

Award Décor

Turn your horse show awards into one-of-a-kind décor to proudly display around your home or barn.

By JESSICA HEIN



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COURTESY MARTI LANCE



COURTESY DIANA BERTHOLD

Ribbons can be repurposed into beautiful works of art you'll be proud to display. Pillows, quilts and bags are among the products crafted by Distinctive Designs by Diana (facing page, above right and far right) and Lance Quilts (above left).



COURTESY DIANA BERTHOLD

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Whether you've won one buckle or 100, chances are that each conjures up memories of a special Paint Horse. Though you can't wear all of your awards at once, you can create one-of-a-kind displays for your ribbons, buckles and other prizes to keep your fondest memories alive.

The options of displaying your prizes are endless, and they range from free, do-it-yourself projects to custom works of art made by the pros. Read on to get some great display ideas, and then get busy designing your own masterpiece.

Professional Touch

A professional artist can handcraft unique award décor designs to showcase your ribbons and buckles.

One popular way to display your hard-earned ribbons is through a quilt or wall hanging. Varying from small to large—depending on the number of ribbons you have—ribbon quilts are a great way to showcase awards from memorable shows or the prizes won throughout a special horse's career.

"These are wonderful ways to cherish one's achievements, instead of having them hidden in a box, packed

away and forgotten," said Diana Berthold, an award-winning artist and owner of Distinctive Designs By Diana (distinctivedesignsbydiana.com) in Bellport, New York.

A quick Internet search yields a host of professional crafters who can help you design an extra-special way to display your prizes, but remember to do your homework to select a reputable artist.

"This is definitely the time to speak to a professional," Diana said. "After all, these ribbons are irreplaceable, and it cost you money to earn these awards. If it is not made as you had hoped, you cannot have it remade, so choose a professional wisely."

Some artists, like Diana, give customers the opportunity to participate in the design process and customize their quilts with embroidered names or fabric-transfer photographs, for instance. These special touches help create a one-of-a-kind piece of artwork you will treasure forever, Diana says.

"One customer wrote that the quilt not only preserves her daughter's memories in the show ring, but also the memories of the time that she and her daughter spent together at shows," she

said. "These are not only true works of art, but art combined with serious considerations to construction and detail and with personalization which make each completely unique."

Other display options for your ribbons are endless. Some ideas include:

- Pillows
- Tote bags
- Stuffed animals

The exact specifications of a ribbon-based product depend on the number of ribbons provided to the artist, as well as their color and length, explains Marti Lance, owner of Lance Quilts (lancequilts.com).

Buckle display cases are another way to show off your cherished prizes.

Adriana Kassay, owner of Signature Cowboy Studio (*signaturecowboy.com*) in Scottsdale, Arizona, designs custom buckle display cases that perfectly accent Western home décor. They feature embossed leathers, colorful hides and rich woods melded into a one-of-a-kind showpiece.

“What makes each display case great is that they are designed to draw the viewers to the case—the awards inside are what keeps them there,” Adriana said. “My aim is to weave my love for horses and the rich, warm essence of the West into each case while incorporating the personality and individuality of the equestrian it portrays.”

KO Trading Company (*trophytack.com*) in Fort Worth, Texas, also sells a variety of buckle display cases, including engraved wooden holders to commemorate a special competition or horse.

Former AjPHA member Betsy Francis of Colorado has another way of displaying her favorite buckles: on her purse. The leather purse’s design allows Betsy to change the buckle as often as she likes, although she prefers to showcase her 1995 Youth Hunter Hack 18 & Under world champion buckle, earned with 1991 brown tobiano gelding Sacred Seven.



COURTESY ADRIANA KASSAY



COURTESY BETSY FRANCIS



COURTESY ADRIANA KASSAY

Try displaying your buckles on a purse, easels or in a beautiful display case—these handmade cases are made by Signature Cowboy Studio.



ABIGAIL WILDER BOATWRIGHT

“I got it as a present from my sister—I was really excited when I got it because I don’t wear belts very often and, with the purse, I had another way to display my buckles,” Betsy said. “This buckle was my first world championship. It meant a lot because I began my horse show career in the hunter/jumper pen, so it was really gratifying to win a buckle in an over-fences class. Even if I won another buckle of that caliber, I’d still keep that one out—it’s pretty special to me.”

Free-For-All

With a bit of creativity and ingenuity, you can easily display your favorite horse show ribbons and championship buckles for little or no cost. Try these ideas:

- **Glass Vase or Bowl:** Fold the “tails” of your ribbons and secure them behind the rosette with the attached hanger. Then, arrange the ribbons in a glass bowl or vase, with the rosettes facing out—try multi-colored and monochromatic arrangements to see which you like best.

- **Fishing Line:** String clear fishing line near the ceiling of your room, wrapping it around small nails at regular intervals to give it strength. Hang your ribbons along the line for a great room accent.
- **Blinds or Rods:** Hang your ribbons on sturdy window blinds or curtain rods.
- **Easels:** Small wooden, plastic or metal easels are a great way to display favorite belt buckles on a shelf.
- **Shadow Box:** Secure your buckles in a shadow box—then, hang it on your wall or display on a shelf. Add an inexpensive engraved saddle plate with your horse’s name for an extra-special touch. **PHJ**

Low-cost display options can still be stunning. Arrange ribbons in a glass container or make a shadow box to feature special buckles.



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To comment on this article, e-mail jhein@apha.com.

Member Methods

We asked our APHA and AjPHA Facebook fans how they showcase their horse show awards, and we received some great responses. Read on for more real-life display ideas:

I started showing two years ago—a lifelong dream made possible by my husband. He pays all the bills, and the only thing he sees are the bills and the ribbons or other awards—and he wants them all! We have all the ribbons displayed on the beams of his “man cave.” We have a hutch for the awards and the beams are now almost covered in ribbons and pictures, complete with my grandson’s own area for his lead line ribbons and medals.

—Francine Acord-Brown of Parachute, Colorado

We have a coffee table made from diamond willow with a built-in buckle display. It has a glass top so you can view the buckles!

—Sandy McCook of Winfield, Alberta, Canada

Every couple of years I give my ribbons to riding groups, such as handicap riding programs. It is the best feeling to see these kids get a ribbon! The ribbons mean more to them than they could ever mean to me.

—Lisa Johnson of Cadillac, Michigan

My mom and I hang our ribbons around our kitchen with pictures from the shows and our trainer, who past away a year ago. We have them in order by places and from what show the ribbons are from.

—Lori Spriggs of Penngrove, California

I hang all mine in my dining room as an accent wall, along with my other awards. It shows all my friends what I have achieved over the years.

—Laina Stashek of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

My son, Cody, has a wall in his bedroom that is covered with his plaques, ribbons, medals, etc. We jokingly call it the “Wall of Fame.” My niece, Arianna, began showing lead line with us using Cody’s horse when she was 3. When she won her first ribbons, she insisted that her ribbons be hung on Cody’s wall because it was her wall now too!

—Jimmie Franklin of Hume, Missouri

We use bookshelves in our living room—we started this when our daughter started showing at 5 years old. She is now 11, and we have had to add three new shelves. Our plan is to make a wall in the new barn so we can move all but the current year to the “Barn of Pride.”

—Kimberly Murusky of Azeto, New Mexico

When we built our house, we devoted a wall in the main living area for our kids’ Paint awards. In the middle of the wall is a 300-gallon aquarium with tropical fish, framed by all the kids’ awards and photos

—Chris Cumpton of Adrian, Missouri

I made a ribbon quilt for my daughter, Alisha, and gave it to her for her college graduation, just before she moved to Texas. Alisha showed her two Paints in Utah Paint Horse Club shows, 4-H and Open shows, and the quilt also has ribbons she won while competing in the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association at Utah State University. We also display buckles in a glass-topped coffee table that has a display drawer under the glass.

—Susan Smith of Salt Lake City



COURTESY SUSAN SMITH



COURTESY CHRIS CUMPTON



COURTESY SANDI MCCOOK

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