



Guide To Becoming A Racehorse Owner



Ilka Gansera-Lévêque

www.gansera-leveque.com

Beautifully positioned in the home of horseracing

Newmarket

SAINT WENDRED'S





WELCOME

Thanks for your interest in my guide to
racehorse ownership

Hi - I'm Ilka Gansera-Lévêque and I'd like to
say thank you for reading my guide to
racehorse ownership.
I hope you find it really useful.

I'm based at Saint Wendred's in Newmarket,
am a practising vet and have been a licensed
trainer since 2012.

If you have any questions about this guide or
racehorse ownership in general. Please feel
free to contact me.

Thanks!

ILKA GANSERA-LÉVÊQUE

Racehorse Trainer

CONTACT

Office: +44 (0)1638 454973
email: office@gansera-leveque.com
Saint Wendred's, Hamilton Road,
Newmarket. CB8 7JQ

CONTENTS

5 WHY BECOME A
RACEHORSE OWNER

RACING AS AN
INVESTMENT 8

11 AN EXTRAORDINARY
EXPERIENCE

BEFORE BECOMING
AN OWNER 13

17 DECISIONS TO MAKE

YOU'RE AN OWNER! 21

24 ANY QUESTIONS?



**IF YOU'VE EVER DREAMED OF OWNING A RACEHORSE
AND HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO GET STARTED...
THIS GUIDE IS FOR YOU!**

Ownership is a big decision and there's a lot to get to grips with in racing. I find that potential owners are looking for more information and so I put this guide together to assist you in finding answers to some of your questions and to help you make the right decision for you.

ILKA GANSERA-LÉVÊQUE

Racehorse Trainer

WHY BECOME A RACEHORSE OWNER

There are so many reasons to become a racehorse owner and because of this our unique sport attracts a wide range of people with different interests, who all come together to enjoy the extraordinary experience of horse racing.

Although often considered a privilege of the very wealthy, racehorse ownership is more affordable and accessible than ever, with a form of racehorse ownership to suit most budgets.



JUST SOME OF THE REASONS PEOPLE LOVE RACING ARE...

A love of horses and a desire to learn more about them and their training.

The social aspect – the chance to meet like-minded people, with a shared passion, to enjoy a great day out with new and old friends and to joyfully attend the numerous social events organised by your trainer.

A love of racing – some people love the sport itself, trying to fathom and master the different elements involved in producing a top horse.

Ownership provides you with behind the scenes access and the ability to learn much from your trainer, such as the intricacies of racing, breeding, feeding, race tactics, race planning and much more.

Others are drawn to the numbers game – the handicaps, ratings and betting odds.

Some are drawn to the historic nature of the sport and the traditions.

UK racing in particular appeals to people attracted to the prestige, the chance to go to the high-end races – for example, Royal Ascot – and rub shoulders with high profile owners such as Her Majesty The Queen.





“

TWO FEET MOVE YOUR BODY
FOUR FEET MOVE YOUR SOUL

”



WHATEVER YOUR REASON FOR GETTING INVOLVED,
ONE THING'S FOR CERTAIN...

YOU'LL MAKE MEMORIES THAT WILL LAST.

Ownership gives you a wonderful opportunity not just to watch racing, but to participate and to be actively involved with racing, on the inside. It's a fantastic way to immerse yourself in horse racing. When you become a racehorse owner, you become an extremely important member of a fascinating sport, industry, social network and part of a dedicated team working towards a joint goal and striving for success.

RACING AS AN INVESTMENT

Racehorse ownership as an investment is high-risk and so you shouldn't hold the absolute expectation that you will turn a profit. However, the risks can be mitigated by ensuring thorough research, knowledge, experience and analysis are employed at each stage.

A considerable profit can become a reality through purchasing, running and selling racehorses in the UK. Once your horse has UK form his value will increase and after winning his first race the value escalates. Added to that, you're accumulating tax-free prize-money. When the time is right, you may be able to sell your horse at a considerable profit, or retain ownership and send your horse for a lucrative career at stud.

THE BUSINESS OF RACING

RACING IS A MULTI-FACETED, BILLION POUND INDUSTRY

Deloitte conducted an Economic Impact of British Racing study in 2013 on behalf of the BHA and reported that the total direct and indirect expenditure of British Racing was £3.45 billion.

For some people, it is the business aspect of the horse racing industry which is most intriguing.

Aside from ownership as an investment, there are further interesting business opportunities within racing such as breeding investment, branding opportunities and government tax relief schemes.



TAX RELIEF

There are two main schemes of note that are applicable to the horse racing industry:

SCHEME #1 - THE ENTERPRISE INVESTMENT SCHEME (EIS)

Applicable to purely commercial activities, such as the buying and selling of bloodstock prior to racing. This scheme offers generous tax breaks, reduces the risk of investing and improves your return. As a qualifying investor you're able to:

- Reclaim 30% of the value of your initial investment
- Roll over capital gains tax on profit
- If the venture fails, you can offset any losses against income tax

SCHEME #2 - THE VAT REGISTRATION SCHEME FOR OWNERS

Providing you meet a few criteria, you're able to register your ownership with HMRC and reclaim VAT on your ownership activities, allowing you to reclaim up to £3,700 each year.



SPONSORSHIP AND BRANDING

There are numerous branding and sponsorship opportunities within racing to help increase the profile of your company. Here are a few promotional options that your trainer will happily assist you with...

YOUR HORSE:

- Company ownership allows your horse to run in your company name.
- Your colours can be registered to match your company branding.
- Your company can sponsor your own horse, so that your logo can be displayed on the silks and worn each time your horse runs (with the exception of races such as the Derby).



YOUR YARD:

You can sponsor all the horses in an entire yard. The trainer manages the admin of this and you agree a certain amount per horse. Branded clothing, both human and equine, is worn at the races and gets your company seen by many.

HORSEBOX:

It's also possible to arrange the branding of your trainer's horsebox. This mobile billboard travels the length and breadth of the country and in our case beyond to Toulouse and Germany – giving your brand considerable exposure.

AN EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCE

Many elements combine to make the ownership experience extraordinary. However, there are two pivotal factors that hugely influence how much you enjoy your ownership experience...

Your Trainer and Your Horse



As a sole owner you have the incomparable experience of buying your horse at the sales, choosing a name (if unnamed) and choosing your colours. Your trainer will be happy to guide you through this.

When joining a partnership or syndicate, the trainer and horse often come as a package, as the trainer already has horses with shares available and you're able to choose between a number of horses at the yard.

Beyond the day-to-day training of your horse, which is of course the central role of a trainer, their communications to you are paramount to your enjoyment. If you're new to racing, trainers walk you through all you need to know.

COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL TO YOUR FEELING A VALUED PART OF THE TEAM

Once training gets underway you'll receive communications about the welfare, health, training, fitness and performance of your horse, as well as other more general information about the yard. This depth of knowledge immerses you in the training of your horse and gives you a fascinating insight into the world of racing.

You'll be invited to early morning visits to the yard to watch your horse on the gallops. Many owners find this moment to be very special.



A DAY AT THE RACES IS A FANTASTIC FAMILY EVENT, MADE EVEN MORE SO WHEN YOUR HORSE IS RUNNING.

Watching your own horse run is extremely exciting. The anticipation before the race cannot be underestimated, and of course, the thrill of being in the paddock before and after a race. Whatever the result, the atmosphere is electrifying, it's second to none – and you're right in the thick of it.

As well as race meetings the trainer organises a number of social events, where you can get to know fellow owners and the yard team, such as summer barbeques, open days, or trips to the sales.



BEFORE BECOMING AN OWNER

We recommend you carry out some research before becoming an owner. You've downloaded this guide – so well done on an excellent first step!

You could also gather other information from sources such as the Racehorse Owners' Association (ROA) and the British Horseracing Authority (BHA).

Talking to a trainer is a really important step, and the absolute best way to get any questions answered. So feel free to contact Ilka Gansera-Lévêque – a racehorse trainer and author of this guide – if you'd like to know more about how to get into racehorse ownership.



We could have a phone call, arrange a yard visit, or perhaps meet at the sales or the races. Ask any question you feel necessary. Racing is one of those areas where there are lots of specialist terms and acronyms flying around; people often use them without realising. There's no such thing as a silly question in this industry. Ask away :)

POINTS TO RESEARCH

RESEARCH POINT #1 - OWNERSHIP OPTIONS

There are a number of different ownership options available where you either own as an individual, company or group – termed sole ownership, company ownership, partnership, syndicate or racing club.

Each type of ownership is different in numerous ways and we'll give you a quick summary here...

OWNERSHIP OPTIONS

To become an owner you must be aged 16 or over and satisfy financial checks, as well as identity and credit checks to be approved by the BHA.

SOLE AND COMPANY

Sole Ownership

Owning a racehorse outright is termed sole ownership.

- Purchase your own horse and retain full ownership.
- Responsible for the administration, including ownership and colours registration.
- As the only owner you're liable for all the costs and will receive all the owner's share of prize-money.

Company Ownership

This is treated similarly to sole ownership.

- Purchase your own horse and retain full ownership.
- Responsible for the administration, including ownership and colours registration.
- Your company is responsible for all the costs and receives all the owner's share of the prize-money.

GROUP OWNERSHIP

Partnership

For two or more people to share ownership, where all partners are registered owners and have a percentage share of the horse.

- Ownership of the horse as a group. If your horse does well, when the horse is sold, you'll receive proceeds of the sale equivalent to your percentage share.
- Share of the costs and share the prize-money.
- Managed by a trainer, so you have much less involvement in the ownership administration.

Syndicate

Shared ownership, for which only the syndicate manager needs to be a registered owner with the BHA.

The syndicate manager handles all administration. Check each agreement for details, such as:

- Who owns the horse (and receives any proceeds of sale).
- How prize-money is distributed, to whom and on what basis.
- The length of the agreement.



Racing Club

Monthly or annual subscription based club for shared ownership.

- The club owns the horse, not the members, and therefore the club receives any proceeds from the sale of the horse.
- There are many members, often hundreds, if not thousands.
- You may get a proportion of the prize-money, but do not expect it to cover your costs.

Always check the details in each agreement as they do vary.

RESEARCH POINT #2 - KNOW THE COSTS

Racehorses are expensive as there's a huge amount of care, upkeep and training involved. It's important to know the expected costs of ownership and having this knowledge upfront is essential to building a good working relationship with your trainer.

AVERAGE COST

An ROA survey of ownership costs in 2015 found that the annual average cost of a Flat horse was £22,595, including all training and racing costs, such as training fees, gallops, farrier, transport, vets, entries, jockeys and registration fees.

TRAINING FEES

Trainers have different rates and may have slightly different charging structures, so be very clear on what's included in the training fees and what costs extra. Training fees in flat racing vary depending on numerous factors but here at Gansera-Lévêque Racing we charge £51/day (for 2019). This covers the multiple expenses involved in running the yard, payment of staff, and the specialist service of training and caring for your horse. There may also be some additional expenses that are applied separately as the costs vary, such as vets' bills, farrier, entries, jockey fees and gallops fees.

MONEY COMES IN TOO!

Of course it's not all money out! It does come back to you too, in the form of prize-money, sponsorship, VAT reclaims, and the eventual sale of your horse (if you choose to sell).

UNDERSTAND THE AGREEMENT AND FEE

It's essential you fully understand exactly what your arrangement is, including the training fee, additional costs, when or how the agreement terminates and the extent of the trainer's authority to act on your behalf to accrue additional costs such as veterinary bills. As a sole owner you're responsible for all costs, whereas in a partnership these costs would be split between all members. As a syndicate or racing club member, in many cases you'd pay your membership subscription only. When joining partnerships, syndicates and racing clubs in particular, make sure you understand the fee structure, as there can be one-off payments, annual payments, monthly subscriptions and some extra costs applied. Your trainer should ensure there's a training agreement in place to protect you both.



DECISIONS TO MAKE

There are a few key decisions to make as you enter racehorse ownership...

1. The ownership type best suited to you
2. Your trainer
3. Your horse



DECISION #1 - OWNERSHIP TYPE

Firstly, decide which type of ownership is best for you – here are the key factors to consider:

- Your finances and disposable income.
- Whether you'd like to take advantage of company ownership, sponsorship and branding opportunities.
- The social experience you'd prefer.
- How much involvement you'd like to have in the day-to-day administration of the ownership.

Here are a few thoughts to help you on each of these...

FINANCES

As mentioned, the average cost of a flat racehorse in training is £22,595. However, there's a type of racehorse ownership available for all budgets, so you're able to choose the best option for your financial situation.

You must make the affordability decision based on the assumption that you'll receive little to no income on your racehorse ownership. Group ownership makes the thrill and privilege of watching your horse develop and attending the races both accessible and achievable, as it significantly reduces the expenses associated with ownership, since all costs are divided amongst the owners. However, should your horse perform well, there's always the possibility and potential for you to make a considerable return on your ownership. This is particularly the case for sole or company ownership as, in line with sole responsibility for the costs, you're also the sole recipient of any prize money and of any proceeds from the sale of your horse.

COMPANY OPPORTUNITIES

Racing is big business. This is evident across the industry. As a company, owning a racehorse is a unique branding opportunity. You can register the ownership in the name of your company and select your own silks in your company brand colours. Your company can then sponsor your own horse, so that you can display your logo on your silks when racing. This is a great advertising opportunity for your business, particularly if your potential clients are the kinds of people involved in racing – which is essentially most types of people!



SOCIAL

Many people find the social aspect of racing one of the most enjoyable factors. As a sole owner there are plenty of social opportunities for you to go racing with your trainer and bring friends and family. But as a co-owner in a group of like-minded people you'll increase your racing connections and make new friends at the same time, as you share in the celebrations and excitement and encourage each other through disappointment.

Group sizes vary between partnerships, syndicates and racing clubs. So you can find a group suited to your preferences, to enable you to enjoy racing at the level of involvement that suits you best and within your budget.



ADMINISTRATION

There's often quite a lot of admin involved in ownership, and if you're new to racing it may seem like a whole new world, which can take some time to work through. Something to consider, then, is whether you want to be involved in the admin and management side of ownership. By choosing a partnership, syndicate or racing club (for which admin is handled by the trainer or syndicate manager), you remove any hassle associated with admin and free yourself up to enjoy your ownership that much more.

To give you an idea of the basic admin involved...

YOU NEED TO:

Register as an owner

As a sole owner you'll need to do this but as part of a partnership, syndicate or racing club your trainer should be able to do the majority, if not all, of this on your behalf.

Register your colours

If you're a sole owner you'll need to choose and register your own set of colours, and have them made up for the jockey to wear on course.

Set-up your racing account

You need to have a specific account to run your racing finances through. There are two options available – Weatherbys Bank account or a BHA invoice account. Both are administered by Weatherbys so that all your entry fees and so on can be charged and any prize money distributed. As a sole owner you'd need to do this yourself. A partnership, syndicate or racing club would manage the accounting element and distribute funds to you in line with your agreement with them.

Name your horse

If not already named, you need to register a name for your horse with the racing authorities.

Authority to act

A quick instruction to the racing administrators informing them that your trainer has authority to make entries and declarations on your behalf.

YOU SHOULD:

Sponsorship

Only necessary if you would like to claim the VAT back on your racehorse ownership. However, you might like to take sponsorship up regardless as it's funds coming in!

VAT registration

Register your racehorse ownership as a business with HMRC. This isn't essential but it's great to do as you can claim back all the VAT on your ownership, potentially saving you a significant sum.

ROA membership

There's a fee to join that brings a range of benefits that many people enjoy, such as a discount on many BHA fees, third party liability insurance and free admission to courses.

Further forms

There are also further forms and registrations to be submitted as and when needed; for example, registrations to submit when entering races abroad.

YOUR TRAINER CAN HELP GUIDE YOU THROUGH ALL OF THE DETAILS OF EACH REGISTRATION, HOW IT BENEFITS YOU AND IF EACH PARTICULAR REGISTRATION IS APPLICABLE TO YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.

DECISION #2 - CHOOSE YOUR TRAINER

Your choice of trainer is pivotal. They can make the whole experience for you.

Not just from the point of view of training your horse to success, but for someone new to racehorse ownership, your trainer can help guide you through any complexities of racing and help make the whole experience enjoyable and sociable.



With this in mind, it's preferable to find a trainer you like and trust first, and then work with them to select your horse. Trusting in your trainer's solid advice and experience, your introduction to horse racing will be a pleasant experience of participation and learning, as you get to grips with the different elements of the racing industry.

What Are You Looking For In A Trainer?

Consider what you need and would like from your trainer; for example, their training methods, perhaps their background, their experience and knowledge. Maybe someone with an above average in-depth knowledge of horses, or someone who's available and happy to answer your questions.

Conduct your own research. Even if you have been given a recommendation it's a good idea to research your own information. You can find out a lot about someone online – not just in terms of facts and figures and racing news, but you can also get a feel for the sort of person they are, their values and ethos and what they might be like to deal with.

IT'S A LONG-TERM BUSINESS AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP AND YOUR TRAINER IS SO VITAL.

You need to select someone you're really comfortable and happy dealing with, someone who communicates well, is happy for you to visit the yard and has time for you – to show you around, help you out and generally provide a really good service.

DECISION #3 - CHOOSE YOUR HORSE

As a sole owner, you may already have a horse, or you might like to go to the sales with your trainer and experience the unprecedented thrill of purchasing your horse at auction. Your trainer would be more than happy to attend with you, view horses and offer their wealth of advice and knowledge on how the whole process works, the attributes of each horse, and help you make the right decision, at the right price. When joining a partnership or syndicate it's likely that your trainer will be able to offer you shares in a horse at their yard.



YOU'RE AN OWNER!

TRAINING

As a new owner, one of the first very special moments you'll get to experience is seeing your horse training on the gallops for the first time. Not only to see it, but to stand alongside your trainer and see it through their eyes, learn from them and discover what they're looking for in the horse.

The team at the yard will do their utmost to make this a very enjoyable morning for you - at Gansera-Lévêque Racing we've provided a comfortable owners' suite where you can relax, warm up and chat. Each visit gives you further insight into the daily running of the yard and the hard work that goes into looking after and training your horse. As these visits progress you'll notice how your horse develops and learn what to look for as your knowledge of both racehorse and racing expands.



RACE PLANNING

Targeting the right kind of race can be complex – there are multiple race conditions and numerous factors to consider. Your trainer has the specialist knowledge and experience to determine the best opportunity for your horse. That said, you may wish to let your trainer know if there's a particular race in which you'd love to have a runner, or if there are certain racecourses you'd prefer to attend – for example, perhaps you've always dreamed of having a runner at Goodwood. Most trainers are open to suggestion, happy to discuss it with you and will do their best to oblige wherever possible.

GOING RACING

There are many ways you can experience a race meeting and it's great to get there early to feel the atmosphere and anticipation building and to make the most of the day. In the summer months many people picnic in the car park before entering.

Admission and Facilities

Owners have complimentary admission and access to exclusive areas of the racecourse such as the owners' and trainers' bar, the parade ring, both pre and post-race, and hopefully the winner's enclosure! There are currently 60 racecourses in the UK and the owner experience is different at each course. The facilities vary but there are often complimentary refreshments available to owners. Most racecourses endeavour to add to your experience by ushering winners into a dedicated hospitality area to celebrate with a glass of bubbly and a replay of the race, as well as organising a noteworthy individual to present you with a memento of your win.



The Race!

You'll meet up with your trainer and co-owners before the race to talk over any plans and get an update from your trainer. In the parade ring prior to the race, you'll discuss race tactics with the trainer and jockey, before heading off to find a good viewing point for the race.

As the race gets underway, you cheer your horse on – you find yourself completely focused on that one moment, almost riding the horse with your jockey! Your heart really is in the race and you feel an exhilarating thrill as you're willing him to win.



Whatever the result, whether it's cause for celebration or commiseration, afterwards you have the opportunity to review the running of the race and how your horse performed directly with your trainer and jockey. Once your race is finished, the excitement has dissipated and the discussions are complete, you're able to continue enjoying a wonderful family day out.



ANY QUESTIONS?

This is quite an extensive guide, so if you have any questions on racehorse ownership or would like to talk to a trainer about getting involved with ownership please feel free to contact Ilka Gansera-Lévêque, who'll be more than happy to guide you through it and answer any questions.

Apprentice jockey with Bruno Schuetz for three years.

A year training with renowned horseman and world famous horse whisperer Monty Roberts in California.

Graduated from Veterinary School at the University Of Hannover.

Vet in Newmarket with Rossdale Veterinary Surgeons.

A member of the Royal College Of Veterinary Surgeons.

Licensed trainer since 2012.



Here at Gansera-Lévêque Racing your experience of ownership is central to us. We offer both sole and group ownership options to allow you the most freedom possible in choosing the best ownership option for you. We do our utmost to offer the personal touch, ensuring each owner is fully involved and up to date with their horse's development, training and racing career. We'd love to welcome new owners to our hard-working, dedicated team and look forward to bringing you much enjoyment and many winners!

ILKA CAN BE CONTACTED ON:

Office: +44 (0)1638 454973
email: office@gansera-leveque.com
Saint Wendred's, Hamilton Road,
Newmarket CB8 7JQ



Ilka Gansera-Lévêque