

What is a dunalino?

by Kristin Berkery



Major Hearts Desire, a dunalino Quarter Horse stallion. Photo courtesy of [Circle P Ranch](#)

At first glance, the stallion pictured here looks like a [palomino](#). But click on the photo to view a larger version and you start to see more characteristics than you'd find on a [palomino](#).

First, he has some dark coloration on his legs, especially around his knees and hocks, and darker shading on his withers. Palominos sometimes have darker shading, which is described as "sooty" and may be accompanied by lots of dapples, but it generally originates at the spine and goes down the sides of the horse in a uniform way. Sooty areas also tend to be larger than the shaded parts on the stallion pictured here.



Major Hearts Desire.
Photo courtesy of
[Circle P Ranch](#)

When you take a look at the second picture of Major Hearts Desire, you can see that he has a distinct dorsal stripe. Palominos don't have dorsal stripes, but duns do.



[Breyer](#)
[Palomino](#)
[Quarter](#)
[Horse](#)

So what exactly is Major Hearts Desire's color? He's a "dunalino," or a horse that carries the dun gene *and* the palomino gene on a basecoat of chestnut. His lovely golden color is the result of the cream modifier, [palomino](#), on chestnut, and the dun gene gives him very faint leg barring (the darker coloring on his legs), a dorsal stripe, and shoulder bars (the shading on his withers).

Now...if Major Hearts Desire had the darker areas on his knees, hocks, and withers *only* with *no* dorsal stripe, you'd have to rule out dun. A distinct dorsal stripe is a dead giveaway for the dun gene.

Dunalino can also be modified by other genes. [Stallions Now](#) has a listing of dunalino stallions at stud, many of which have additional color genes like tobiano, overo, and [Appaloosa](#). To be sure they are dunalino, look for a distinct dorsal stripe.

Major Hearts Desire stands at [Circle P Ranch](#) in Washington.