

45 Ideas⁺

Photographing Different Disciplines

American Horse Publications
Hoofprints in the Sand Seminar
San Diego, California
June 18, 2011

Panelists:

Gail Bates

Gail Bates Photography & Advertising
Clements ,CA
209-759-3642
gailbatesphoto@gmail.com
www.gailbates.com

Arnd Bronkhorst
Arnd Bronkhorst Fotografie
The Netherlands
info@arnd.nl
www.arnd.nl

Diana De Rosa

Press Link
Farmingdale, NY
516-848-4867
dderosa1@optonline.net
www.presslinkpr.com
www.aperfectpresskit.com

Milt Toby
Attorney/Author
Georgetown, KY
502-867-0241
milt.toby@miltonctoby.com
www.miltonctoby.com

Panel Moderator

Pat Trowbridge

Publisher—Equine Titles
BowTie Incorporated (Horse Illustrated, Young Rider & Thoroughbred Times)
Los Angeles, CA
213-385-2222 ext. 2134
ptrowbridge@bowtieinc.com

GAIL BATES

Western Stock Events

Gail Bates of Clements, California, has long been one of the most successful photographers in the equine industry. Gail was the Official Photographer at the 1994 & 1995 APHA World Championship Shows. Also to her credits, Official Photographer for the Australia National Paint Championships, National Quarter Horse Championships, National Appaloosa Championships, National Halter Championships and National Cutting Horse Futurity for a number of years.

1. FLAT KNEES

In many breeds knee action is a good thing. In the western breeds, they want to see as little knee action as possible. They want “sweepy” legs. Knee is a 4-letter word. So the photos in the western pleasure and the hunter under saddle need to show all 4 legs extended and Straight Flat flat flat...

2. LEVEL

Only in the western breeds, and in particular, western pleasure, do you want to see the neck out and level with the back. This goes for riding and conformation shots for the pleasure horse. However the days of the “peanut roller” are gone. Judges are supposed to disqualify a horse that goes over 5 strides with the head below level.

3. LIFT

At the lope, you want collection and lift in the back. To show this, a hind leg on the ground as the other legs rise to reach forward will show not only the lift in the back, but the sweep of the knees (hopefully flat knees).

4. SQUARE

¾ front halter photos are the standard conformation shot for the western breeds. Standing them “square”, you want equal distance between the front legs, back legs and front-to-back legs. It shows off the “v” in the chest and the muscles in the forearms and gaskins. If you have too little space between front and back legs, you hide the all important gaskin muscles... The most common mistake is by not shooting at a low enough level.

5. PROFILE

The proper stance is to have the near legs straight up and down with the far legs just to the inside. Very important to NOT have the hind legs out behind the vertical, unless it is a Hunter, where the near hind leg can be out in the small stretch. Neck level will depend upon whether it is a halter horse or a rider.

6. THE EYELASH

In almost all cases, the most flattering headshot is when you can just see the opposite eyelash. You will then see the bulge of the eye socket and the “dish.”

7. SPIN

In the Reining events, there are 2 main shots, the slide and the spin. Planting the inside hind leg, they will pivot (spin) fast and hopefully controlled. The main photos of the spin would be the crossover and the reach.

8. STEP HIGH

For trail the best shot is usually a walkover. You want the leg elevated making it obvious it is not going to rub the rail. This is one time you do not want a flat knee look in the western horse. With the straight leg, you cannot tell if they hit the pole or not.

9.

SLIDING

Reiners have come a long way from the stiff, stilted reiners of the past. Now, they slide deep and are relaxed in the legs, walking as they slide. The photos need to show the soft leg as they walk. Of course, you want their ass in the ground and the dirt flying.

10.

EYE-TO-EYE

In cutting, the horse wants to stay eye-to-eye with the cow, to control it. My favorite shot is when they “set up” right in the middle and dare the cow to move. This is the “money shot” for cutting.

11.

THE MISS

In cutting, the most common mistake is to shoot the “miss.” When the horse loses control of the cow, he turns inside out to get back in front of it. But if they get a body length off, it is a “miss” and a 1 to 3 point penalty. Often a spectacular movement shot, the cutter will NOT want to see his miss in print.

12.

FENCING

In the working cowhorse class, the “fence” shot is when they run full speed down the rail and turn into the fence, blocking the cow and turning him back. The rider needs to be eye to eye and then push JUST past the cow to turn him. That makes a great shot. If they are a body length past the horse, that is showing a major penalty.

13.

CIRCLE UP

The other shot for Working Cowhorse is circling the cow. After boxing the cow at the end, running down the fence, you then pull the cow off the fence to the center and run circles around him, turning him tighter and tighter to show control. Once you control one way, you go the other direction. They need to be head to head with the cow for the best photos. If they are lagging behind, at the barrel of the cow....Not a good shot...the cow is in control.

14.

THE LOOP

Team Roping... The best shots will be the head horse, after catching the horns, will turn and pull the steer off balance. At that point, when the steer is off balance, the heeler will throw the rope, catch the heels and then they will “stretch” out the steer.

MILT TOBY

Racing/Copyright

Milt Toby is an author, photographer, attorney, and world traveler who works from his home in Georgetown, Kentucky. Formerly on the editorial staff of The Blood-Horse magazine, he covered Thoroughbred racing in the United States, England, Panama, and Japan.

15.

START AT THE FINISH

If you only have one shot, this is it. Shoot from the outside rail, standing at the finish line or a few yards past. The winner will be moving fast, and may be in the middle of the rack.

16.

FIND THE STORY

The finish is the focal point of a horse race, but the finish is not always the most interesting aspect. No one remembers a finish photo of Foolish Pleasure winning the match race with Ruffian; everyone remembers the grainy images from the backstretch where Ruffian broke down.

17.

YOU OWN YOUR WORK—UNLESS YOU DON'T

The photographer is the “author” of a photograph for copyright purposes, unless:

- You're a freelancer who signed a work-for-hire contract
- You're an employee and the photography was within the “scope of your employment”

In either case the employer is the “author.”

18.
KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT
The finish of the Kentucky Derby is not the best time to try out that new superfast, 300mm lens. Be certain everything is working, know what your equipment can (and more important, cannot) do—and use new (or freshly charged) batteries.
19.
RIGHTS—THE MORE YOU GIVE, THE MORE YOU SHOULD GET
For freelancers, keep in mind that the more rights you transfer to a client, the more you should get paid. Don't undercut the competition, no matter how badly you want to see your work in a particular publication. Everyone suffers in the long run.
20.
MODEL AND PROPERTY RELEASES
You generally don't have to worry about model/property releases for editorial use, such as a magazine cover or illustrations for a timely article. You should have model/property releases for commercial use in an advertisement or any other use that implies an endorsement of a product or service.
21.
THE WINNER'S CIRCLE
Check out the winner's circle ahead of time for location, access, and lighting. The track photographer probably will orchestrate the action. Things move quickly so don't dawdle!
22.
THE TRACK PHOTOGRAPHER
The track photographer is a paid employee of the race track and will shoot every finish, every winner's circle ceremony, and every trophy presentation. Most of his (or her) income is generated through sales of photographs to horse owners. The track photographer can be your best friend or your worst enemy.
23.
CONFORMING CONFORMATION
Conformation shots differ from breed to breed. If you don't know a good Thoroughbred conformation shot from a bad one, do some research in one of the trade journals.
24.
IT'S THE PEOPLE
Depending on the planned coverage, shooting a race might involve photographing the people as well as the horses. You can't photograph the people if you don't know who they are, so do your homework. Trade journals are a great resource, as are other photographers.
25.
COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION
For freelancers, you can register all photographs from a particular race as a collection (Kentucky Derby 2011, for example) with the copyright office in Washington DC. Registration is not required for copyright protection, but registration is necessary for an infringement lawsuit and timely registration can enhance penalties for infringement.
26.
GETTING ON THE TRACK
You can photograph a race as a civilian, without press credentials and without being on the track, but it's much easier inside the rail. Credentials for major races can be difficult (sometimes impossible) to obtain. Most tracks also require credentials for access to the backstretch. Apply well in advance.
27.
INTERNET THEFT—A COST OF DOING BUSINESS?
Poaching photographs from an Internet site is almost impossible to prevent. Watermarks with a © might help, but they can be removed by a clever hacker. Embedding copyright information in meta data can establish ownership and the tags may go unnoticed by Internet thieves. A cease and desist letter may be an alternative to expensive federal court litigation for infringement.

28.

PREPARE FOR THE ELEMENTS

Protect yourself and your cameras from the elements. Water and electronics don't mix. Pack plastic bags and duct tape and keep a camera body in reserve if possible. Pack sunscreen and a hat.

29.

REMOTE PHOTOGRAPHY

Those nifty under-the-rail shots are done with remote equipment. Hard-wired remotes are more reliable; radio remotes are easier to use. Check in advance if remotes cameras are allowed.

30.

SLOWER CAN BE BETTER

A fast shutter speed can stop the action of a race. Panning with a slow shutter speed can create a more interesting image.

DIANA DE ROSA

Hunters, Jumpers, Equitation

Diana De Rosa has been both a writer and photographer for over 30 years and has covered the Olympic Games, the World Equestrian Games and numerous other events nationally and internationally.

31.

HUNTERS-IT'S ALL ABOUT PERFECTION

In hunters you want to catch the horse at the peak of the fence, knees tightly closed, both rider and horse looking elegant.

32.

SPECIAL MOMENTS

Always have your camera ready for the unexpected because you never know when you'll capture that special shot.

33.

SILENT ELEGANCE

It's not always about the action. Sometimes just watching a horse's reaction and having your camera ready will produce a shot that just jumps off the page.

34.

BEHIND THE ACTION

Sometimes the view from behind is best. While we always strive to get the action from an angle or heading straight for us, sometimes shooting the action from behind can capture a unique look and feel.

35.

DARK SILENCE

Sometimes you don't want too much light. Silhouette shots don't give you as much detail but can speak volumes. Barn shots especially can produce some interesting results.

36.

JUMPER PERFECTION

Sometimes you want the jumpers at the peak of the jump because that's the perfect elegant shot.

37.

JUMPER ACTION

Other times you want something a little bit different and this time perhaps it's the power in the photo, a landing shot or galloping around a corner.

38.

AWARDS - AFTER THE RIDE

It's not always about the jump. Remember to watch the horse and rider after they finish their ride so that you can capture their emotion.

39.

GREAT LIGHT

Sometimes it's all about the lighting. Lighting without shadows is the best lighting of all. So think about shooting in the morning or later in the day when it's not too contrasty.

40.

WORDS SPEAK

Sometimes busy is okay because it depends upon the purpose of the shot. If it's for a sponsor, you may want to be sure to capture all the right elements in that photo. The sponsor's name, the name of the event and the image all perfectly balanced.

41.

FLAG TIME

Country Support can be evident by how those spectators and supporting team members display those flags. Keep an eye out especially when their country is in the arena.

42.

THE GOOD & THE BAD

Empty Seats are something to be avoided but occasionally you'll get that wonderful shot with empty seats behind and so you have to make the decision on whether the quality of the image is more important or the subject or is there a way to use the key part of that image without those empty seats.

43.

WHEN YOU GET IT RIGHT

Getting those pictures published is the name of the game and so first capturing the image is important but then you want to get it published and maintain a scrapbook of your results.

ARND BRONKHORST

Dressage, Eventing, Horses at Liberty

Based in The Netherlands, **Arnd Bronkhorst** has worked as a professional equestrian photographer since 1986. He covers international events, including the Olympic Games and World Equestrian Games, as well as a wide variety of other subjects concerning horses.

44.

SEE WITHOUT CAMERA

Look at the subject without a camera, before starting to take pictures. Decide what looks best and where it looks best.

45.

BACKGROUND

Decide what your background will be. This is the first thing to get right. A bad background will ruin the outline of your subject, clutter the image and make the subject less recognizable.

46.

LIGHT

The second thing to decide is the direction of the light. Try to find a combo of background and light that will work well. Though "the sun in your back" is the safe option, it is also boring. Use the light to shape your subject and create atmosphere.

47.

SUBJECT

Enter the subject of the picture. Let the action play out in front of your chosen background, and in the right light. Though it is not always possible to set the scene to the same degree, making conscious decisions in these key matters is important to making your images stand out.

48.

FAR OUT

Try to maximize the distance between your subject and the background. This will allow you to get the backgrounds out of focus, concentrating the eye of the viewer on the subject even more.

49.

GET LOW

Don't take pictures from eye level: everybody has seen that already. It will also make many horses look relatively small. Get on your knees or even lower, and make the horse and the obstacles look bigger.

50.

AIM FOR THE STARS

In almost all horse photography, the horse needs to move upwards, not down. Make sure the footing is even or goes up, not down. This is true for confirmation shots, action shots, and even for portraits where a part of the body is visible.

51.

COMMUNICATE

Talk to the rider, handler and/or owner. Explain what you want to do, where you plan on taking the pictures, where to release the horse, where a rider can relax and where they should perform.

52.

NOT TOO LONG

A horse running free is a great sight, but it doesn't always last long. After a few minutes even, horses may start sweating, become less powerful, they become less focused and eventually it will show in the photograph. Be ready when the horse is turned loose.

53.

NOT SO FREE

Fence off where you don't want the horse to go because of bad backgrounds, bad light. The suggestion is that they are running free, the reality is that they are not. Sorry.

54.

HIT OR MISS

In Eventing all you get is one opportunity usually. In most cases, there is hardly time to run from one obstacle to another, as the next rider is already arriving in a few minutes. Plan ahead with the starting order and an obstacle list in hand to see where you can miss riders and change fences.

55.

MULTIPLE SHOTS

Try to find the combined obstacles, where the riders have to jump several times. If the winning rider has a bad jump on your obstacle, you won't have a decent shot.

56.

DENIAL

No dressage rider will admit it, but there are weaknesses and strong points to any horses' performance. By careful conversation, try to find out what the best movements of the horse are to take pictures of. Make it clear that you have a common goal in looking for great shots that show beautiful movements.

57.

NO-GO AREAS

Avoid walk, shoulder-in, reining back. They just don't work. Pirouettes are difficult to get right for horse, rider and photographer. Try to get other stuff then just the extended trot.

58.

POSITIVE TENSION

I look for the moments that show positive, upward movements. You need to learn to identify the moments that show the best shape, the best outline. In each movement, there is a buildup to the best moment, and then the aftermath where the tension goes down again. The best moments are often right before the moment of maximum tension.

The PowerPoint Presentation file shown during the session at the American Horse Publications seminar in San Diego is available to AHP members on request.

Please contact: Chris Brune

ahorsepubs@aol.com

387-760-7743

American Horse Publications

49 Spinnaker Circle

South Daytona, FL 32119

www.americanhorsepubs.org