse in the entry and then place the poles around the horse, rather than setting up the obstacle first and adding the horse. I would move this horse so that the second pole is between the front legs, and the first pole is between the back legs. I think this would be a better spot and show off the bend in this model and the curve of the obstacle.

The setting of this image is great, and the obstacle elements look in scale to me: I've seen supersized planters at real horse events before. The saddle is also fitted well, but the bridle is a bit big and isn't really correct for western events. Happily, western bridles are pretty minimalist and you could create one at home to work better.

The rider is scaled well to the horse and sits well.

8th Sampson

I love all the potential here. This image is crisp and clear, well lit and nicely framed. The saddle is placed perfectly and fits well. I'm not worried about the colors on the tack as jumper classes have a lot more freedom than Hunter classes do. I would like the ring of the bit to be at the corner of the mouth, as it's clearly too far back here.

I would like a tiny bit more in the documentation-what sort of jumping class? I assumed jumper, but in that case, the jump should have directional flags. If this is a Hunter class, the tack may not work depending on the exact class (this jump could work for Hunter derby, for example, but they are very specific about not allowing fun colors on tack). Cross country is another possibility here--there's a variation that does do cross country type obstacles in an arena--but that also needs directional flags on the jump. These are all things that can be easily changed up or created at home, so I look forward to the next version of this entry.