

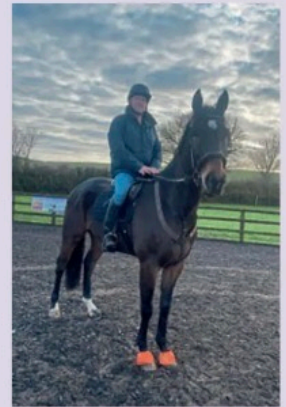


## 'I WAS BEING "VETTED" BY THE SELLER'

Matthew has bought four ex-racehorses over the years, including the latest addition, 17.3hh ex-pointer Black Alpha ('Alfie'). Matthew bought him from a private home.

"He'd been off the track for two years and had only been lightly hacked in that time. The previous owner was only selling him as they were going abroad."

For Matthew, the important thing was the trustworthiness of the seller: "Buying from a genuine and caring home was important, and we knew the sale was genuine. I felt that as much as I was trying the horse, I was also being 'vetted' by Alfie's seller to ensure that the horse was going to a good home. He was clearly very cared for and his former owner wanted to ensure the best for him."



"First of all, we clarify what the potential owner is looking for and ask for videos of them riding so that we can get an idea of what horse might suit them," says Kevin.

If the charity thinks they have a potential match, a visit is arranged: "We'll put them on a schoolmaster first, then show them their potential match being ridden by a member of our staff before they get to ride, under supervision in a safe space, such as our round pen."

On a second visit, the prospective owner can tack up the horse or bring them in from the field, as well as riding them. On a third visit, they might have the opportunity to hack out.

### Aftercare

The other advantage of rehoming from a charity is the aftercare, as Kevin explains. "Owners become part of our big family and we're always at the end of the phone. We also have a closed Facebook group, where people can ask questions and post pictures. It's a safe group where people know they won't be judged."

Philippa agrees that this ongoing relationship with the charity is of huge benefit for both owner and horse.

"The charities will lease or loan the horse to safeguard its wellbeing for life and this ensures the horse always has a secure future, regardless of changes in the loaner's circumstances."



Always view a horse in person and watch the seller ride first

PHOTO: YOUR HORSE LIBRARY

### OPTION 4

#### FROM A PRIVATE HOME

Another option may be to buy a former racehorse from another private owner, via an advert or social media. In this instance, apply the same scrutiny as you would when buying any breed of horse.

"How long have they had the horse and why are they selling it? If someone has had a horse for three or four months and they aren't ride it, then I'd wonder why," says Kevin.

But with the appropriate due diligence, buying an ex-racehorse from someone with a genuine reason for sale can be a good option.

#### Do your research

Find out as much about the horse's history as you can, including how long since they finished retraining and what level they are training at now. You'll also want to get a good idea of their temperament, behaviour and things they like and dislike.

No horse is perfect and a thorough look at their health and veterinary history, as well as seeing them ridden — and riding them yourself — in different places and in varying weathers at various times of day, will all help you to establish a picture of what the horse is like.

Always take a second pair of eyes with you — ideally someone with experience of ex-racehorses — and a vetting is recommended. Be honest about your own experience and what you'd like to do with the horse. Any reputable seller will be able to say whether the horse will be suitable.

### OPTION 5

#### AT AUCTION

Experienced buyers can also consider an auction, where you'll have less information about the horse's background, but prices can be lower for those destined for the leisure market.

However, if your heart strings are easily pulled, then an auction might not be wise, as Kevin points out: "Rescuing a horse can be noble, but it's not always the right thing for the horse."

A lot of ex-racehorses pass through the sale ring at places such as Ascot and Tattersalls. There are many success stories, but it really is only an option for experienced buyers because you don't truly know what you've got until you get the horse home. Some will arrive in the ring days after racing for the last time, so their new home also marks the start of a whole new way of life — physically and mentally.



Auctions are best for experienced buyers

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