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July/August 2007

Young Rider®

# Young Rider®

The Magazine For Horse And Pony Lovers

**SUPER-DUPER  
SHOW  
ISSUE!**

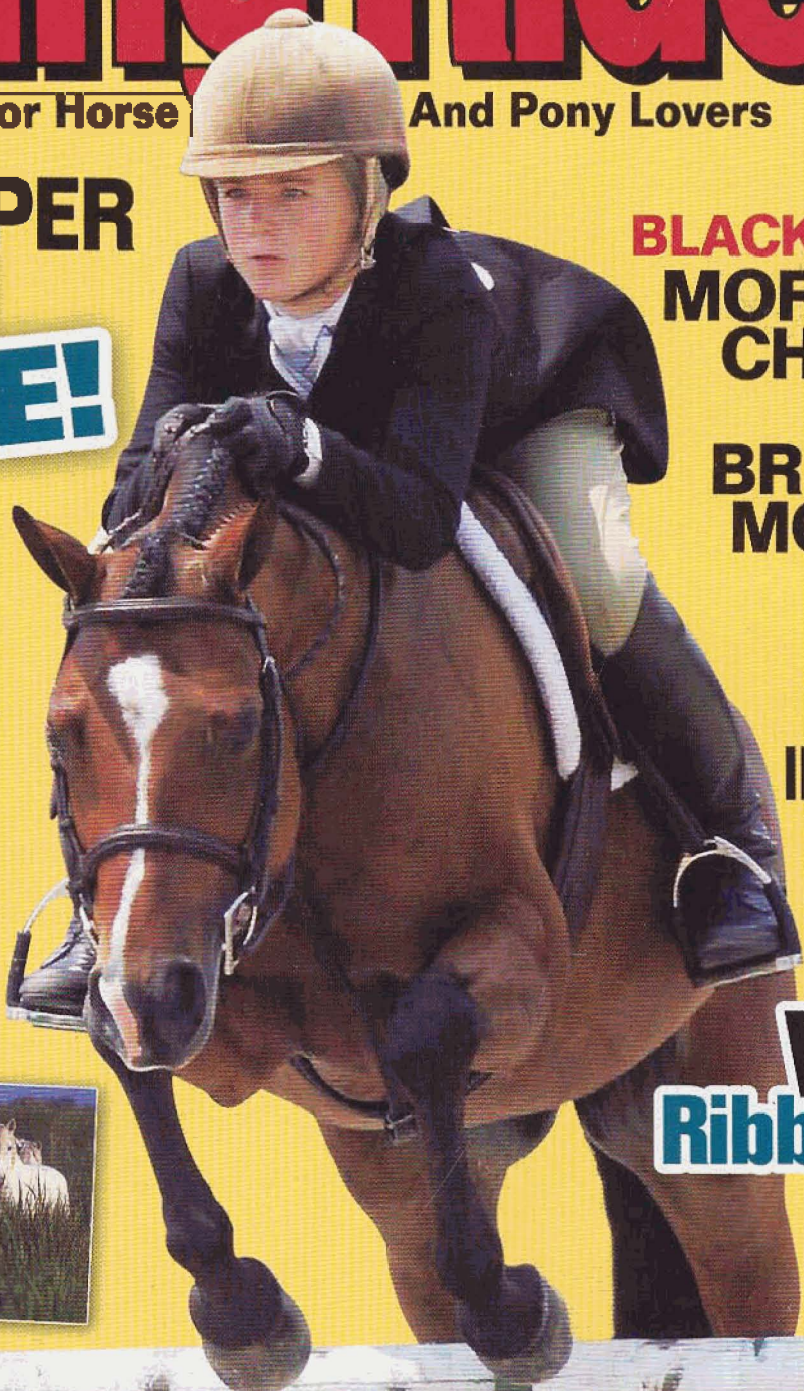
Hot, Young  
Showjumper

**Nick** **INSIDE!**  
**Haness!**

**MEET  
BLACKJACK  
MORGAN  
CHAMP  
AND  
BREYER  
MODEL**

**HOW TO  
IMPRESS  
HUNTER  
JUDGES**

**And  
Win  
Ribbons!**



**Color  
Posters!**

# BLACKJACK

Story Book Hero, Breyer Model Horse & Best Friend!

By Ellen F. Feld

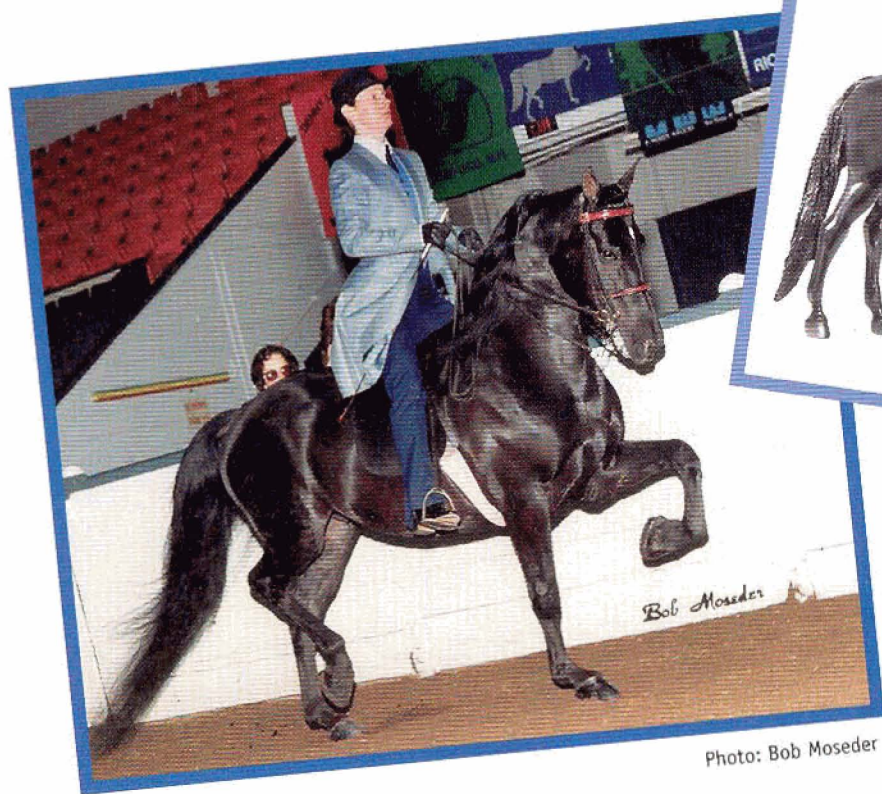


Photo: Bob Moseder

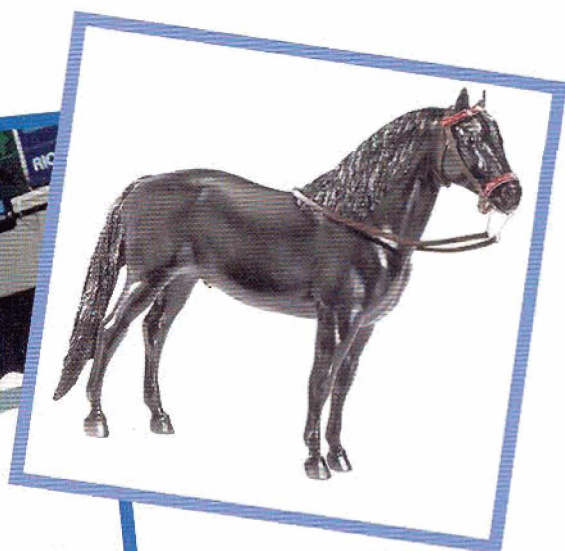


Photo: Breyer

**W**as there ever a horse that touched your heart so deeply you knew instantly he would be a lifelong friend? For me, that horse is Blackjack, a beautiful Morgan Horse that entered my life 13 years ago.

In the spring of 1994, I visited a Morgan Horse farm to meet their wonderful horses. While there, I was introduced to the most magnificent stallion. His barn name was Butch and he was coal black with a tail that touched the ground and the biggest, softest eyes I'd ever seen.

When this stallion was led out of his stall, he puffed up, stretched his neck back and cocked his

head in my direction. He knew he was special and he was checking to make sure I agreed.

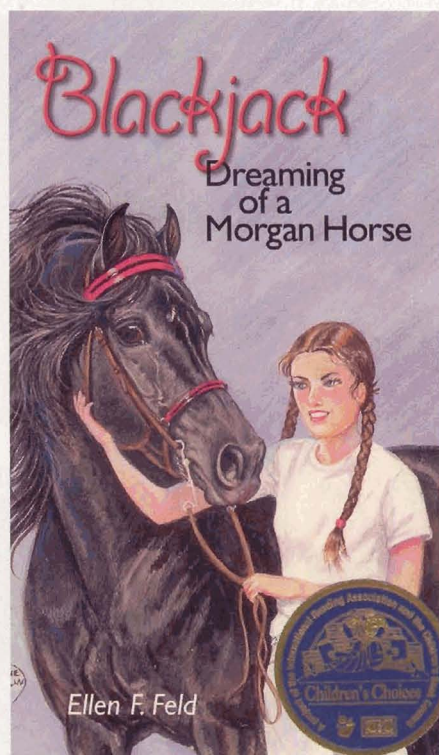
After meeting Butch, I was led to a pasture full of this handsome stallion's babies. Walking into the field, I was greeted by a fuzzy, black colt that pushed his way past my friends and stopped at my side. He ignored calls from his mother as he nuzzled my arm, asking for attention.

This curious fellow had his father's big, soft eyes and the sweetest disposition I'd ever encountered. I knew immediately that Blackjack would be coming home with me.

Blackjack spent the next few years playing in a big,



*As a baby, Blackjack's personality made him a champ in the show ring.*



*Blackjack stars in his own book!*

grassy field. I quickly fell in love with this jet-black horse, not so much because of his beauty, but because of his friendly (and comical!) personality. He loved to do silly things and make me laugh.

One day, while wandering around the barn, he discovered an empty grain bag. Convinced there was a tasty treat hidden inside, he stuck his whole head into the bag until all that was visible was part of his neck.

At first I thought Blackjack would panic and hurt himself, but as I rushed to his side, he simply raised his head, still stuck inside the bag, waited a moment, then lowered his head and continued searching for grain. He looked like a giant bag monster. I decided to pull the grain bag off his head, but instead of being relieved, Blackjack looked at me as if I'd just ruined his game. Then he threw his head back into the bag.

When Blackjack was three, I took him to a trainer to begin his show career. Arriving at the trainer's barn, Blackjack stepped off the trailer, stopped, looked around and let out an

ear-piercing whinny. My show-off stallion was announcing his arrival and everyone from the barn came running to see what the commotion was. Blackjack pranced, snorted and investigated his new surroundings.

As he was led to his stall, I wondered if my beloved Blackjack would enjoy strutting around a ring. Would he win any blue ribbons? Was he perhaps destined to become a show ring star?

Making the long trip home, my mind wandered to thoughts of Blackjack and his future show career, but by the time I arrived home, I realized that I already missed my horse.

Blackjack quickly settled into his new routine and received high marks from the trainer. I managed to visit him every week, but as winter approached and the weather grew cold, I was forced to miss many trips.

Sitting at my desk one particularly cold, snowy day, I couldn't get my mind off Blackjack, so I decided to write a story about him. It began as a short story about a girl who was trying to rescue her horse, but it quickly

grew into a book. Writing about Blackjack and sending him on an imaginary journey helped pass the winter and ease the longing for my stallion.

I continued to write and by spring, the first draft of *Blackjack: Dreaming of a Morgan Horse* was completed.

By the time my book was published, Blackjack and I had made our show-ring debut. The first few shows were a bit rough, but with a little more practice, we began to work as a team and won our share of blue ribbons.

It was an awesome feeling trotting down the middle of the ring for the first time as we made a victory pass with a tri-color sash around Blackjack's neck and a long, flowing ribbon attached to his bridle.

Blackjack and I continued to enjoy showing as the popularity of our book grew. People started asking me about the horse in the story and if he was based on a real horse. They also wondered when a sequel would come out to continue the adventures of Blackjack.

With the encouragement of Blackjack's fans, I set to work on my next book. I knew it had to prominently feature Blackjack, but I also wanted it to include a new horse.

After some thought, I based the sequel on my rare gray Morgan mare, Frosty, and this time I wrote about trail riding adventures.

Before long, there were four books in my Morgan Horse series (with a fifth due out this fall) and each one featured Blackjack, my favorite horse with the wonderful, people-loving personality.

After winning two national book awards and gaining horse fans around the country, my books caught the attention of Breyer Animal Creations®. They were looking for a new book to pair with one of their beautiful models and felt my first book, *Blackjack*, was the perfect match.

When I was contacted about the prospects of a Blackjack model, I was asked to send Breyer pictures of my horse so they could match his color, markings and personality.

Seeing the model for the first time, I was thrilled to see a likeness of my beloved Blackjack, with no detail overlooked—they even included a miniature version of his show bridle!

Blackjack and I will be traveling to Lexington, KY, in July to attend BreyerFest 2007.

It will be a long trip from our home in Massachusetts, but that's OK. Blackjack loves meeting people and I can't wait to introduce him to the many model horse collectors who will be attending this exciting annual event.

I look forward to sharing this new adventure with my best friend, who just happens to be a story book hero and a Breyer Model!

I hope all of you model-horse lovers will come and meet Blackjack and me at BreyerFest. See you there!

## BreyerFest 2007

BreyerFest takes place July 20-22, 2007, at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY. This year's theme is Stars & Stripes: Celebrating America's Horses! There will be a "Rockin' in the USA" performance featuring stunt riders that are sure to dazzle you with their amazing acrobatic tricks.

You'll meet the real horses that have inspired Breyer models, including Blackjack, Rugged Painted Lark and barrel-racing star Hot Shot. You can participate in model horse shows, workshops and craft activities, too. Fun!

Check out [www.breyerhorses.com](http://www.breyerhorses.com) to learn more about BreyerFest.

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