

# Dream Horse

***Dream Horse*** is a 2020 sports comedy-drama film directed by Euros Lyn from a screenplay by Neil McKay. The film stars Toni Collette, Damian Lewis, Owen Teale, Joanna Page, Karl Johnson, Steffan Rhodri, Anthony O'Donnell, Nicholas Farrell, and Siân Phillips, and follows the true story of Dream Alliance, a horse that raced in the Welsh Grand National. It had previously been the subject of the documentary, *Dark Horse: The Incredible True Story of Dream Alliance*.

The film tells the true story of Dream Alliance, an unlikely race horse bred by Welsh barmaid and cashier Jan Vokes. With very little money and no experience, she convinces her neighbours to chip in a bit each week to help raise Dream in the hopes he can compete with the racing elites. Dream rises through the ranks with grit and determination and goes on to race in the Welsh Grand National.

*Dream Horse* had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival on 24 January 2020 and was released in the United States on 21 May 2021, by Bleecker Street and in the United Kingdom on 4 June 2021, by Warner Bros. Pictures.

## Plot

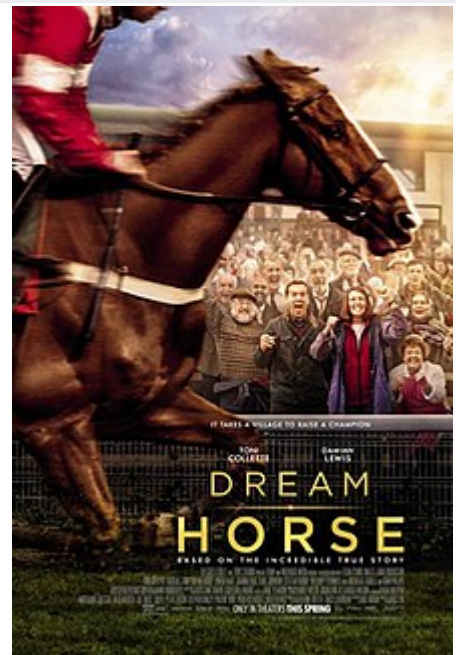
Empty nesters Jan and Brian Vokes lead an uneventful, mundane life in Wales. She is a supermarket cashier and regularly helps her elderly parents while he stays home.

At her second job at the pub, Jan overhears Howard Davies telling stories about a winning horse he once owned. Curious, she finds a breeders guidebook through an ad in Horse and Hound and does her research. Telling Brian about her idea to breed a racehorse, he thinks she's mad.

Soon the couple are buying Rewbell, once a racehorse but sold to them as a brood mare for £300. In the pub, Jan asks Howard for help choosing a stud, and he's not encouraging. She aims to form a syndicate of 20 locals contributing £10 per week.

Passing out flyers all over town, initially Jan's evening pitch meeting seems to be an epic fail, but they do get their 20-member syndicate formed. At the farm while awaiting the insemination, she tells Brian that she needs this project to motivate her.

### Dream Horse



Theatrical release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Euros Lyn</u>
<b>Screenplay by</b>	<u>Neil McKay</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Katherine Butler</u> <u>Tracy O'Riordan</u>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Toni Collette</u> <u>Damian Lewis</u> <u>Owen Teale</u> <u>Joanna Page</u> <u>Karl Johnson</u> <u>Steffan Rhodri</u> <u>Anthony O'Donnell</u> <u>Nicholas Farrell</u> <u>Siân Phillips</u>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<u>Erik Wilson</u>
<b>Edited by</b>	<u>Jamie Pearson</u>
<b>Music by</b>	<u>Benjamin Woodgates</u>
<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Cornerstone Films</u>

Rewbell doesn't survive the birth, but her foal is born soundly. Their syndicate agrees to name the colt Dream Alliance. Once Howard deems him ready, the Vokes take him to trainer Phillip Hobbs, who finally takes him on for a trial period. Considered race-ready, Dream rises through the ranks with grit and determination.

When he wins the King Edward's Challenge, another breeder offers to buy Dream, which Jan, Brian and Howard disregard. However, some of the others in the syndicate are angered at her quick refusal. Feeling inspired, Howard quits his accounting job which he hated and opens his own firm aimed at the not rich. Jan asks why and he explains he wanted to do better than his dad, who gave up trying to be a jockey, spending his life in a factory.

A setback comes when Dream injures a tendon. Again, those in the syndicate focused on the bottom line are for putting him down, but Jan reminds them that he brought them hope and have given them pride. After hours of surgery, and days of rest and stem cell treatment Hobbs believes not only that the tendon is stronger than ever, but he could race in the upcoming Welsh Grand National.

	<u>Film4</u> <u>Raw</u> <u>Ingenious</u> <u>Topic Studios</u> FFilm Cymru Wales <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Bleecker Street</u> (United States) <u>Warner Bros.</u> <u>Pictures</u> (United Kingdom)
<b>Release dates</b>	24 January 2020 ( <u>Sundance</u> ) 21 May 2021 (United States) 4 June 2021 (United Kingdom)
<b>Running time</b>	113 minutes
<b>Countries</b>	United States United Kingdom
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Box office</b>	\$6.6 million <sup>[1][2]</sup>

Jan fears for Dream's well-being, but the rest of the syndicate overrules her. He wins the race, going on to continue racing for a decade before retiring. The Vokes have started a new syndicate and have a new project as of 2019.

## Cast

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- [Toni Collette](#) as Jan Vokes
- [Damian Lewis](#) as Howard Davies
- [Owen Teale](#) as Brian Vokes
- [Joanna Page](#) as Angela Davies
- [Nicholas Farrell](#) as Philip Hobbs
- [Siân Phillips](#) as Maureen
- [Karl Johnson](#) as Kerby
- [Peter Davison](#) as Lord Avery
- [Steffan Rhodri](#) as Gerwyn
- [Anthony O'Donnell](#) as Maldwyn
- [Di Botcher](#) as Nerys
- [Alex Jordan](#) as Johnson White
- [Max Hutchinson](#) as James Lingsford
- [Lynda Baron](#) as Elsie
- [Asheq Akhtar](#) as Peter
- [Darren Evans](#) as Goose
- [Katherine Jenkins](#) as herself
- [Clare Balding](#) as herself

## Production

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It was announced in March 2019 that [Euros Lyn](#) was directing the film, with [Toni Collette](#) and [Damian Lewis](#) cast in the lead roles.<sup>[3]</sup> [Owen Teale](#), [Joanna Page](#), [Nicholas Farrell](#), [Siân Phillips](#) and [Karl Johnson](#) were added in May.<sup>[4]</sup>

Filming began by May 2019 in [Wales](#).<sup>[5]</sup>

## Release

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*Dream Horse* had its world premiere at the [Sundance Film Festival](#) on 24 January 2020.<sup>[6]</sup> The film was originally scheduled to be released in the United Kingdom on 17 April 2020, and in the United States on 1 May 2020,<sup>[7]</sup> but these were delayed due to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).<sup>[8][9]</sup> The film was eventually released to theaters on May 21, 2021 and was released on DVD, July 20, 2021.

## Reception

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### Box office

*Dream Horse* grossed \$796,000 from 1,254 theaters in its opening weekend. Females made up 62% of the audience, with 85% being over the age of 25.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 88% of 132 reviews are positive, with an average rating of 6.7/10. The site's critics consensus reads, "Spurred on by an excellent Toni Collette, *Dream Horse* has a comfortably crowd-pleasing gait that makes the most of the story's familiar formula."<sup>[11]</sup> On Metacritic, the film has a weighted average score of 68 out of 100, based on 30 critics, indicating "generally favorable reviews".<sup>[12]</sup> According to PostTrak, 81% of audience members gave the film a positive score, with 57% saying they would definitely recommend it.<sup>[10]</sup>

## References

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## External links

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- *Dream Horse* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9883996/>) at IMDb
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