

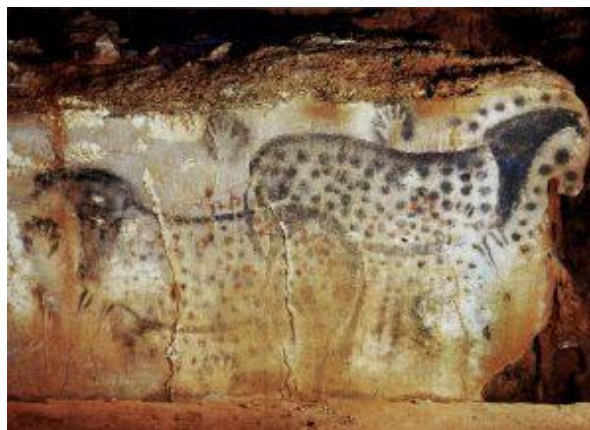
Information from BAPSH. (British Association Pure Bred Spanish Horse) SPANISH SPOTTED SADDLE HORSE STUDBOOK

Introduction



*Leopard Spotted Spanish Stallions were held in high esteem for riding and high school in the early 1700s by the Imperial Riding School of Vienna (later titled the Spanish Riding School of Vienna).
Details from two paintings by Johann Georg von Hamilton.*

Horses with white coats scattered with slightly oval coloured spots were pictured on cave walls around Europe 25,000 years ago, particularly famous are the Peche Merle paintings in France. Originally the spotted colouring of the horses was thought to be 'artistic license', no-one believed that spotted horses existed amongst the wild horses of Europe.



25,000 year old Cave Paintings of Spotted Horses at Peche Merle, France

In modern domestic horses this type of spectacular colouring is known to be caused by a partially dominant gene named Lp (short for Leopard) working with a group of Pattern modifier genes that cumulatively increase the amount of white background coat on the horse. One of these Pattern modifier genes has substantially more effect on increasing white background area and this one has been given the name Patn1; both Lp and Patn1 now have commercial DNA tests established for determining their presence.

The 'Appaloosa Project' website <https://www.appaloosaproject.co> contains the most

recent information and research on the leopard complex genes and is well worth visiting.

A few years ago a group of scientists performed DNA analysis on 25,000 year old equine bone samples from regions of France and Spain (and other countries) and to everyone's amazement the results showed that a small proportion of wild horses did have the Lp mutation, thus proving that Leopard Spotting occurred in wild horses in France and Spain and the artists who created the Peche Merle spotted horse paintings were illustrating reality. The paper on this research is "Genotypes of pre-domestic horses match phenotypes painted in Paleolithic works of cave art" and is published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences; here is a link to an excellent summary of the paper ['Ancient horse DNA sheds light on Cave Paintings'](#)

Naturally, when humans started domesticating horses the eye-catching Leopard spotting coat colour was highly desired and horses with this coat colour were captured and brought into the domesticated herds.

The Leopard Spotted colour pattern has had periods of great popularity, and during 17th and 18th Centuries Spanish Horses with Leopard Spots were selected as the mounts of Kings and Emperors. Spotted Stallions were particular favourites of King Louis XIV of France who features mounted upon Spanish Spotted horses in a number of war and battle paintings by Adam Franz van Meulen in the mid-17th Century.



Leopard Spotted coat colours also featured in the Spanish Stallions and mares selected as the foundation stock for the Imperial Riding School of *Vienna* (see illustrations at top of article). In 1672, a Spanish Spotted Stallion features as the central detail in the French battle scene of 'The Crossing of the Rhine' painted by Adam Frans van der Meulen.

In the 17th/18th & 19th Centuries the accepted term in Britain for the PRE Horse was 'Spanish Jennet' and references to Jennets (also spelt genet and ginete) occur throughout written literature, documents, and artwork; the modern version of the term Spanish Jennet is Spanish Saddle Horse. During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were many instances of spotted Spanish Saddle Horses

(Spanish Jennet horses) in England, some of which are documented in paintings, for example, the painting of 'Lady Conway's Spanish Jennet' by John Wootton, owned by Marquis of Hertford, and others in the art collection of the Earl of Pembroke at Wilton House.



The original spotted version of the PRE horse has been extinct for several hundred years but it is now being re-created in Britain as the Spanish Spotted Saddle Horse using a blend of PRE horses combined with two Spotted breeds that descend from ancestral PRE stock, the Foundation Appaloosa descending from the PRE horses used in the conquest of the Americas, and the Knabstrupper descending from PRE horses abandoned in Denmark in 1808.

The goal of the Spanish Spotted Saddle Horse Breeding Programme in Britain is to produce a versatile quality riding horse with the type, conformation, character, and movement of the baroque PRE with a spotted phenotype. Ideally all Spanish Spotted Saddle Horses should have the Lp Spotting gene in combination with Patn1 &/or Patn2 genes to permit maximum expression of the spotted coat colour.