

# The Legend of the Gypsy Cob

BY CHERYL NYGAARD

Photo by Clononeen Farm, UK



Gypsy Cob horses are now in high demand for many performance disciplines and also suit less competitive owners for pleasure riding. It is estimated there are only 100 Gypsy Cobs in Canada, breeders having "discovered" them only as recently as 1997.

The traditional colours are black and white, but they also have been known to branch out

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into many other beautiful colours. Powerful and yet quiet in nature, these hardy small-statured horses are seen in trekking centres and riding schools all over Ireland and Britain, who have long been famous for their quality horses. Many of the mares and stallions that are now recognized by the Romani people as the great producers were of Irish origin.

The highest quality stock we found of this wonderful breed came from England. We started to realize how new the breed was to North America. We travelled to England and handpicked all our mares, each having legendary bloodlines behind them. We've since added two stallions and two more mares. One friend of ours has said it well: "Once you start, it's hard to stop!"

The Gypsy Cob's shorter stature, (anywhere from under 14 hands to 15.3 hands high), powerful bodies, smaller, refined head, and large hooves, paired with the beautiful flowing mane, tail, and feather (often starting at their knees) make them irresistible.

However, we find their nature the most treasured part of the Gypsy Cob breed. They

have a winning combination of strength and gentleness and are often referred to as the "golden retriever of horses." Often after dinner, we will stroll out and visit with our herd, as each has his or her own personality that calms the spirit and soothes the soul.

As owners and breeders of this amazing

horse, we intend on promoting Gypsy Cobs across North America and showing the world the beauty, quick-mindedness, and versatility of the legends we love.

*Cheryl and Dale Nygaard own the North Fork Equestrian Centre and are the proud owners of Gypsy Cobs. See [www.northforkhorses.ca](http://www.northforkhorses.ca).*

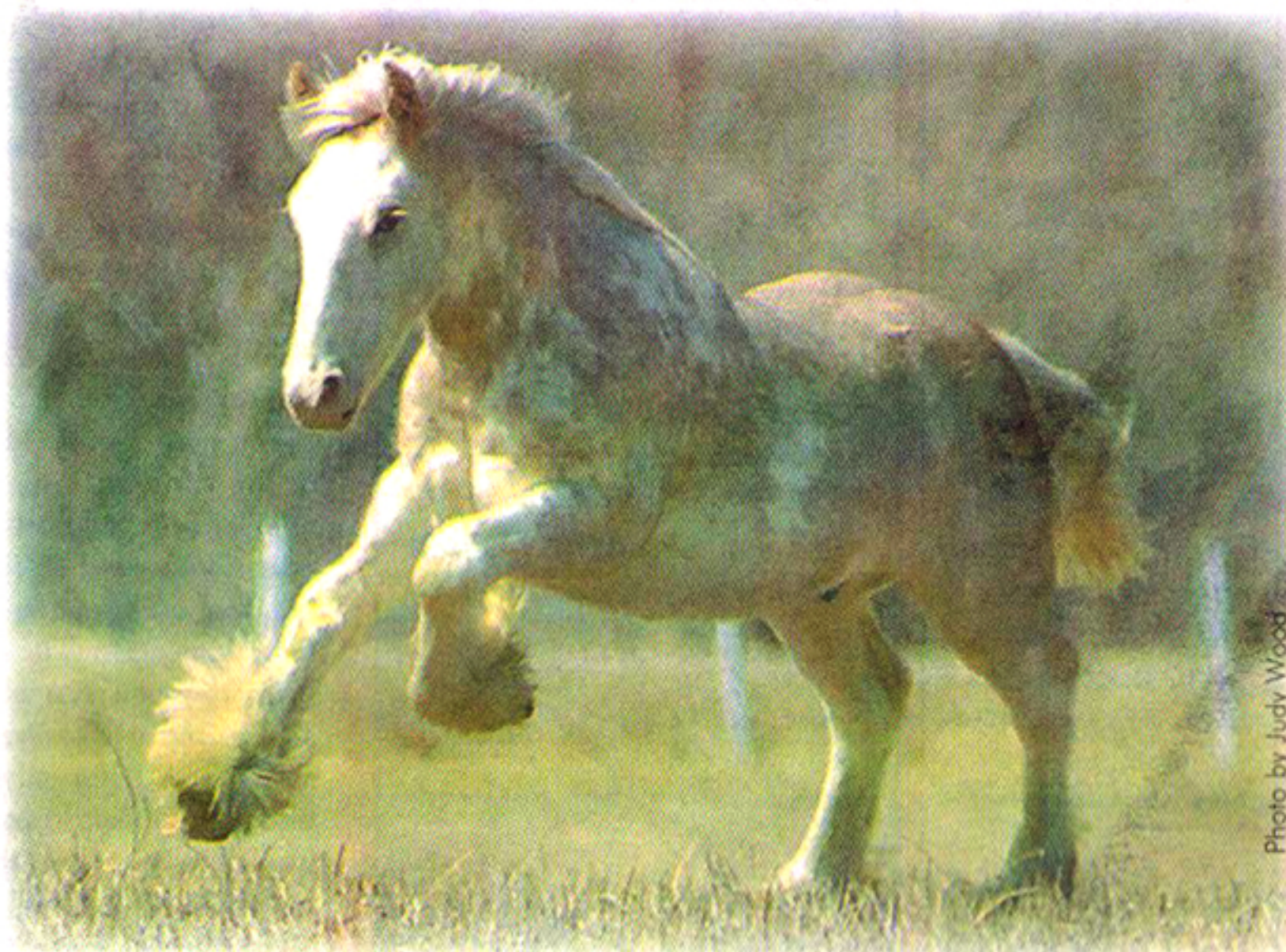


Photo by Judy Wood

**L**ong, flowing manes and tails, copious amounts of feather, and strongly muscled bodies. Who are these Gypsy Cobs, seemingly so much a part of history, yet relatively unknown in North America today?

Our journey with this amazing breed started out in fall 2007 shortly after we decided to purchase a ranch just outside Saskatoon. We were sitting around the table talking about things we could do together as a family when the subject of horses came up.

Our eldest son mentioned the horses with the "super long manes and big hairy feet" we had seen in a magazine a few years before. After some research and a visit to a ranch about six hours away, our love story with these beautiful horses began.

In researching the breed, we found out that most of their history had been passed down through the spoken word of the nomadic Romani people. Some historians trace the horses back to as far as 200 AD when the Roma travelled the country with their families. The Romani (also known as Romany, or a Rom, meaning "man" or "people") are an ethnic group mainly located in Europe and the term "Gypsy" was initially used to refer to their nomadic lifestyle. As travellers, they carefully chose characteristics such as strength, endurance, and an even-tempered personality to selectively breed horses specially suited to pulling their living wagons (called vardos) to each village.

## Summer is for pets, too!

BY DR. VIVIENNE JONES

**S**ummer is a fun time for both you and your pets. To ensure happy and safe holidays here are some things to keep in mind:

### Heat stroke

Dogs and cats can't sweat to cool them-

Try this remedy to remove the skunk smell. Mix 250 millilitres of hydrogen peroxide, one teaspoon liquid soap and two tsp. baking power. Rub into your dog's coat, soak for five to 10 minutes, then rinse and shampoo with regular pet shampoo.