

Encyclopedia of the Horse

CATALOG OF BREEDS AND TYPES | LIGHTER HORSES

Orlov Trotter

HEIGHT AT WITHERS
16h (64 in)

ORIGIN
Russia

COLOURS
Any, but grey and black are favoured

One of the oldest and most popular Russian breeds, the Orlov was originally developed as a carriage and racing horse.

At the end of the 18th century, Count Alexei Orlov crossed his white Arab stallion, Serebriak, with Dutch, Dutch-Flemish, and Danish mares at his Orlov stud near Moscow. Serebriak left only five offspring in his short stud career, but among them was Pulkari I, the result of a mating with a Dutch mare of Spanish blood heritage. Pulkari I was mated with a substantial Dutch mare, chosen because she had the freedom of movement and energy levels necessary for trotting. This resulted in the Orlov Trotter's foundation stallion, the grey Bess I—bred in 1784 and used extensively at the Orlov stud. From 1788 Count Orlov and his Khesars stud manager continued to work on the evolution of the Orlov. Bess I sired Asha, Donski, and Dutch mares as well as English half-blood and Arab-Moslem blood crosses. A policy of breeding to Bess and his sons to establish the desired type was then practiced: the pedigrees of all purebred Orlov Trotters

show a strong connection to the foundation stallion. Training and a regular program of trotting races were carried out in Moscow from 1810 onward to encourage improvements in the breed and enhance performance. The Orlov combines height and elegance with a light, powerful build. Ideally, the legs are fine and set square on the body, and there should be pronounced muscular development. There are five basic types within the breed, influenced by the policies of the individual studs. The best is the Khesars type, which is regarded as the classical Orlov. Improvements continue to work emphasis on preserving the height, build, strength of tendons, and the potential to trot at speed.

TROIKA

The word troika means triple or trio. In driving it is when three horses are worked side by side other driving single. The center horse is usually harnessed with a collar harness to a carriage and the two winging the pair sit above its shoulders. It works at a gallop, while the outside horses are either side on or breast to breast. They are also kept on light side-reins, which turn the horses toward and away from the driver's position.



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