



Painting Horses

By Elliott Saunders

This article is based on a painting guide we found whilst surfing about the internet, and we thought it was so good we'd make sure everyone saw it. It's one of many painting and modelling articles on Elliott's site (www.ellsweb.com), which is well worth a visit next time you're on-line. To demonstrate the results of these instructions we got our own Mr Roach to wield his brushes and give us an example of each, painted as per the instructions. Anyway, without further ado, over to Elliott:

A few people consider painting horses as an enjoyable pastime, others really detest it since their detail is often minimal and their expanses of large, mostly smooth areas can be tricky to highlight. I am, I'm afraid, of the latter camp, and I seriously try to shy away from horses whenever possible. However, I have written this guide so that all those new to the hobby may take the opportunity to see exactly how a horse is painted, even if they, too, never want to paint one!

Now, I am no horse rider, in fact, I've only ever sat on one horse in my life, so whatever I say in this guide is not in any way gospel, but I have collected many references and viewed a LOT of pictures to try to make this guide as factual as possible.

Hoof Colours

Hoof colour is very dependant on the limb and the horse. Black hooves will never appear on white horses, and white hooves never appear on black horses, however striped hooves may appear on either. Stockings or socks can be either white or black, and will depend on the horse as to how far they come up and what colour they are on the leg. Ermine marks are speckled white lines above the hoof that has black marks or dots on.



Blazes and Facial Striping

Blazes can occur on any colour of animal, regardless of whether the animal can have socks. Here are a few of the common varieties of 'blaze'.



Star



Snip



Long Snip



Stripe



Blaze



Muzzle



Face

There are a few 'areas' on the horse that I may refer to in this guide, and they are as follows:

Muzzle: The lower end of the horse's face, from just under the eyes down.

Mane: The hair running down the back of the horse's head and neck.

Tail: Hairy bit above the bum.

Cannon: The upper part of the lower leg, just below the knee but above the fetlock.

Cuffs/Socks: A white patch that can extend from the fetlock, through the cannon, up to just above the knee.

Fetlock: The ankle, just above the hoof but below the knee and cannon.

Hoof: The actual end on the foot, the nail piece.

Bays

Brown horse, ranging from a light tan red to a very dark reddy-brown, with a black mane, tail, muzzle and cannon. Often the black cuff can extend up over the horse's knee (to become a sock) – if the horse has white cuffs then the black continues above the white.



Dark Bay

Basecoat: Scorched Brown, add a touch of Red Gore

Wash: Black, red-brown mix

Highlight: Dark Flesh

Cannon/Muzzle: Black, Dark Flesh/black mix highlights

Mane/tail: Same as muzzle

White cuffs/blazes: No, they are usually dark.



Light Bay

Basecoat: Bubonic Brown

Wash: Bubonic Brown/Chestnut Ink wash

Highlight: Bubonic Brown, Bleached Bone

Cannon/Muzzle: Cannon Scorched Brown, muzzle often lighter, Bleached Bone/Skull White mix.

Mane/tail: Scorched Brown/Black mix

White cuffs/blazes: No, usually dark.

Black

Very dark brown, not entirely black (which helps for highlighting), but can have white cuffs or blazes in any combination.

Basecoat: Very dark Scorched Brown-black mix, almost pure black.

Wash: Black

Highlight: Dark brown/black or grey

Cannon/Muzzle: Black

Mane/tail: Black

White cuffs/blazes: Yes, in any combination.



Grey

Range from a dappled grey through to a dark steel grey. Mane and tail are often either darker or lighter than the coat, and the muzzle and cannon darker than the coat. Greys can have white cuffs.



Pale Grey or Dapple Grey

Basecoat: Ghostly Grey

Dapple: Space Wolves Grey

Wash: Fortress Grey/Ghostly Grey watery mix to obscure dapple.

Cannon/Muzzle: Shadow Grey

Mane/tail: Bleached Bone/Space Wolves Grey Mix, highlight with Skull White.

Cuffs/blazes: Usually no blazes but can have any combination cuff.

For realism, no horse is truly all grey. They are usually a very dark colour (not quite black) with lighter grey hairs showing here and there. Of course, when painting models we want to give an impression rather than an exact copy, so we can ignore this issue and just paint the whole horse in Codex Grey and highlight with Fortress Grey and then Fortress Grey and Skull White. However, if you want to be slightly more realistic then I suggest applying a black undercoat, and watering down the Codex Grey to an almost milky appearance. Apply this carefully to the horse, leaving in some of the strokes of the brush. Naturally at the scale we're working we shouldn't be able to see the actual hairs, but we want to give the impression of the black and grey hairs together. Using this method, we get a simple highlight in grey, over the black undercoat that leaves an impression that looks like the real thing. Blenders and layerers will know that applying very watery colour requires not only very steady hands, but the use of a little trick: when applying very watery colour, use a piece of tissue to draw off some of the water from the side of the brush (not too near the tip and definitely not too near the ferrule or you'll cake the brush up, so preferably use an old brush) and leave the pigment at the end of the brush. If you water it down too far, add some more paint – it should be watery enough to see the black undercoat, but not so watery that it puddles or turns into a big droplet on the figure.

Then highlight up using Fortress Grey and Fortress Grey and Skull White mix as normal, taking care not to cover over too much of the previous layer. It does look odd, but is more realistic than coating the horse all in grey. To bring out detail, you can use a wash of Codex Grey.

The mane and tail are similar to the body, with grey highlights over a black undercoat, going up to almost Skull White in spots but not too pale: we want to give an overall impression of dark grey with lighter grey and white hairs peeking out here and there.

Dappling a Grey Horse

The coat of grey horses is most commonly a mixture of white and dark hairs, rather than a uniform grey. This will often give the animal a slightly "spotted" or dappled appearance, which I duplicate in the following way. Cover the horse in the basecoat ensuring that all the areas are covered. Take an old small 0 or 00 brush and dip it into a watery mix of the dapple colour and wipe some off onto a rag or tissue. Gently touch the tip of the brush down (rather than across, we don't want streaks, but dots). We want to create irregular, small blotches not long streaks. Once dry, mix up a watery mix of the wash and apply to the horse so that you can just see the dapple, but it has a more diffused, soft effect.



Dark Grey or Steel Grey

Undercoat: Chaos Black

Basecoat: Codex Grey

Highlights: Fortress Grey then Fortress Grey and White Skull.

Wash: Codex Grey

Cannon/Muzzle: Muzzle approaching an almost Codex Grey colour, but still quite dark so don't highlight up too far, cannon's should remain mostly dark, but they can be as light as the muzzle.

Mane/tail: Chaos Black with streaks of Codex Grey as noted below in the longer method or highlight to Codex Grey if not using that method.

Cuffs/blazes: See previous description, but again, if possible, leave them dark.

Palamino

Another pale golden brown with a blonde mane and tail and white blazes and cuffs. Never has dark markings on its lower legs.



Basecoat: Vomit Brown

Wash: Leprous Brown/Flesh Wash mix, make it watery.

Highlight: Vomit Brown/Bleached Bone mix

Cannon/Muzzle: As basecoat. Muzzle may occasionally be pinkish or grey though.

Mane/tail: Bleached Bone, wash with Bubonic Brown and highlight with Skull White.

White cuffs/blazes: Usually the blaze extends to cover the muzzle, and three out of four legs tend to have a white cuff.

Roan

A pale dusty brown or 'strawberry', which is a very light red-brown. Often have a dark cannon and muzzle but the mane and tail are almost always much paler than the coat. Can have cuffs and blazes in white and in any combination.



Basecoat: Snakebite Leather

Wash: Vermin Brown/Flesh Wash mix

Highlight: Leprous Brown/Vermin Brown

Cannon/Muzzle: Muzzle usually dark brown-grey

Mane/tail: Bestial Brown, with dark Scorched Brown wash at ends.

White cuffs/blazes: Yes, in any combination.

Piebald

Traditionally, in Europe, a black and white patchwork horse (imagine a Friesian cow like a horse) is called a Piebald. For the most part, these horses are usually white horses with random "blotches" of black or what can appear to be a very dark brown (nearly black, but slightly reddy-brown under intense light), often in a "jigsaw" pattern on the coat. Usually Piebalds have white legs or stockings, the black coloration staying within the coat area, but some can be seen with black legs. Piebalds' faces are almost always black, with a blaze or stripe of white.



Basecoat: Touch of Ghostly Grey in white with Chaos Black for patches.

Wash: Very watery mix of darker basecoat

Highlight: Skull White for white, with a Scorched Brown/Black mix for black patches.

Cannon/Muzzle: Black or white (all one colour usually)

Mane/tail: Usually black

White Cuffs/blazes: Most often whole leg is one colour but can be white or black on an opposing coloured leg.

Skewbald

Skewbald on the other hand is a white horse with any other colour, usually randomly blotched with browns, ranging from a medium brown to an almost black (but characteristically a brown that you can differentiate from black, so ensure when painting that it stands out as a very dark brown, ie, 'brown' enough to be seen). Occasionally Skewbald can have black legs, which are often confined to one side of the body and merge with the brown patches above the legs on the body.



Basecoat: Follow the white horse, but for brown patches, choose between any of the roan, chestnut or dark bay colours.

Wash: Very watery mix of darker basecoat.

Highlight: Skull White for white, with browns as noted elsewhere for the particular brown you've chosen to use.

Cannon/Muzzle: Brown or white (all one colour usually).

Mane/tail: Usually brown

Cuffs/blazes: Most often whole leg is one colour but can be white or brown on an opposing coloured leg.

Mealy Muzzles

This is quite a complex question and depends on the horse's parentage and genetic makeup, but suffice to say that almost all horses can have a mealy muzzle, except some very dark horses, such as bays and blacks.

best scientist voice It occurs most commonly in roan or medium brown horses and often in mules/donkeys/asses. It is essentially a genetic dominant gene 'defect' – (because horses are not bred for it's trait, its a problem that has largely been overcome with time so older horses (from fantasy/ancient armies times) would have had a more visible problem because of a rouge gene called 'Pangare'. There is also another 'defect' that occurs naturally in light, usually white or dapple horses, called blood spots, which are essentially a concentration of flea bites, often on the flanks and shoulders).

Anyway, mealy markings can cause lighter areas on the belly, muzzle (most common when it occurs at all), inner legs and over the eyes. It is usually bred out these days and for the most part, is actually uncommon in horses anyway (it's more common in mules). Mealy points are off-white (Bleached Bone or white/BB mix) and are sometimes so extensive they can occur up to the throat, breast and flanks. Usually in such cases, the horse also has light eye rings and a muzzle but a dark belly.

Dun

Very pale yellow with dark mane, tail muzzle and cannon. Very rarely has blazes or cuffs.



Basecoat: Bleached Bone

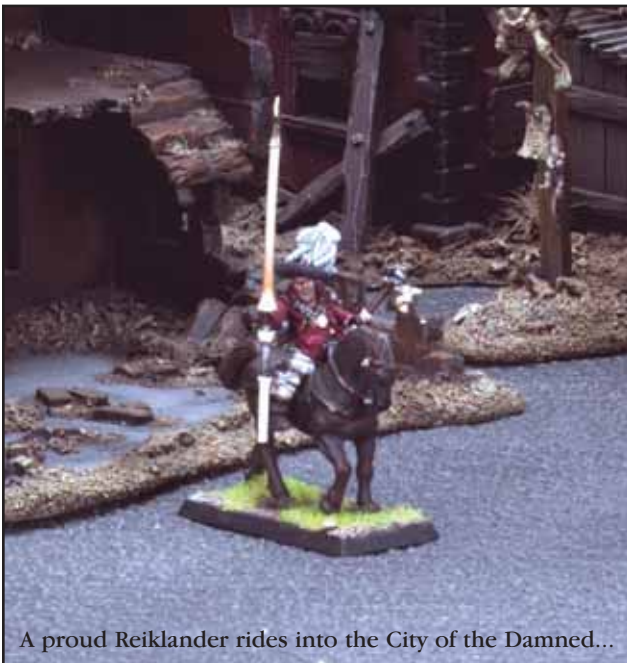
Wash: Flesh Wash/Bubonic Brown, make it watery.

Highlight: Bleached Bone

Cannon/Muzzle: White/Bleached Bone blend

Mane/tail: Bleached Bone, apply dark grey/brown wash to the very end of the tail and mane.

White cuffs/blazes: Occasionally



A proud Reiklander rides into the City of the Damned...



Appaloosa

There is another horse, called the Appaloosa, with similar markings to the Piebald and Skewbald, but these are often confined to 'spots' of black or brown (on a white horse or spots of white on a black/brown horse), rather than patchy 'jigsaw/cow' marks. Only rarely do these horses have facial markings other than a blaze.

There are six main Appaloosa patterns and several pattern variations, with a roan being the most common base colour.

There is the leopard coat, which is an all over white background with dark spots. Or its opposite: the snowflake, being an all over dark background with white spots.

Alternatively, there's the spotted blanket, which is mainly a dark body (black or dark brown, choose the dark chestnut or bay) with dark spots on a white back and/or hindquarters.

This contrasts to the white blanket, which has a mainly light body with a dark back and/or hindquarters.

For painting, follow the instructions for a white horse, with either the black horse's instructions for the dark areas and spots, or dark bay or dark chestnut. Note that these horses can be a really mixed up colour combination, from being a white back and hindquarters, with a chestnut front and roan legs to a more usual spotty black and white horse!



Cannon/Muzzle: Often a white blaze

Mane/tail: Usually brown or black

White cuffs/blazes: Yes, in any combination, but can also have a light roan/dun colour up to the level of a stocking.

Chestnut

Bright copper brown to a dark reddy-brown, with the mane and tail mostly the same colours as the body. Sometimes the chestnut will have a mane and tail of golden/blonde hair, but unlike bay's chestnuts have no black cuffs or socks that extend to the cannon.



Dark Chestnut

Basecoat: Scorched Brown/black mix, but more brown than the 'black' horse.

Wash: Black-brown ink/paint mix

Highlight: Scorched Brown/black mix

Cannon/Muzzle: As basecoat

Mane/tail: As basecoat

White cuffs/blazes: Yes, in any combination.



Light Chestnut

Basecoat: Dark Flesh

Wash: Red, chestnut and dark brown ink/paint washes

Highlight: Bestial Brown/Vermin Brown

Cannon/Muzzle: As coat

Mane/tail: Slightly lighter or darker than the basecoat.

White cuffs/blazes: Yes, in any combination.



White

A light grey more than white, but will usually have a very light and white looking tail and mane, with a pinky muzzle. Consider sitting musicians, standard-bearers or other important dignitaries or heroes on white or grey horses in 'good' armies for that extra touch!



Basecoat: Touch of Bleached Bone in white.

Wash: Watery Bleached Bone/Grey mix

Highlight: Skull White

Muzzle: Can be pinkish or grey.

Cannon: If pink muzzle, as coat colour. If dark, cannon as muzzle colours.

Mane/tail: If pink muzzle, Bleached Bone, shade with Bubonic Brown at ends. If dark muzzle, Codex Grey wash with black at ends.

White cuffs/blazes: Often has cuffs, but not usually any blazes. Follow the mane example for colour.



Can a Zombie run faster than a horse? Depends which movie you watch.

Author

A self-confessed "computer geek", Elliott has more than just a talent for bits and bytes. His web site is full of interesting painting and modelling guides and is well worth a visit, regardless of which games you play. He's also an amateur cryptozoologist, which makes me wonder if his pet cat really is just a normal cat...

Further Information

More Mordheim Website

The mounted Characters are now available from Direct Sales (See page 94 for How to Order).

Turn to page 68 for the Averlanders.

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