

WELCOME *home!*

Bringing a new horse back to base can be both exciting and terrifying. **Catherine Welton** finds out how a recently formed partnership can get off to the best possible start

PART
TWO

BUYING A HORSE is a huge responsibility, so no wonder it's a rollercoaster ride of emotions for new owners.

"There's a great deal of excitement and then thoughts like 'what have I done?' come flooding in. It can be overwhelming, but it's normal to have those thoughts and react like that," says Natalie Passmore, a BHSII SM coach and livery yard owner who has helped many clients buy new horses over the years.

For new owners, it might feel like they have endless decisions to make, but prioritising what is important will make it manageable.

Where to keep the new horse is the first thing to consider. Natalie runs a livery yard that offers a variety of packages, but she also has clients who keep their horses at home, so she knows the pros and cons of all options.

She believes that new owners should start by asking themselves questions: "If I'm working full time will I need assisted or full livery? What facilities will I require? I have clients, for example, who work late and need floodlights so that they can ride late into the evening."

Natalie also advises making sure that the livery yard's facilities match the horse's needs.

"If your horse requires year-round turnout, check that the yard owner can accommodate this. It's also worth thinking about the environment your horse is coming from. If he's been living on a quiet yard, he may struggle to adjust to somewhere busy."

Location, location, location applies to livery yards too.

"Is it close enough to where you live? Is it near competition venues if that's what you want to do?" are all questions that Natalie would ask.

Natalie believes that there are advantages to opting for a DIY package with a new horse.

"You want to spend as much time as possible with him, to get to know his mannerisms and quirks, so you know what behaviour is normal for him," she says. "You can even learn a lot when poo picking in the field as you watch how he interacts with others."

That said, for some less experienced new owners Natalie believes that full livery is the better option.

"Full livery means that you have knowledgeable back up on hand if you need it," she says.