

2025 ASAW People's Choice Horse of the Year Nominations

Nominees are presented in alphabetical order. Bios are printed exactly as they were received

ARE YOU IN

Are You In exemplifies everything that defines the American Saddlebred. This year alone, he distinguished himself across multiple divisions—Adult Country Pleasure, Adult Equitation, Western Country Pleasure, and Open Breed Model—proving both his versatility and remarkable trainability. Chip earned top placings on some of the sport's largest stages, including Top 3 at Lexington, Top 5 finishes in The Good Hands Final, and Top 5 in the USEF Medal at Kansas City, while amassing more than 20 blue ribbons throughout the show season.

Chip has wonderful ring presence & is well attuned with his partner Lena. Throughout the 2025 show season he demonstrated versatility to perform at a high level across all disciplines with ease. He loves to perform! You can see him bring his love for completion as he moves easily through a variety of arena venues with poise & focused energy. He is the horse I go to the shows to watch & support because I am in awe of who he is.

Beyond his exceptional talent and consistent results, Chip's temperament is what truly sets him apart. He is kind, generous, and endlessly willing, carrying every rider with heart and confidence. Whether he is asked to shine in the equitation ring, show elegance in country pleasure, or display correct conformation in model classes, Chip rises to the moment with grace and honesty.

Are You In aka Chip is the definition of an American Saddlebred—kind, willing, and incredibly versatile—Chip delivered 20+ victory passes this season across multiple divisions, making every moment in the ring unforgettable. I have been so lucky to own and ride Chip for multiple years!

Are You In embodies the beauty, intelligence, and spirit of the American Saddlebred. His achievements this year, paired with his character and versatility, make him a standout representative of the breed and a deserving candidate for ASAW People's Choice Horse of the Year.

LEVI STRAUSS

Levi Strauss was bred by Bob & Lisa Nesson of Crest Haven Farm in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Lovingly raised by Cindy Nesson, "Blue" went to his forever home at Barbara Southgate's private stable. Over the years, Blue has acquired fans who often inquire about him. He politely stops for photographs and is often followed to his stall where he enjoys being petted. Photographers have declared fondness for him as well, since they can count on his brilliant expression in the show ring.

Showing at major Wisconsin & ASAW recognized shows, Levi Strauss has earned 26 ASAW Year End awards and 3 times ASAW Hunter Horse of the Year Awards.

An impressive list of National Titles Include:

3 times ASHA National Champion

6 times ASHA Region 5 Champion

2 times ASHA National Champion Reserve

2-Saddle Horse Report National Champion Reserve

Saddle and Bridle Best of Breed Gelding

Top 10 Saddle Horse Report

The consistency and longevity of Levi Strauss' Career speaks well for the individual and his wonderful breed.

Your vote could make him the first hunter to win this prestigious ASAW Award

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NUT TOO SALTY

Universally heralded as “flashy” and “grand” by industry publications covering horse show results, ASAW People's Choice Horse of the Year nominee Nut Too Salty is instantly recognizable for his high head carriage, four white socks, and champagne mane and tail. He marches confidently through the ingate, leaves it all on the rail, then lines up and stands like a true gentleman, patiently awaiting his reward.

Renowned not only for his striking profile in harness, Salty has also built an impressive show record in the Fine Harness division. He has earned accolades at every level—locally with a blue ribbon and Reserve Championship at ASAW's Summerfun Show, and regionally and nationally with RWC and RWGC honors, ASHBA Year-End High Point Awards, and the 2025 Amateur Fine Harness High Point Championship for the Mid-America Horse Show Association.

In every appearance, Salty exemplifies the elegance, heart, and presence for which the American Saddlebred is celebrated.

During a personally challenging year, he provided focus, joy, and a powerful reminder that the show must go on.

Please join me in honoring this exceptional gelding and outstanding breed ambassador by casting your vote for Nut Too Salty as ASAW People's Choice Horse of the Year.

CH ON HIGHER GROUND

We are honored to nominate WCC WC CH On Higher Ground for ASAW Horse Of The Year. “Bentley” began his show career by winning both a World Championship and a National Championship at the age of three! He has excelled in many divisions....Park Pleasure, Show Pleasure, Ladies Three Gaited, Amateur Three Gaited and Juvenile Three Gaited.

In 2020, Bentley was purchased by the Nelson family. He came to the Midwest and has shown on the Midwest circuit every year since then, winning nearly every class he has entered from 2020 to 2025. He was trained at first with Utoft Stables then beginning in 2024 he was trained at Equitate. In 2024 and early 2025 he won 13 of 14 classes in Amateur Three Gaited with Kristen Olson including a National Championship. He lit up the ring in Milwaukee, Madison, Springfield, Minneapolis and countless other places. Then Kristen turned over the reins over to Isabella Eifert in July of 2025. This would be Bentley's first time having a junior exhibitor guiding him around the show ring...and he delivered once again! Bentley and Isabella won 8 of 8 classes including a National Championship at the American Royal and a unanimous 2 classes to be named World Champion and his World Champion of Champions title in Jr Exhibitor Three Gaited 13 & Under at Louisville. Bentley was also just recently named the 2025 UPHA Jr Exhibitor Three Gaited Horse Of The Year.

What makes all of these accomplishments even more noteworthy is the fact that Bentley was 15 years old in 2025 when he won world and national championships. This shows that like a fine wine, he is only getting better with age! He has gained the love and admiration of many along the way...trainers, judges, spectators and most of all, the people who have gotten to work with him every day.

Bentley is a kind and loving horse that leaves the hearts of all who have been involved with him full. He loves to work, but he also loves walks outside to soak up the sun and graze. He is a true representative of the wonderful American Saddlebred breed, earning the love and admiration of all who have been lucky enough to be around him.

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Kristen Olson showed Bentley for 5 years. Here is what she shared about her most favorite horse to ever have and show..."Bentley is a horse of a lifetime. He is a true show horse who gave his all every time I showed him and even at the barn when he was pretending to be showing. Every ride was the same. He is consistent in every step and never backed an ear. He would start shaking right before going into each class in anticipation of what fun we were about to have. He will always hold a special place in my heart!"
~ Kristen Olson

Tom Nelson, Kristen's dad, is the one who picked Bentley out and has been his biggest supporter every step of the way. Tom shared that "it has been a real privilege to have been the owner of Bentley. When he entered the show ring, he was bright, confident and delivered time after time. And outside the show ring, he was this man's best friend."
And this...well, it's what it's all about.

SNAPPER SINCLAIR

Snapper Sinclair is a horse that truly demonstrates the versatility of the American Saddlebred through his success in the western pleasure division. He has placed top ribbons in all ASAW, MASHA, and IASPHA shows, and furthermore ribboned at the Kentucky state fair. He is a true representation of what a western pleasure saddlebred should look like, and I believe it is important we highlight all aspects of the breed, not just the high division horses.

Snapper Sinclair is a perfect representation of the beauty in our breeds versatility. He show cases the importance of using divisions like western for the enhancement and longevity of our breed. He has earned top ribbons all through this season and even went on to place well at the WCHS.