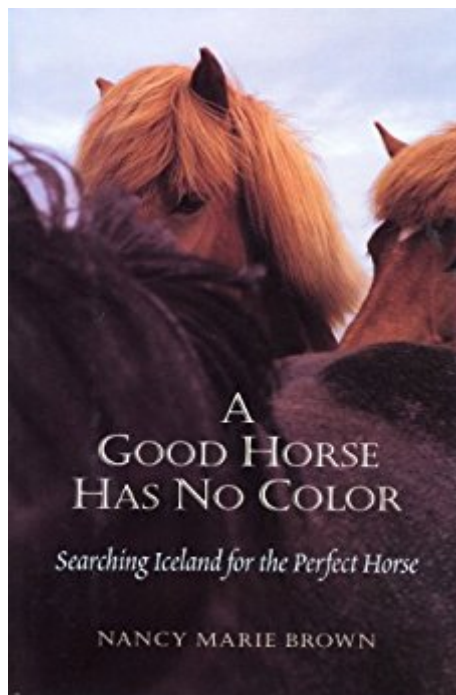




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A Good Horse Has No Color: Searching Iceland For The Perfect Horse



Synopsis

After several visits to study the medieval Icelandic sagas, Nancy Marie Brown returns to Iceland to search for the perfect horse, one she can bring back to her Pennsylvania farm and make her own. She arrives shaken by tragedy, uncertain of the language, lacking confidence in her riding skills, but determined to make her search a success. She finds inspiration in the country's austere and majestic landscape, which is alive with the ghosts of an adventure-filled past. In the glacier-carved hinterland, she rides a variety of Icelandic horses—some spirited, willful, even heroic; others docile, trusting, or tame. She also meets an assortment of horse owners, who can be as independent and stubborn as the animals they breed. Little by little, visiting legendary horse farms, watching skillful riders, taking sea-splashed treks with opinionated experts, she opens herself up to the strange and wonderful world she's entered. She discovers what makes Icelandic horses unique—why they are celebrated in glorious sagas and protected by national law. She also learns much about herself as a horsewoman and, more importantly, discovers what she is really looking for, in a horse and in her life. Evocative, clear-headed, and richly described, this book is for anyone who has at some time in their life searched for something perfect.

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Customer Reviews

This is a very good read even if you are not totally a horse person. I read N.Brown's FAR TRAVELER and I like to read thoughtful nonfiction. This book gives her deep background in Icelandic and Saga studies, her coming to know Iceland and its people a bit and then her love affair with the Icelandic horse. They don't allow any other kinds of horses in Iceland so this breed has bred its particular kind for a long time, and it has unusual qualities. Finding the right horse for her, only a fair rider, and finding the right way to get one of these horses is very revealing about life, her, the Icelanders she got to know some, and about that magical bond some humans have with what I once read as described as "wisdom in the form of a horse." Very very enjoyable read.

This was a great book. I was originally interested in it because I wanted to get back into riding and was looking for anything on Icelandic horses. With a back problem, the tolt seemed like a gait that I would be able to handle and they are one of the few breeds that do it. But, the book also adds a lot of information on Icelandic history and the sagas from their mythology. It incorporates it in with the locations and stories which is a great way to do it. There is also a lot of information on the country and the people. I found it very interesting to learn more about the way they view things and why. So, if you like horses it is a great book. But, if you don't like horses, it is still a great book. A wonderful story, along with a lot of other interesting things to learn about.

The author's story of her experience purchasing an Icelandic horse was engaging. She is certainly knowledgeable about Icelandic history and the Icelandic sagas, and her explanation of people, place and even horse names related to Icelandic sagas and mythology was appreciated. Her indecision and confusion about which horses to choose and the uncertainty about the reliability of some of the breeders she met with kept the story interesting. It would have been nice to have more information about her satisfaction with her choices after the horses were delivered to her farm in the States.

I just bought an Icelandic and I loved every last detail of this book. Being a bit of a researcher at heart, I loved the careful and complete descriptions Nancy Marie Brown provided. It was a wonderful journey into a world and culture I was, as yet, unfamiliar with. I will say, the very best part of this book, for me, was that the type of horse she was seeking, and what I had been seeking for

20+ years, were all found in this unique breed.Don't think I will EVER stray from Icelandics again.

I had first read this book when I had begun seriously competing Icelandic horses. What is so wonderful about the book is that it combines a human search for meaning with an exciting travel adventure, all entwined with an equestrian's expedition to find the horse of her dreams. I have gifted this book to many non-riders who have enjoyed it enormously. And I have read and re read it four times--the best review I can give!

This wonderfully written, beautiful book is the perfect guide for the U.S. horse enthusiast who has discovered the magic of the Icelandic horse. While every Icelandic has a magic to it imbued by 1,000 years of culture and its direct ties to the Viking times and spirit, not every Icelandic horse will fit the riding style and dreams of every U.S. rider. These horses are loved because they are different from what we know: they are self-assured, friendly, beautiful, and comfortable--but they are different, and building a successful, "joyful" partnership with an Icelandic horse requires these differences to be understood and respected. Nancy's chronicle of her own search for the perfect Icelandic horse--at times hilarious--at times deeply moving--always insightful--relays a practical wisdom regarding the Icelandic horse that only comes from knowledge, personal experience and astute reflection. It is a tremendous boon, not only to the interest of the book, but also to Nancy's understanding of the horse, that she long has been a student of Icelandic language and culture. Nancy's search is almost archetypal for many US riders: middle aged, novice riders looking for more of a personal experience than they can get from a weary school horse; and--looking for the almost mythically beautiful, brave and smooth-gaited horse that will carry them safely through the most rugged of landscapes. As Nancy discovers, finding the perfect Icelandic, is not a search for external qualities, like color or flash, but for qualities of mind and soul. Nancy's insights are not confined just to the Icelandic horse, but show us clear pictures of the Icelandic people who live with this horse and who share its geography and its culture on the most elemental level. Practical and astute, this is a MUST READ for any American interested in buying an Icelandic horse. Articulate, romantic, culturally intriguing, this is a MUST READ for anyone who loves good travel writing.

I really enjoy Nancy Marie Brown's work. Her combination of research, saga, memoir and just great writing make this a book a good read. If you like Icelandic culture, want to learn about Icelandic horses, like sagas or want to explore Iceland from an arm chair this is a nice book. I recommend having a map of Iceland nearby so that you can see where the towns, farms and geographic and

historic features are located. There are tiny maps at the beginning of the book-- I found them too small. I kept reading a chapter, finding more research, reading a chapter, googling a topic, reading a chapter, then looking up a saga, asking questions or friends, family and the author-- the circle continues. When completed two others will borrow my book. Enjoy.

Not very many books provide a good sense of horses in Iceland. (at least, not in English) Or a good sense of why Iceland is such a great place to visit. This book deserves a lot more attention than it received.

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