

Red Flags When Buying

Chapter 5

None of these alone means walk away. Several together mean slow down and ask harder questions.

AT THE LISTING STAGE

- ☐ Described as suitable for any level. Horses are suitable for a specific range, and a seller who knows their horse knows this
- ☐ A price that has dropped significantly and repeatedly in a short time, with no explanation offered
- ☐ Only a few photos, all from the same angle or the same session
- ☐ Vague or missing information about age, height, training, or show record

DURING THE VISIT

- ☐ The horse was worked hard before you arrived, or is inexplicably quiet for his age and type in a new situation
- ☐ Ears pinned consistently during grooming, tacking, or girthing
- ☐ The seller cannot give specific answers about the horse's quirks and challenges
- ☐ His behaviour shifts significantly between your first and second visit
- ☐ You are discouraged from watching him being caught, brought in, or turned out

FROM THE SELLER

- ☐ Manufactured urgency — other people are coming, you need to decide today
- ☐ Cannot tell you who the horse's regular vet and farrier are
- ☐ Vague about when he was last shod, or when his last Coggins was pulled
- ☐ Offers a discount to skip the pre-purchase exam
- ☐ Details change between conversations in ways a memory lapse does not explain

A sound horse with a clean history can withstand a pre-purchase exam. When someone is motivated to avoid that examination, ask yourself what they are motivated to avoid.

WHAT I SAW, AND WHAT I ASKED ABOUT IT