



# THE HEAVENLY HORSES

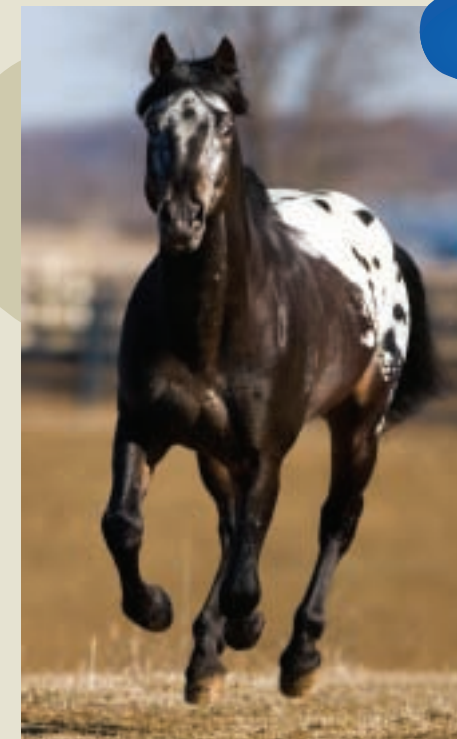
Beneath the striking spotted coat of an Appaloosa is a heart of gold and a warm and wonderful personality.

From prehistoric cave paintings in France to ancient Chinese art, the spotted horse has long fascinated people. The Appaloosa Horse breed has existed for many centuries. It was the horse of aristocrats and nobles in Europe in the 1600s and 1700s. Chinese Emperors described them as "heavenly horses."

## Spotty History

The Appaloosa's history is as unique as their colorful spotted coat patterns. Many believe that the spotted horses were brought to North America by the **Spanish** – to Mexico during the 1500s – and they reached the **Nez Perce** tribe around 1700. But the Nez Perce, a Native American Indian tribe, have passed along a story that says their first Appaloosa horses came from a **Russian** ship off the Oregon coast. Three spotted stallions swam from the ship to the tribe waiting on shore.

The Nez Perce tribe inhabited the Palouse River country of central Idaho and eastern Washington. Their horses were called "**the Palouse**" which turned into "**Appaloosa**" over the years.



## On the Spot

To survive, the Appaloosa had to be a **hardy horse** and an excellent hunting mount. It had to carry a rider who was using both hands for his bow and arrows. The Nez Perce trained the brave Appaloosa to charge into stampeding herds of buffalo on the hunt.

## Spots and Stripes

The Appaloosa's body is strong and compact, but not heavy. The edge of its eyeball is white.

The skin around the muzzle and eyes is spotted or **mottled**. Its firm hooves have vertical dark and light stripes.



## Coat of Many Colors

There are five Appaloosa coat patterns: 1) *leopard* (white with dark spots over the hips); 2) *snowflake* (spots all over the body); 3) *blanket* (white without dark spots over the hips); 4) *marble* (same-size spots all over the body); and 5) *frost* (white specks). Appaloosas can have a combination of patterns and can change patterns over their lifetime.



## Happy Appy

Today, the beautiful spotted horse is one of the most beloved of American horse breeds and found throughout the world. It excels in western pleasure, rodeo, games, jumping and dressage. It is a natural at cutting cattle. Appaloosas are prized for their easy-going dispositions and reliability as family horses.

*Photos courtesy of Appaloosa Horse Club*

**Learn more at [www.appaloosa.com](http://www.appaloosa.com). Be sure to check out the Youth Association pages.**

