

few) there are also disc-type rowels, a popular dressage spur, and roller spurs with a plastic end that rolls along the horse's sides.

■ **Waterford** — Similar to a rounded end spur but with a much larger ball at the end of the shank. These are very soft spurs that are unlikely to cause rubs on the horse's sides.

■ **Barrel racing/sidewinder/bumper spurs** — Instead of a shank, these spurs have a length of ridges, teeth, or even rowels along the inside part of the heel band. This allows the rider to engage the spur without rotating their foot or leg. The side rowel is another version of this same type of spur, as is the mild, English style "Le Spur."

■ **Swan neck, gooseneck, Spanish, etc.** — Swan neck, gooseneck, Spanish, derby, cutter, classic, roper and futurity are all terms used to describe the shape of a shank. Most of these shank designs are found only in Western style spurs, but the swan neck style can also be found on a few English designs.

Spur innovation

While the basic spur templates haven't changed much over the years, spur manufacturers continue to innovate on these basic designs, with some incredibly effective results. If you're looking to enhance your stock of traditional spurs with some new and novel products, take a look at some of these exciting offerings:

Stübben STEELtec SEQ Spurs - The STEELtec SEQ (Safety & Elegance & Quality) Spur has a soft, rounded rowel designed to roll easily along the horse's sides. The shape of the rowel on these spurs allows for a faster rotation of the wheel, so with very little movement of the lower leg, the rider can give a very accurate and precise aid. Thanks to the horizontally oriented rowel, these spurs are ideally suited for use on sensitive horses. The STEELtec SEQ spur is also crafted from a flexible type of stainless steel, which allows the rider to customize the fit of the spur, and the non-slip covering provides both boot protection and a snug, secure fit on the boot.

Stübben STEELtec Dynamic Dressage Spurs - The STEELtec Dynamic Dressage Spur features soft, engrailed rowels that react immediately to the horse's movements, and roll easily and smoothly along their sides with just the lightest cue from the rider's leg. These spurs make giving precise aids astonishingly easy, and the slight outward bend of the spur strap slots makes them equally easy to put on the boot. These spurs are available in a unisex, 35 mm size.

Reinsman's Interchangeable Rowels - While most riders must swap out their spurs if they want to increase or decrease the severity of the tool they have strapped to their boot (and re-fit the spur each time) Reinsman has solved this conundrum with its interchangeable rowel system. Each pair of rowelled

Reinsman spurs comes with the ability to swap out the rowel itself for one of six styles, each designed to offer a distinct feel. In addition to interchangeable rowels, all Reinsman spurs come with a choice of either straight or angled swingers. Angled swingers conform more closely to the boot making for a snugger fit, while straight swingers fit more loosely.

Cavallo and Sprenger's SmartClix System- Cavallo and Sprenger have developed a new system that seamlessly combines boot and spur into one elegant piece of equipment. In addition to giving the rider a closer-contact feel, the SmartClix system also eliminates time spent putting on and taking off spurs, along with discomfort from overly tight spur straps or unsightly rubs on the boot leather. SmartClix are height adjustable and come in several different styles of rounded neck and rowelled spur designs. In addition, the rowelled styles can be turned from vertical to horizontal to further fine tune the contact. SmartClix spurs won't slip up or down, and because boot and spur are one, it's virtually impossible to misplace your spurs right before an important competition or clinic.

The Spursuader - Designed to be gentler, more humane, and equally as effective as

"traditional" spur designs, the Spursuader features a patented, flattened sphere end that curves inward on both left and right spurs. Linda Hauck, creator of the Spursuader was inspired by her experience working with sensitive horses, particularly Thoroughbreds, to design a spur that would allow the rider to get his or her point across without creating tension in the horse.

Because of its very different look, Hauck has faced a challenge getting people to try this new, gentler breed of spur. But through clever marketing — allowing retailers to "sign out" a loaner pair of Spursuaders to local trainers and coaches — she's succeeded in convincing some very big names in the equestrian industry to give her product a try. "I finally got John Nunn of Bit of Britain to try a pair," says Hauck. "He came to my booth at Equine Affaire last month and said 'I'm sold. I don't feel bad using these and the horse responds well.'"

Originally designed for the English market, Spursuader is now available in a Western version as well. "That whole market is ready for a kinder spur," says Hauck, "especially with the amateurs."



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