



"In addition, you can telephone the people who are consigning directly," she continues. "See if you can arrange to try the horse on the farm before he even leaves for the auction. Many consigners are happy to do this and it allows you to see the horse in the place where he is at ease. That can give you a much better sense of the horse than the crowded, unfamiliar auction setting."

She points out that the CWHBA Fall Classic Sales features 68 horses at each event. "That number of horses doesn't have to be overwhelming if you do your homework, though. Remember, there will be weanlings, yearlings, broodmares and performance horses, so you can narrow down your choices quickly. Then by doing some research in advance—and really knowing what you are looking for—you can continue to narrow the list before you even go to the sale," she says.

Finally, she says, take someone knowledgeable with you as you shop, both before and during the sale. "A professional's eye can be such a help when you are looking at a lot of horses," she explains. "You'll also find it helps develop your own eye! At some sales, you can observe demos under saddle and free jumping to help you assess the horses."

"At the Fall Classic, we even offered all the demos and free jumping online in real time," she continues.

"So theoretically, you could buy a horse without even attending the sale. I'm not sure I'd have the courage for that, though—I prefer to study a horse in person and get a sense of his personality."

"Perhaps most importantly, realize that auctions are not necessarily the place to go looking for a bargain. Instead, think of them as a place to see a lot of quality horses at once, all available at fair market value," Katrina says, adding that because many horses are consigned directly from the breeder they represent a good value. "It's also an enjoyable way to look at horses because these auctions become social events. They are a great way to socialize and network with breeders and other professionals," she adds. "And that can help you, as a rider and as an owner, in so many ways!"

"To me, auctions simply make sense because they are such a convenient way to shop for horses," Katrina says. "Ultimately, they can save you a lot of time. At an auction, there are so many horses gathered together in one place—it's simply a great opportunity." **WT**

