

Guiding Hand

PRIZED ROSETTES

Everyone appreciates recognition for a job well done particularly if it involves pretty, colourful ribbons. Rosettes have been awarded for centuries, not just in the equestrian community but also as a badge of distinction, a military honor, as a symbol of club membership or simply as a decorative adornment.

Hodges Badge Company have been making ribbons, rosettes, sashes and buttons in America since 1920. Every year they turn more than 12 million yards of satin ribbon into rosettes, flat ribbons and neck ribbons for medals. Their historian traces rosettes back as far back as the 8th or 9th century. Unlike the rosettes we know today, designed to resemble a rose, the first millennium rosettes are said to have been created to symbolize the moon and planets.

In 1802, Napoleon Bonaparte instituted the use of rosette award ribbons as a part of the Legion of Honor award. These early rosettes, larger than the rosettes we see today, were attached to the ribbon that displayed the Legion medal and presented to individuals in

recognition of outstanding military or civic service. In the mid-1800s, rosettes began to be crafted in smaller sizes to be worn on clothing, and became popular for civilian use.

A basic rosette consists of coloured ribbon that has been folded, pleated or gathered in a circle to resemble a rose. Ribbon streamers are usually attached often printed with text. Horse show rosettes usually display the name of the event, the place, year and host city of the competition. Historically rosettes are awarded for the first six placings in a horse show, with a different colour for each. These colours vary by country – red represents first place in the UK and Canada, and blue for first place in the US and Australia.

Horse enthusiasts cherish their rosettes but even if you've never ridden a horse, you can still amass a collection. Vintage rosettes have become collectible and are making their way into the art and decorating world as party decorations and to adorn wrapped presents.

Prices vary but you won't need to sell your horse to buy a few rosettes. A piece from the 1950s or 1960s can be found at an on-line auction for between \$10 and \$20. You may even be lucky enough to find an entire box lot for a song – the seller unaware that there are collectors willing to pay much more for a ready-made collection of rosettes.

Price depends upon the condition, intricacy of the design and age. Prior to WWII, the ribbon streamers were printed with real gold leaf, the satin streamers draped beautifully and the centre buttons were made of



celluloid. Most modern day rosettes are made of a much stiffer acetate ribbon with a plastic button. Though still lovely, their vintage counterparts are more appealing to those who swoon over time-worn details.

Most rosettes in my collection have been acquired through auctions and antique shops. My favourite is a pink, cream and gold one with petal shaped ribbon folds layered over the bottom layer of pleats and a gold horseshoe image on the centre button.

My vintage collection inspired me to design a range rosettes. Having nothing to do with horses, they are for decoration and gift giving. Other rosette manufacturers have been pleating ribbons for decades, and are happy to design ribbons in any colour and offer

customised buttons to suit every needs. Vintage or new, traditional prize ribbon rosettes have a certain appeal, perhaps because they have not changed much over the years. And someday... even the new ones will be vintage. ♦♦♦ **Andrea Singarella**

RESOURCES LIST

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New rosettes www.rosettesdirect.co.uk • www.prudhoe-rosettes.co.uk • www.gardenspotribbonaw.com
• www.hodgesbadge.com • www.andreasingarella.com
• **Books** • Horse Antiques and Collectibles, Deborah Rashkin, Schiffer Book for Collectors, £24.95, ISBN-10: 0764313509 ♦♦♦

