

PASO FINO



Fascination

Paso Fino



For most people the significance of owning a horse these days means to spend their precious leisure time with a partner with whom they can share many interesting experiences. You are searching for a partner for your whole life.

It's especially appealing when that partner offers some extras. Therefore baroque breeds with specific equitation and especially gaited horses have experienced an enormous boom during the last decades. Most riders look for something beyond the monotony that is still taught in many riding schools. They search for freedom, ease and willingness of their horses.

This explains why various gaited breeds from all around the world find a home in Europe. Riding a gaited horse is very comfortable; it is definitely something special and a challenge. The horse has an additional gait and often belongs to a fairly rare breed. Therefore it is helpful to educate oneself on the breed and to keep in contact with like-minded people.

We would like to introduce you to the Paso Fino – a fascinating breed. It's a rather compact Spanish type horse that comes with a temperament easy to handle and prompt responsiveness. Additionally the Paso Fino offers lots of natural gait, which is very addictive once you've tried it. The literal translation of "Paso Fino" is "fine gait". But we will elaborate more on that later.

Let us whisk you away into the world of the Paso Fino and enjoy the pictures of this small information brochure. If the Paso Finos fascinate you, then we recommend experiencing them live and testing them under the saddle. It is a unique riding experience and the special character of these horses can hardly be put into words.



As all horses in America, the Paso Finos descend from those horses that Christopher Columbus brought with him on his second voyage in 1493. Columbus and the conquistadores after him were better seafarers than riders. Therefore the horses had to be comfortable, undemanding and robust.

Over time a natural selection occurred for sure-footedness and sound legs. In a country without knowledge about horses and subsequent rough handling only the healthiest horses survived. But the life in South America suited the horses; they spread from today's Dominican Republic all over the Caribbean and most of Southern America.

In addition to sound legs and hard hooves, endurance and willingness to go were very important to the riders. They needed reliable working horses to operate their large haciendas and plantations. They were also looking for smoothness of gaits, because they usually spent their whole day in the saddle.

Spaniards and South Americans are fiery and spirited people and they wanted beautiful, lively horses to match their temperament, but were easy to ride at the same time. This is the reason why they highly valued

a willing personality of the horse. Nobody wanted to make a fool of oneself by falling off the horse in front of everybody.

In South America the Paso Fino is a real cult. There are huge stud farms, huge shows – the Paso Fino in South America is not only a horse breed, but an attitude to life. It's quite comparable to the cult on football in Europe.

It's not surprising that this breed has become increasingly popular in Europe. Colombia, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Panama, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Aruba, Ecuador, Mexico and the Dominican Republic are counted as the countries of origin. During the 1960ies the USA discovered their passion for the Paso Fino as well and became one of the most important countries to breed Paso Finos with approximately 35,000 horses today.

In the 1990ies the Paso Fino started his journey to Europe. Currently importing horses directly from the countries of origin is difficult. Most horses are imported from the USA.

At the moment we count about 1,000 Paso Finos in Europe and it is still a rare horse breed, but with its popularity gaining.



Let's sum it up:

Primarily the Paso Fino is an easy-going, versatile partner for life; a very handy horse, standing between 13 to 15 hands tall.

There is a definite preference for a compact build, with a petite but strong and dry fundament.

One feature to identify the breed by is the unusual way they carry their tails - like a flag.

The Paso Fino comes in all colours (apart from Leopard coloured), with the Colombians preferring a dark colour without overly loud markings.

In addition to his great personality, the gait of the Paso Fino is very specific.

What is a gaited horse?

In addition to the regular three gaits: walk, trot and canter a gaited horse offers at least one other gait. Usually it is some type of four-beat gait.

There are variations of that four-beat gait which are either more diagonal ("Trocha") or more lateral (Pace). The pace is undesired for the Paso Fino. Some Paso Finos have so much natural gait that they don't show a trot under the rider. The Paso Fino is a naturally gaited horse, meaning the ability to gait is inherited.

As each gaited breed shows its specific gait somewhat different, the gaits are named differently. But they have one thing in common: they are intended to allow their riders the most comfortable way of moving from A to B.

Gaited horses were known in Europe before. There was the medieval 'Palfrey', bred to take the fine lady on a comfortable ride to the next castle. These horses were not very impressive and it so happened that they became a fringe group in our military oriented history of riding. On a battle field a rather big horse

with impressive gaits and a lot of movement was preferred. Only during the last decades the Europeans 'rediscovered' the gaited horses as the horse became a leisure companion and more emphasis was put on smoothness.

What is the special gait?

It is a four beat gait, similar to the walk. The legs move in the following order: hind left, front left, hind right and front right. There is no period of suspension or skipping in between. This is why the gait is so comfortable. There is always one hoof on the ground. There are differences between the movements of the various gaited breeds. Sometimes there can be a more diagonal or lateral influence. But the basic structure is always the same. The different gaits of the gaited breeds are a science by itself; therefore we provide only a rough overview.





The best way to get familiar with the gait is by using your ears. The sound of the gait of a Paso Fino is a fast: Tacatacatatacata. The shift to a more diagonal gait (Trocha) sounds like: Tras Tras Tras Tras, whereas the trot sounds like: Tra Tra Tra Tra. The canter in comparison sounds like: Tadadam Tadadam, because of the suspension phase. It helps to shut the eyes and concentrate on hearing. This is the best way to distinguish between the specific gaits.

The Paso Fino gait offers the most comfortable and smoothest ride you will ever find. The leg action of the Paso Fino is not excessive but balanced. Paso Finos inspire with their even movements, which are short and quick and therefore so very comfortable. Small steps create little momentum. You hardly notice any movement of the croup. Where there is no movement in the back of the horse, there is no being jostled around in the saddle. You notice too if you look at the riders. It's not only by the smile on their faces that you can tell by that they are gaiting. No, it is because they look as if they are floating in contrast to the trotting rider. The trot creates a distinct up and down movement. You will not find that with a gaiting rider.

When you observe a Paso Fino working on the oval track you will think of little locomotives. As if on tracks, they won't deviate going round and round in a clear four-beat gait.

The slower gait is called „Paso Corto“, the faster gait „Paso Largo“. The third variation is „Classic Fino“, which is a show gait. It is an extremely collected gait, with very fast footfall and almost no forward movement, making it difficult to see the individual legs move. Therefore the so-called “Sounding Board” is used to present this type of gait, so the clear four-beat sound can be heard.

But a Paso Fino can do more than gait, it can be ridden in walk, trot and canter too. Additionally many horses offer a broken trot called “Trocha”.



The Paso Fino is a horse with a genetically fixed natural gait it can execute in various speeds.

To classify the different types, you have to look at the individual ability to gait and the spiritedness.

Pleasure

As the name indicates, it should be a pleasure to ride this type of horse. Many Paso Finos are considered pleasure type horses. They are uncomplicated horses, easy to ride, who are tireless and reliably carry their riders along the trails in a casual, consistent gait with different speeds. They are leisure horses, trail horses, working horses but also proud and graceful show horses.

Country Pleasure

As the Pleasure Type is so versatile, it is sub classified into Pleasure and Country Pleasure Type. Country Pleasure horses have the same prerequisites as the as the Pleasure Type, but are calmer concerning gait and temper.

Performance

Performance Type horses differ from the Pleasure Type as they are fierier, more accentuated and have more spirit (brio). They have more presence and charisma and more elevated gaits in combination with an eagerness to move. They are particularly well suited for ambitious riders who appreciate their spirit (brio).

Classic Fino

The Classic Fino Type is what most people associate with the breed Paso Fino. Searching the internet, you will find many videos showing horses with a very high frequency gait on the sounding board. These horses are the „crème-de-la-crème“, extremely sensitive and very spirited. They are definitely not for riding novices or those new to the breed.

Here in Europe, we have very few horses of this type. Everyone who ever had the pleasure to ride this type and could feel the energy of that gait – there are just no words that can express this feeling. You feel how the horse puts weight on his hind quarters and releases the energy. But you can still ride this horse with just your little finger.



The following two types are less common in Europe:

Trochador / Trocha y Galope

As the name indicates, they are more diagonally gaited (Trocha). A good Trochador is as smooth as a horse in an even four-beat gait and will carry its rider along the trails comfortably and economically. The canter should be a rounded, collected three-beat rhythm.

Tronton Galopero

This type is only able to walk, trot (Trote) and canter (Galope). But you can't compare Trote to the regular trot. The Trote has no suspension phase and is therefore very comfortable to ride, because it does not throw the rider. The Galope is very comfortable and ridden to the highest degree of collection.

Trochadores and Tronton Galoperos are not able to do an even four-beat gait, but a Paso Fino is usually able to trot or to trocha based on its natural gaiting ability.

As this breed is so versatile, every rider can find the perfect horse. And you can select the type of equitation you like. Certainly you have to ensure the lightness of riding and the clarity of gait when training a horse. The young horses are started in a bosal, a bitless Colombian bridle. Later on as the training advances a bit is added.

The traditional equitation can be compared to the Old Californian Western Style. Contact is kept with the reins, but no pressure applied. Apart from that minimal cues are used, primarily with the rider's weight.

The horses should have a fine and prompt reaction and carry themselves proudly. The gait should be offered naturally without the use of manipulative means or complicated cues. Keep in mind that gait requires a lot of strength and carrying capacity of the hind legs, thus it will improve with training. Support means such as weighted hoof shoes or auxiliary reins or additional weight on the legs are not acceptable for the Paso Fino riders and there is no need for it. You don't have to push the Fino into gait. The breed has as much natural gait as it needs and with the correct exercises it will gait by itself.

After starting a young horse with a phase of Trot or Trocha, the gait is presented almost like a gift as soon as the horse is balanced and has enough muscle to permit some collection. Foals already gait around the pasture. There is a saying: a foal that shows gait will gait under saddle as well.

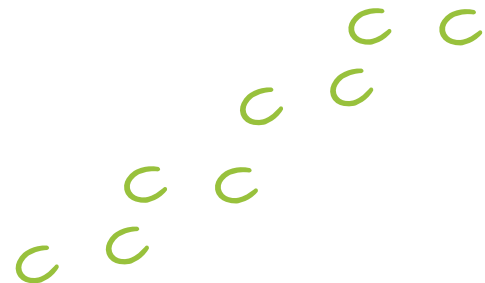
You will not get this 'ideal', very sensible horse that responds to minimal rein and offers willingness to work and vibrancy just by buying a Paso Fino. The Brio of the breed requires you to work on your own riding ability. The fast responsiveness and high sensitivity enable the Paso Fino to respond to minimal body tension of the rider. It is important for a newbie to the breed to contact experienced Paso Fino owners or trainers to exchange information and get tips.

Most exciting aside from the smooth gait is the disposition of these horses. In a Paso Fino we call this 'brio'. It is a mixture of a friendly and willing character, attentive responsiveness, controllable spirit combined with a willingness to work and to be ridden easily.



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The brio creates a horse that is people oriented, one that always tries to please its owner. Talk to Fino-owners, all of them will tell you how their Paso Finos went through the proverbial fire for them. They are noble spirited horses that are also very tough, robust and healthy.



The Paso Fino • The use

With this versatile horse, you can try any different type of riding styles without getting specialized. You will find no better horse for the leisure rider who wants to trail ride as well as participate in shows.

You are free to look for inspiration in almost any type of riding. Western riding, classical dressage, trekking, mounted orienteering, endurance riding, circus trick work, ground work, liberty dressage, jumping, driving, and riding side saddle - as a matter of fact everything is possible. With a Paso Fino you are even well advised as a show rider. There are specific gaited horse shows, focussed on the four-beat gait.

One thing is for certain: You will attract attention with a Paso Fino. Due to their Spanish heritage these are compact horses with elegant looks and natural presence. They appeal to people not only with their friendly eyes and perfect conformation. The rider's bright smile may also play a huge part in their popularity. This results from the extremely comfortable experience of riding Paso Corto or Paso Largo. You simultaneously feel the energy and easiness of movement in gait and can't help but enjoy it.

Those who have never ridden a Paso Fino before and are interested to try: you should contact one of those smiling Paso Fino owners. Most of them are more than willing to spread the 'Paso Fino' virus.

But be careful! It is highly addictive: Most people end up with their own Paso Fino.





The PFAE e.V. and its members work to meet the breeding goal for the Paso Fino as much as possible. A good selection of sires and broodmares, partly imported from the USA, partly bred in Europe, provides the best possible foundation.

Besides the appropriate conformation and disposition, it is our goal to breed healthy and versatile horses with faultless character and natural gait - horses that give daily pleasure to the leisure rider as well as the show-ambitious rider for a long time. We are happy that the Paso Fino with its fascinating traits and enormous versatility finds more and more enthusiasts in Europe.

The web-page of the association introduces the stallions available in Europe, the foals born in Europe and a list of Paso Fino breeders. In addition you'll find all forms necessary for the registration of your foal.

Originally the Paso Fino comes from the warmer South American countries, but usually the imported horses are acclimated so well after the second winter that there is no difference noticeable to horses born here.

In Europe the Paso Finos mostly live in open stables or a combination of a stall at night and pasture with a herd during the day. They enjoy the herd and ability to move around.

Even most stallions in Europe live in open stables and are not confined stalls without paddock. The Paso Finos are very undemanding in their keeping. They do just fine in all kinds of herds, as most of them grow up in mixed groups and thus their social skills are well developed.





Aficionados?

Friends of the Paso Fino, supportive members of the PFAE e.V. who don't have their own Paso Fino.

Association?

The membership in the PFAE offers many advantages. You can help to actively promote this wonderful breed. You will meet like-minded people and find new friends and inspirations. In addition PFAE-members receive reduced rates for insurances as well as price reduction at events and specific shops.

Bosal and Barbada?

It's the traditional bitless bridle of the Paso Fino. Just as in the countries of origin, the horses in Europe are started completely bitless in the Colombian bosal. A bit is used only when the horse has finished the bitless training. A bit is considered a means to refine the communication and not to contain the horse. The Colombian bosal permits a large variety of uses and is getting popular with an increasing group of people interested in bitless riding. The bosal is actually the part over the nose with rings to attach the reins, and the Barbada the part around the lower jaw also with the option to attach reins. You have the choice to ride with two or four reins. Bosal and barbada come in countless variations that

can be combined depending on the desired effect and on the horse's state of training.

Brio?

Describes the extraordinary disposition of the Paso Fino. A distinct spirit, that is always controllable, paired with high responsiveness and a willingness to please. A Paso Fino would do almost anything for "his" human.

Cadence?

Rhythm of movement.

Canter?

Of course every Fino does canter. Some of them really enjoy it. Canter is also part of some show classes. Some Paso Finos have more of a four-beat canter. Many however do have a clean three beat.

Carrying weight?

Don't be misled by the "thin" legs. A U.S. study (Dr. Den Bennett, Ph.D.) accounted for an extremely high bone density. In addition there are small and petite as well as larger more robust individuals within the breed. Most Paso Finos have a stick measure of about 14.2 hands and are thus within the average size of working horse breeds.



Charm?

Hardly anybody can elude the charm of the Paso Fino. Many aficionados fell for the people-oriented character of the Paso Fino with their politeness and their proud and graceful appearance.

Classic Fino?

1. Gait in collected speed. Show gait in highest degree of collection
2. Term for a type of Paso Fino, that can rarely be found in Europe, but that stands for the embodiment of the Paso Fino.

Confepaso?

Confederación Internacional de Caballos de Paso (International Breeding Association for Paso Horses). Based in Colombia.

Country Pleasure?

A subcategory of the Pleasure type. As the Pleasure type is so diverse, they are grouped into Country Pleasure and Show Pleasure horses. Country Pleasure is the calmer representative of the breed with flowing, ground-covering, easy gait.

Curb bit?

You can ride the Paso Fino with every type of bridle, based on the ability of the rider and the training of the horse. The curb bit is generally used only with well-trained horses. It is not used to rein in spirited horses. On the contrary, the curb bit is there to refine the communication with horses that received a high level of training. For regular training sessions most Paso Finos have bitless bridles.

Did we catch your interest?

www.pfae.org

Equitation?

Traditionally it's a way of riding using signals/cues, comparable to western riding.

Gait?

The Paso Fino offers gait in different speeds. All speeds are always smooth and comfortable. The slow gait is called Paso Corto, the fast one Paso Largo, and in the highest degree of collection Classic Fino.

Hock action?

With that term the Paso Fino experts refer to the movement of the haunches. The phrase: "Whoa, does he have hock action" stands for "I am very impressed how this Paso Fino moves his hind legs in gait. I like especially how he flexes his haunches upward."

Jaquima?

Part of the traditional bridle of the Paso Fino. A type of halter usually made from rawhide and/or leather.

J-tail?

(also „Scorpion Tail“) The term for the typical carriage of the tail of the Paso Fino – in a J-shape and trailing after the horse like a flag. Is shown when the horse is excited or is presenting itself.

Mechanics?

The mechanics of the Paso Fino gait should be energetic and well accented both in front and rear leg lift and harmonise concerning height and reach. The rider should be virtually motionless in the saddle and there should be no lateral or vertical movement in the croup.



Motto?

Whoever gets engaged in the adventure Paso Fino, will realise that his or her attitude towards some areas in life will change. You don't suppress or dominate a Paso Fino. You learn to work with his motivation and sensitivity and respond to him. You will learn to look for the mistakes not with the horse but yourself. Most Paso Fino novices fail with something trivial as too much tension in their own body. Only those who are willing to change will receive the best results. And changing oneself will usually result in critical scrutinizing in other parts of life.

Natural Gait?

The gait of the Paso Fino is natural with a harmonic balance in gait. Harmony requires no excessive lift of front or hind legs. The movements are smooth, rhythmic, straight, balanced and synchronous in forehand and hindquarters.

Pace?

Pace is the only gait that is undesired in a Paso Fino. A pacey Paso Fino is tense and has difficulties with the gait. Therefore this tendency is not encouraged but rather a diagonal tendency is favoured. Positive and negative tensions are very close together for a sensitive Paso Fino. Therefore you want to encourage the positive tension and choose more relaxing gaits.

Paso Fino?

The horses with the fine step.

Paso Corto?

Gait in moderate speed; working speed.

Paso Largo?

Gait in fast speed without loss of rhythm.

Performance Type?

Representative of the Paso Fino breed with a gait that is more dynamic, accentuated and spirited than that of the Pleasure type, sort of the sports version with more "horse power".

PFAE?

Paso Fino Association Europe e.V.– official association in Europe www.pfae.org

PFHA?

Paso Fino Horse Association – official association in the USA www.pfha.com

Pisador?

Lead rope for the jaquima that connects the throatlatch and is used for leading the horse

Pleasure Type?

Type of the Paso Fino breed that most horses are assigned to. Horses that can be used for any kind of riding; the "everybody can ride" version of the Paso Fino.



Quickness?

With this term the Paso Fino-lover refers to the speed of footfall in gait. The phrase: “Whoa is he quick” indicates: “Whoa, this Paso Fino lifts his feet in such a high frequency, that you can hardly distinguish the individual movements. I am very impressed”!

Show Outfit?

During shows and official events the Paso Fino rider can be identified by his white straw hat, black pants or riding skirt, white long sleeved shirt or blouse. Optional are vests or jackets. To distinguish the Fino rider even more, some of them wear zamarros. The horses are often dressed up with show bridles that have rawhide braiding and traditionally a pisador.

Show Pleasure?

Subcategory of the Pleasure Type. (see also Country Pleasure) Represents the Pleasure type horses that are ‘quicker’ in gait, with a light collection.

Sounding Board?

Long wooden board to listen to the clearness of gait.

Support?

Is offered under www.pfae.org. There you will find experienced trainers and Paso Fino enthusiasts.

Trocha?

A type of diagonal gait. Relaxed gait between trot and four-beat gait, which is often used during training or for young horses, but also for comfortable trail riding.

Trot?

Of course Paso Finos know how to trot. However some of them have so much natural gait that they don't offer trot when ridden, only at liberty when they are lunged.

Use?

The Paso Fino is primarily a gaited horse. You enjoy him best when he is gaiting on the trails and carries you around comfortably. But the amazing thing about the Paso Fino is that he is suited to get a taste for almost all types of riding: classical dressage, western riding, endurance riding, jumping exercises, driving, working on long reins, liberty dressage, trekking, trails. No matter what you're looking to do, you will find the matching Paso Fino. Or you will discover new opportunities based on the disposition of the horse. You just have to engage yourself in the adventure Paso Fino.

Willingness?

The Paso Finos are very motivated. If anything you have to slow them down. Also they are very tough and concerning diseases they are rather robust.

Walk?

Of course the Paso Fino walks. Whoever can gait, can also walk. The walk should be shown in an easy way, consistent with flowing movements.

Zamarros?

These are the traditional oversized Colombian chaps made of heavy cow-hides. They are very warm but impractical for every-day use. They have large pockets on both sides that offer room for many useful things and contrary to what they look like; they are hardly bothersome for the rider. You will always be noticed with Zamarros.





more Information

This brochure aims to give you an impression of the Paso Fino breed. If we could spark your interest, please visit us on our website: www.pfae.org. There you will find the newest information on everything that may interest you about the breed.

With the few Paso Finos that we have in Europe so far, it is difficult to find experienced trainers. Therefore we collected the addresses of knowledgeable Paso Fino people. We also offer test rides near you. Just check out our Paso-Fino map of Europe.

And don't forget to browse the listed links. You will find many interesting websites that offer more information on the Paso Fino and everything that you can experience with these great horses.







Paso Fino Association Europe e.V.
contact@pfae.org • www.pfae.org

