

Tiger Horse Foals

With Guest Judge Elizabeth Graves

As a judge being in center ring, it's always a delight to hear the reaction from the spectators when the foals enter. They present a picture of new young life, fresh and innocent and ready to experience the world.

I find the foal classes the most difficult to place, everyone seems to quickly pick a favorite and the judge has to be the one to look past the cute innocence and decipher what is now presented before you and what will be in the future. A judge must decide in what order does each fall within their breed standards, with the prospects of being a serviceable animal in the future. Never an easy task when so much in a foal is changing, rarely staying in proportion and growing in sections.

The photos presented here do not make it any easier. This is an exceptional group of foals that seem to show a lot of consistency within them. Two have the colors expected of a Tiger horse, and one will likely “color up” as it matures, but they must also have the elements present for the ability to do some sort of four-beat gait, the running walk being the most desirable.

When looking at foals it is not uncommon for them to carry themselves higher in the neck and at this age this cannot be an indicator of how they will carry themselves as adults. Length and thickness of neck can also change considerably with maturity. It is very difficult to predict what gait a foal will have as a mature horse until everything has gotten closer to finished growth final proportions.



ANNANDALE'S KISSY

Foal #1 looks well balanced at this age, as do all three in our photos. Although the angle of the photo limits what the possible bone angles are, it does look like this foal is a bit over at the knees. This could still change with age or could be the way the foal is standing just in this frame, but as judges we must use what is presented before us at the time.

This foal looks to have the steepest shoulder and humerus angle of the three creating the propensity for lift and fold in the front.

Foal #1 looks to have hind legs being camped out just a bit but again we are working with an angled photo.

Color is vibrant and attractive.

Foal #2 also looks so well in balance at this age. This foal has a marvelous head, being a bit more sculpted and the eyes look well set out on the corners of the head and large in size.

I prefer the more sloped back shoulder and a flatter humerus angle on this foal in hopes for efficient reach desirable in a natural running walk. The legs front and back look well set, not showing at this time any serious deviations.

I really like the rounder, smooth muscling this foal exhibits, which lends itself to good support of the skeletal structure.

The coloring is bright and eye-catching, very appropriate for a Tiger Horse!

*Photos courtesy Victoria Varley,
Annandale's Tiger
Horse Farm, Santa Fe, NM*



ANNANDALES BUTTERFLY

Foal #3 The foal in this photo is moving so it is a bit more difficult to judge, but the legs look well set and in this photo showing no structural faults.

This foal looks to have just a bit steeper pelvic angle with a longer gaskin making it easy for it to get its hind legs under itself.

This foal looks to have a bit steeper shoulder and humerus angle limiting the amount of reach, but creating some lift and fold to the fronts. I like the length of neck on this foal at such a young age. This foal is not showing tiger coloring as of yet, but this is not uncommon in Appaloosa patterned horses and this baby may well color out as it matures.



STEP AHEAD

I would like to add that what has been pointed out in possible deviations from ideal structure in all three foals is so small, I really felt I had to find some way to separate them, but nothing here really causes me any major concern as future prospects as all can straighten out in these small amounts in final growth and strengthening. This is just such an exceptional group I have been presented to work with here, and this is just not always the case when given a group to separate in some order of placement.

To see how Ms. Graves placed these three outstanding foals, turn to page 64.

About our Guest Judge:

Elizabeth Graves has judged countless all breed, gaited horse shows, continues to train gaited horses and also gives clinics around the U.S. on riding and training gaited horses. Though youngsters present a challenge for the judge's eye, she was, as always, gracious enough to give her comments on these babies with only the photos as shown from which to draw conclusions.



**Placings for
Form Follows Function
from page 60**

1st Place Foal # 2

2nd Place Foal # 3

3rd Place Foal #1