

# Buying Or Selling A Horse?

## An Auction Offers Benefits For Both Sides Of The Deal

### A Horse Times Interview with Tim Smith of RSD Auctions

Tim Smith operated horse auctions at Eyer's Stables in Thurmont, MD with Jim Roberts for 11 years before opening his new facility in Kearneysville, WV, just outside Charles Town, on his family's farm. There, Tim is the auctioneer and Jim is the ring man. Horse Times asked Tim to share some of his thoughts on the horse auction business.

**Q: What are the benefits for buyers and sellers of a live auction?**

A: At our auctions, buyers get plenty of time to spend with the horses, assessing their temperaments, and riding them. We even have jumps set up in our preview ring, so as long as it's OK with the consignor, riders can try them over fences. And because it's a busy environment, buyers get to see how the horses react to that, so maybe you get to see them at the worst they can be. We have Dr. Keith Berkeley of Valley Equine at the sale, available to examine a horse before a purchase, and he can even perform a full pre-purchase exam on the spot. Every horse sold at the sale gets a new Coggins pulled by



Dr. Berkeley, so the buyer doesn't go home with an old Coggins in someone else's name. Auctions save buyers a ton of time, because they don't have to go traveling all over trying a horse here and there. And sellers have a bunch of serious buyers in one location. They don't have to worry about tire kickers, scheduling appointments, and wasting time with no shows. When you sell a horse at the auction, you are guaranteed to get your money, and sometimes it's more than the price you were asking for the horse.

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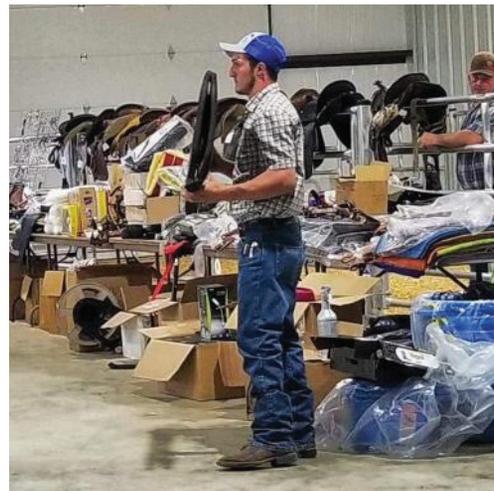
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**Q: In addition to having a veterinarian available for exams, what are some of the other ways buyers are protected?**

A: We offer a three-day soundness guarantee. If a horse is sold as "sound" and within three days is not, it can be returned and the purchase price refunded. It almost never happens, but sometimes a seller doesn't know that much about the horse, so it's not really that they were trying to deceive anybody. We stress full disclosure by sellers -- don't lie when the truth will do. For example, if the horse needs shoes, say that, because it may not bother the person who buys the horse and it may be what's needed for the horse to be sound. We also offer a guarantee on cribbing: If a horse is represented as not cribbing but does, it can be returned. Some consignors will also offer a guarantee that goes beyond ours, and might take a horse back if they buyer doesn't like the horse for any reason.

**Q: When you talk about horse auctions, of course you have to address the issue of "kill buyers." What are your thoughts on that subject?**

A: The meat business has about faded out because of all the horse rescues. What I see out there are scammers who want to look like they have a bunch of horses that are going to go for meat, but they are not sending them to slaughter houses (although they make it sound like they are) but are just reselling them. A lot of it is done on Facebook. People think they are "rescuing" a horse by paying its "bail" or "adoption fee" but they are just buying a horse from a horse trader. It's one of the biggest scams in the horse business. There are lots of genuine, good non-profit rescues out there, but do your research before you donate. The prices we are getting at our sales are way above what meat buyers will pay, so they don't come. Most of the horses we sell are broke, finished riding horses. Some might be green, but very few are unstarted.



PHOTOS COURTESY: rsd auctions

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*If you have something you don't want anymore, come get a check for it!*

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**Q: What else brings people to your auctions?**

A: We sell new and used tack (there can be hundreds of saddles to look at), barn supplies, trailers...anything horse related. We've got great pulled pork and burgers, and a family friendly environment with no alcohol. It's a Friday night social event where people just come to hang out and see other horse people. These sales are a way for people who might not be sure about buying a horse at an auction to come check it out, get comfortable, and have a good time too. Maybe they buy a bridle or a halter, or bring something to sell. One person's junk is another person's treasure. If you have something you don't want anymore, come get a check for it!

