

A Model Horse Customizing Project:

Breyer G3 Stablemate Pony to a Pinto Miniature Horse

by Sarah Tregay



Breyer G3 Stablemate Pony in Sandy Bay and Magazine Ad for Pecan Grove Farm

Ready to start customizing? Here we'll transform the Breyer G3 Stablemate pony to a Pinto miniature horse. You'll be removing leg feathers and reshaping the hooves, etching, and hand painting. This project is challenging and appropriate for teens with adult supervision and adults.

STEP 1: Sanding

The G3 Pony has feathers on its legs and relatively large feet whereas a Miniature horse in show condition has neither. So the first step in this project is a little sanding.

In order to sand off the feathers, I will use a hand-held, battery-powered Dremel tool with a cone-shaped and barrel-shaped bits. If you don't have a Dremel tool, don't worry (nor go out and buy one just yet). You can use an Emory board, a small flat, round or half-round file or a piece of 150 grit sandpaper wrapped around a popsicle stick.

If you are using a Dremel tool, take a moment to tie back long hair and put on safety glasses. Hold the model with your non-dominant hand or place it in a small vice with padding. To sand, hold the bit parallel to the model's leg. Maneuver the Dremel tool to remove the leg feathers.

List of Supplies:

Breyer G3 Standing Pony in a solid color
Photo of a pinto horse (preferably from both sides)

Sanding Supplies

Dremel tool with small conical or cylindrical bit (www.dremel.com) OR
Emory Board OR
Small flat, round or half-round file OR
150 grit sandpaper and a popsicle stick
Safety glasses

Etching Supplies

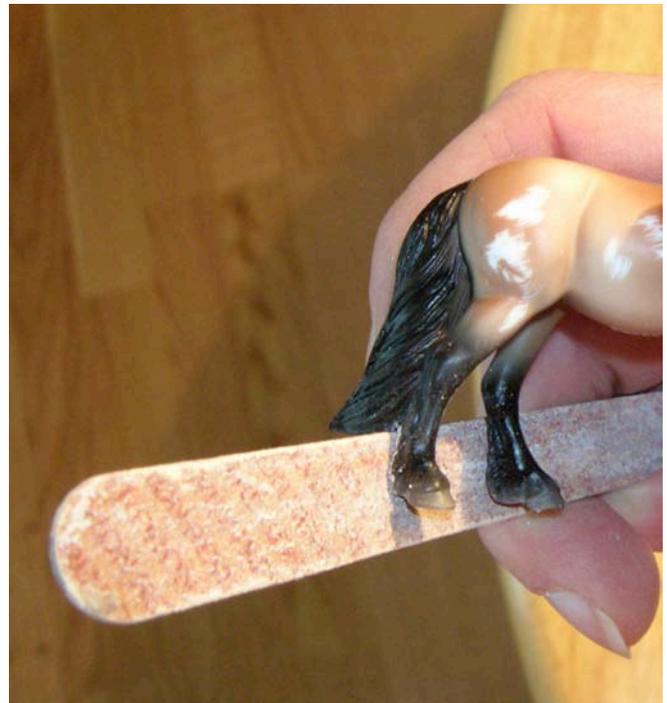
Exacto knife and holder such as blade #11
Masking tape
Nail polish remover or acetone
Protective gloves
Q-tips
Dull Coat such as Testors Dull Coat, Armory-Clear Matte Sealer or Citadel Colour Games Workshop Matte Varnish

Painting and Pastelling Supplies

Chalk pastel stick in pink or flesh color
Chalk pastel Pearl Ex Pigments dust in a coordinating metallic shade such as gold
Chalk pastels in soft yellow/ochre, light brown, and burnt sienna
Sandpaper
Paintbrush #3 Round or other random size (for pastels)
Paintbrush #000 or 10/0 Round Spotter or other similar size (for details)
Acrylic paint such as Jo Sonja in the following colors: tan (Skin Tone Base) black, and a fleshy pink OR tan, black, white, and burnt sienna
Glossy clear coat such as gloss varnish or fingernail polish



Sanding off the feathers with a Dremel tool



Sanding with an Emory board

If you are using an Emory board or file, sand back and forth across the back of the leg. Sand a little at a time, stopping often to check that the leg maintains its shape.

To make the feet smaller pretend you are a farrier. Hold the Dremel/Emory board/file against the hoof at its natural 45° angle and simply file down the hoof wall (and the bulge/coronet band). This will give the impression of smaller feet. Rinse the dust off by washing the model with water.



Etching with an Exacto knife (note masking tape for safety)

STEP 2: Etching

Now, onto the fun part: making the pinto markings. For this you will need an Exacto knife blade and holder. The small #11 blades work well. An old, dull one will be just fine because you will be using the back of the blade, not the sharp side. Cover the sharp side of the blade with masking tape. Leave only ¼ inch of the tip on the backside exposed.

With a photo or drawing as your guide, start to scrape off the paint with the back of the Exacto knife. Don't worry about getting every little bit of paint off the model; just get the basic shapes and interesting edges (never leave boxy edges, make

them rounded, hairy and irregular). Rinse the dust of the model with water.

I like my etchies to have a finished, customized look. I realize that I can't sand all of the seams because that leaves random white patches all over the model. But I can sand off the Breyer stamp on the belly. Simply sand it smooth with an Emory board and shape into a white pinto spot.

With your markings etched in, the next step is the chemical one. If your model is almost how you want it with very little paint stuck in the mane or tail or in the grooves of the cannon bones, then feel free to use nail-polish remover for your chemical. This contains acetone but is much safer than pure acetone. If your model has a white mane or tail or has stubborn paint stuck in crevices, purchase a small container of acetone at your local hardware store.



Acetone clean up of white markings, especially the mane

For both nail polish remover and acetone, try to remember to wear latex (or similar) gloves and protective eye wear. Acetone melts plastic and can damage eyeglasses. Do not use acetone or nail polish remover on or near any painted or stained surfaces (like a desk) it will remove the paint.

Pour a teaspoon or so into a separate container and replace the lid immediately. (Or it will evaporate and cause stinky, flammable fumes.) With a Q-tip, rub a drop of acetone on the paint you want to remove. Change Q-tips as they get dirty because you don't want to smear paint on your clean white markings. The plastic will melt a little and turn shiny, but don't worry -- a little is okay. Keep your Q-tip moving to prevent big gooey melted areas. Also, smooth over the legs where the model was sanded.

Let the model stand for a few minutes and then spray with Citadel, Armory or Testors Dull Coat. Always read instructions on the spray can—shaking the can and spraying in a well-ventilated area (outside) are both important. Allow the horse to dry. Turn and spray the other side.

STEP 3: Painting and Pastelling

Don't worry, you won't have much painting and pastelling to do. Some of the following ideas are optional, so pick and choose which will be best for your model (and your budget.)

Pastelling:

Choose a pale pink or flesh-colored pastel stick that feels like chalk (not an oil pastel stick.) Rub the stick on a piece of sandpaper. Dip a paintbrush in the pile of dust and apply to the areas of your model where the white hair would be thin: the back of the pasterns, behind the elbows, between the back legs and up the crease between the barrel and the hindquarters. Your horse may or may not have white markings in these areas. If not, just dust the lower legs.

Choose a metallic dust or pastel stick, such as Pearl Ex Pigments in 657 Sparkle Gold. Dust a little "shine" on the colored body areas such as the point of the hip and the crest of the neck.

Spray the model with dull coat and allow to dry.

Painting:

Because you have sanded the feathers off of your model, all four feet have white stockings. This means that all four hooves will be shell colored. Paint the hooves with a beige color of acrylic paints, such as Jo Sonja's tan-colored Skin Tone Base. Allow to dry. Dust with pastels of varying shades, such as soft yellow, light brown, and burnt sienna. Work from light to dark. Only use a tiny bit of burnt sienna.

Paint the chestnuts a shade of warm grey. To get warm gray, mix a dot of black paint into the tan you painted the hooves with.

Paint the nose flesh color if your model has a white stripe, blaze or bald face. To mix flesh color, add a drop of burnt sienna to white paint. I painted some grey dots on my horse's muzzle to add interest. You may want to try this.

If your model is bay or buckskin, you may need to paint the mane and tail black. My tail got rubbed when I sanded the back legs, so new tail paint was needed. Two tone manes and tails will most likely need touch ups.

Spray the model with dull coat and allow to dry.

You may repaint the eyes.

Paint the eyes and hooves with a glossy clear coat such as nail polish.



Finished Miniature horse from a Breyer Stablemate