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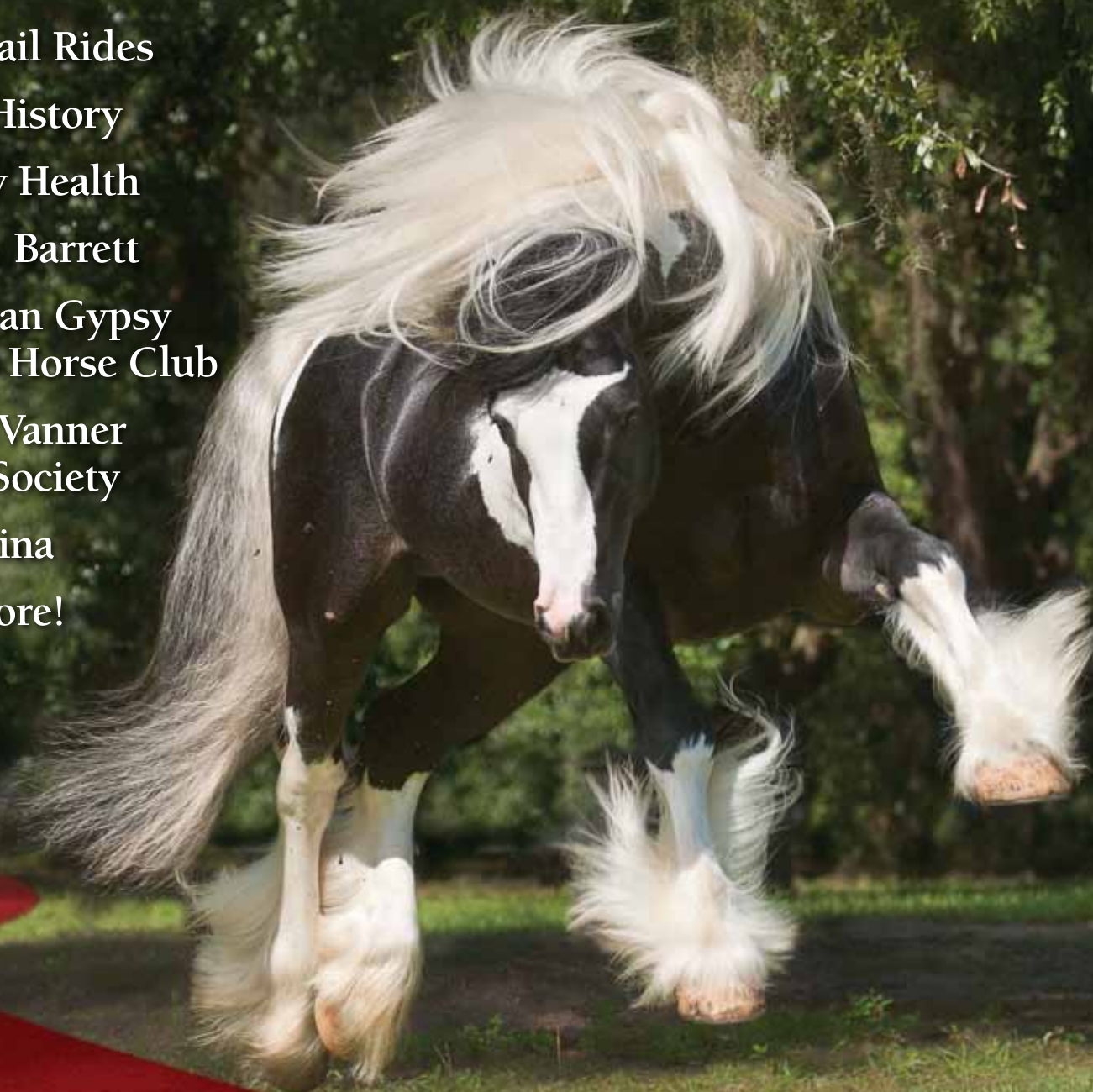
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# VANNER FAIR <sup>2011</sup>

## RED CARPET ISSUE

Inside Vanner Fair  
Heli-Trail Rides  
Breed History  
Affinity Health  
Mark J. Barrett  
Canadian Gypsy  
Vanner Horse Club  
Gypsy Vanner  
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# VANNER FAIR <sup>2011</sup>

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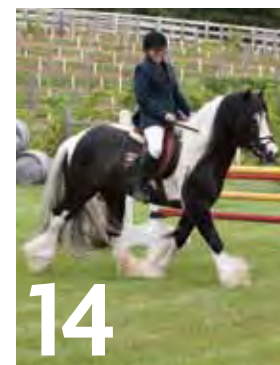


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## Publisher's Note

by James D. Wilson



### Welcome to Vanner Fair!

There is something to be said when you can gather together a group that shares the same passion in life, and really supports one another in actualizing a vision. Such is the case with the launch of the first annual Vanner Fair – and it's not surprising. After all, Gypsy Vanners are among the most glorious animals on earth.

It takes a lot of inspiration, sweat of the brow, and commitment on everybody's part, to transform that vision into reality. The dedication of both the Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club & the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society was instrumental to that endeavor, and in the process we renewed longstanding friendships and discovered many wonderful new ones.

One thing is certain; a fair makes the passion come to life, especially when sharing the magic of the Gypsy Vanner. For years these beautiful horses have captured the hearts of so many people.

### Highlights of the Fair:

**SHOPPING AND FOOD COURT PAVILION:** The pavilion will delight cultural-events performance buffs and gourmards alike, with the festive atmosphere which defines Vanner Fair. The Vanner Fair Pavilion is a gastronomic cabaret that offers a feast of delectable foods, a robust wine and beer garden, plus strolling entertainment, specialty vendors and artisans selling lifestyle and equine crafts and wares.

**THE OPENING CEREMONIES:** A vibrant opening ceremony, marking the launch of the first North American Vanner Fair, celebrating one of the most magnificent breeds of horse the world has ever seen.

**VANNERS SWIMMING:** A must see! Owners and trainers will take their Vanners for a swim in the pond.

**A LIVE CONCERT:** Terrie Lea & The Mustangs is one of the most diverse country music entertainment acts you will ever see. Terrie and the band have been thrilling crowds for years.

Get an up-close introduction to the Gypsy Vanners, watching them take part in demonstrations and competitions. Dennis Thompson – breed founder – has referred to the Vanner as a 'golden retriever with hooves' ... so move over man's best friend, you have competition.

I want to thank everyone for helping to put together a great fair. A warm appreciation and a big Thank-you go out to the Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club Vanner Fair Event Advisory & Organizing Committee, of which I was honored to be a part. The selfless efforts of everybody involved made Vanner Fair 2011 possible. Kudos to my fellow members: Katherine Mutti, Dan O'Neill and Terry Elder.

A special recognition from all of us goes to the professionals who dedicated their time and effort to bringing Vanner Fair to life: Liz Shaughnessy & Associates; Isabella Devine – DeerFields Stables Country Inn; Ross & Virginia Munroe – Editors of Vanner Fair Magazine; June Brown – Sculptor of the Best in Fair Trophy; and many more...

Cheers,  
James D. Wilson





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# The Passion Comes To Life



by James D. Wilson

On September 24th and 25th, DeerFields Stables Country Inn, just outside the Village of Palgrave in Caledon, plays host to North America's first-ever 'Vanner Fair' with breeders, owners and trainers trekking from the far reaches of the United States and Canada to participate in lively demonstrations, keen competition and the good camaraderie which so naturally follows the colorful Gypsy Vanner horse.

It's only fitting to hold North America's 1st Vanner Fair as part of Destination Equitation 2011, a 9-day celebration of all things equestrian in the Hills of Headwaters. Host for Vanner Fair, DeerFields Stables Country Inn,

provides a setting not unlike the English landscape familiar to the breed – picturesque rolling hills in the countryside and boutique facilities that offer an inviting atmosphere catering to a small or large gathering.

There is free admission for the public. Gates open at 10am.

## Browse A Little... Shop A Little... Enjoy A Lot!

With the feel of a true vacation destination, Vanner Fair has something for the whole family, from a social gathering, entertainment and horseplay to Vanner swimming and a Vanner

soccer match. Enjoy the peace and tranquility of the nature trails or dive into the festivities that include shopping, mouth-watering food, wine and beer,

.....  
**...participate in lively demonstrations, keen competition, and the good camaraderie...**  
.....

live entertainment and breathtaking demonstrations that honor the Gypsy Vanner horse.

On the Saturday, a boutique trade fair celebrates the 'Vanner Passion' with specialty vendors and artisans selling lifestyle and equine crafts and wares, while breeders and newbie owners regale visitors with personal anecdotes about their lives with a Gypsy Vanner. Hospitality areas, wine sampling, delectable food concessions and a robust wine and beer garden with strolling entertainment complete the

festive atmosphere, which defines Vanner Fair. The day in the country finishes with a live concert featuring the renowned Terrie Lea & The Mustangs.

DeerFields Country Inn's facilities include La Cucina Dining Room, Sea Horse Spa, Reins Lounge, plus the Amphitheatre Food Court, rolling hills, hiking and riding trails, a pond, Tuscan-style vineyard and much more.

## The Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club Presents...

The Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club had planned on organizing a gathering of breeders and owners for years. Vanner Fair finally had its birth at a cold winter Club meeting in early 2011 – and once the Advisory Committee was established, the passion truly came to life.

Appleby Fair has for hundreds of years been the Mecca for Gypsy horse lovers and traders. Now Vanner Fair is both a complement to that legacy, and the start of a new tradition. The Fair was never intended to clone the historical event, other than to pay tribute to the magnificent Gypsy horse breed. Vanner Fair 2011 is only the start of an exciting new development, delivering on the Mission of the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society – to respect the spoken words of Gypsies who have

dedicated lifetimes in the pursuit of breeding the perfect caravan horse...the glorious Gypsy Vanner.

Breeders want to make sure they are part of North America's first exclusive gathering of Gypsy Vanner breeders & owners as they present their horses, educate the public about the breed and offer them for sale. Registered GVHS horses are entered into the Red Carpet Expo, a unique showcase of Gypsy Vanners. Vanner Fair offers a one-of-a-kind Concierge Promotion and Sales Suite, judging forum, breed evaluation, competition and demonstrations. The Gypsy Vanner horse world is abuzz with positive discussion supporting the Fair and is looking forward to the future. The Sunday is dedicated exclusively to horse aficionados, enabling them to wrap up their business and enjoy some camaraderie, away from the general public.



.....  
**...Vanner Fair has something for the whole family...**  
.....

## Vanner Fair Magazine

The flagship publication for Vanner Fair, this glossy four-color magazine is the key media vehicle for the event. The magazine includes editorial features on the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society and the Canadian Gypsy Vanner

Horse Club. There are fascinating stories written by owners and breeders on the history of the Gypsy Vanner horse, the breed standard and personal experiences with these superb horses. Add to all this, articles on healthy lifestyle, arts & entertainment, travel, real estate and sales; and you have a magazine well worth reading, referring back to and keeping close at hand.

## Come One. Come All!

Vanner Fair 2011 is the one to remember – certain to become the beginning of a wonderful new chapter in the unfolding saga of the Gypsy Vanner breed. While DeerFields Stables is hosting the inaugural event, the prediction is that Vanner Fair will move to new venues across the continent in the coming years.

For more information, visit [www.VannerFair.com](http://www.VannerFair.com)







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## HISTORY OF THE BREED



# How The Gypsy Vanner Came To North America

by Dennis Thompson



In 1996, my wife Cindy and I established the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society. Hidden behind shrubs and under bridges; amid the indiscriminate breeding practices that had caused the world around the Gypsies to see any horse bred by them as nothing more than trade horses for consumption; a breed had been developed and its story begins here.

Founded November 24, 1996, the GVHS is the world's first registry to recognize a breed of horse developed

by the Gypsies of Great Britain/Ireland and the only such registry founded on an in-depth study of British/Irish Gypsies and their horses.

All breeds result from a crossing of breeds by someone or some culture focused on creating a specific looking horse born from their dreamed image – their vision. Once the ideal horse

is achieved and recognized, the basic function of a breed society is to protect, educate about, perpetuate and promote the breed. With our breed and the magic it holds, the opportunity is greater.

Soon after World War II, a vision was born by the Gypsies of Great Britain to create the perfect caravan horse; "a small Shire, with more feather, more color and a sweeter head," was the goal.

Selective breeding continued virtually unknown to the outside world for over half a century until Cindy and I, while traveling through the English countryside, noticed a magical looking horse standing in a field. It was that very horse who became the key to unlocking the heretofore-unknown vision and genetics that created the Gypsies'

"vanner" breed (a horse suitable to pull a caravan). Be it good fortune, good luck or pure Gypsy magic, a passion was born in us to understand the little stallion that captured

our attention and stole our hearts. It would take years of research – without the help of the Internet – to learn about this special horse and, just as importantly, the colorful culture which had created it.

.....  
...one of the most  
magnificent breeds  
of horse the world  
has ever seen...  
.....

Cont'd next page



Invited by the stallion's owner, we attended Appleby, (the oldest horse fair for Gypsies in the world) with the sole purpose of developing a better understanding of Gypsies and their horses. For ten days we introduced ourselves to every Gypsy who bought or sold a quality-looking horse and then documented contact information for later pursuit. The discovery of that one special little stallion and ten days turned a curiosity about Gypsies and their horses into an obsession.

Our relentless pursuit of knowledge over four calendar years resulted in:

- Uncovering the post World War II vision from which the breed was born.
- Identifying Sonny Mays and The Coal Horse – the two foundation stallions that inspired the Vanner breed – as well as much of the influential stock originating from those two.
- Identifying the genetics that created the breed: The Shire, Clydesdale, Dales Pony and Friesian.
- Tracing the genetic heritage of Cushti Bok (the stallion we had discovered) through three countries.
- Discovering that, as a yearling, Cushti Bok had been “the most highly prized colt in all of Great Britain” at the same 300-year-old horse fair where our quest for knowledge began.
- Naming the unnamed breed, “Gypsy Vanner Horse.”
- Documenting the Vanner breed standard based on years of listening to the spoken words of dedicated Gypsy breeders. Respecting the spoken words of Gypsies who have dedicated lifetimes in the pursuit of their dream, is a commitment of the GVHS mission contained in its by-laws.
- Importing the first two Vanner fillies (Bat and Dolly) November 24th 1996.

- Importing the first two Vanner stallions (Cushti Bok and The Gypsy King) Easter Sunday 1997 and Easter Sunday 1998.
- Importing a total of fourteen mares and two stallions for the breed's introduction in June of 1998 at Equitana USA in Louisville Kentucky and on the Internet. All other names and efforts to recognize a breed of horse developed by Gypsies throughout the world came after.

Returning from the fateful trip in which we first discovered Cushti Bok, Cindy and I sat on a plane contemplating the absurd possibility that we may have just stumbled upon an unknown breed of horse in the last decade of the twentieth century. As wildly improbable as it seemed, consequent research confirmed that, in fact, one of the most magnificent breeds of horse the world has ever seen was not recognized, did not have a name and was not understood outside the world of Gypsies. I cannot explain or express deeply enough the sense of responsibility that reality brought with it.

The mission and goals of the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society were inspired by that sense of responsibility and a sincere desire to establish the magical-looking breed Gypsies created without changing a thing.

With the very first issued Registration Certificate for the Gypsy Vanner Horse Breed, a new breed was officially recognized and the recording of the horses within that breed began.

*Dennis Thompson is the owner of Gypsy Gold farm in Ocala, Florida, and founded the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society with his late wife, Cindy. The two imported the first sixteen Gypsy Vanner horses to North America. [www.GypsyGold.com](http://www.GypsyGold.com).*



Photo: © Mark J. Barrett, [www.markjbarrett.com](http://www.markjbarrett.com)

the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society  
\*\*\* Certificate of Registration \*\*\*

Name: Cushti Bok  
Date of Birth: July 20, 1992  
Registration Number: GV00001F  
Sex: Male  
Blood Type: E

Country of Origin: United Kingdom (Wales)  
Date entered at time of registration: August  
Date entered at time of registration: August  
Date entered at time of birth: August

Name: Cushti Bok  
J.C. Mays (founder)  
Foundation Stock (founder)  
Calle (founder)  
Foundation Stock (founder)

Owner: Dennis & Cindy Thompson  
4100 Hwy 77, 32077  
Buddick, FL 32006

Date issued: December 15, 1997  
Registered: Cally Thompson

This is to certify that the above named and described horse has been registered in the Stud Book of the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society.

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# One Breed, One Vision: The Gypsy Vanner Horse

by Wayne G. Hipsley, BSc, MSc

The evolution of the Gypsy Vanner horse in North America has been a very short journey when we compare it to the legacy of the Thoroughbred or the Arabian. Both are breeds from a foreign shore that were brought to our continent for the purpose of improving domestic breeds and types of horses, each having their introductions well over 150 years ago. Each of these breeds came to the Americas with a genetic legacy based upon some form of a recorded pedigree, which was incorporated into the domestic breed societies.

What does this have to do with the Gypsy Vanner horse? The answer is simple. The Gypsy Vanner horse is in the early stages of development as a breed in North America, just as the Thoroughbred and Arabian once were. The Gypsy Vanner horse is following in the same footsteps of these early predecessors.

The North American vision for the Gypsy Vanner horse started with Dennis and Cindy Thompson, when they discovered these unique horses in England. Once the Thompsons imported their carefully selected horses, there was a need for the creation of a studbook to maintain the official pedigrees and records on these horses.

These first horses came with anecdotal pedigrees, and no certificates of registration, essentially no formal documentation. And from these horses that Thompson imported, the Gypsy Vanner horse has evolved as a breed, just like the Thoroughbred and Arabian.

What constitutes a breed of horse? The generally-accepted definition of a breed of animal starts with a known and recorded pedigree. These animals possess specific and unique genetically based traits and characteristics that are capable of being passed along

..... to future offspring. The traits and characteristics are replicated as the result of selective matings, breeding like to like to produce like.

And yet with this definition, we cannot ignore the fact that the Gypsy breeders in England and Europe did not maintain accurate ancestral pedigrees on most of their horses. But, what they did accomplish was the creation of a conformation type with unique traits and characteristics, such as the colorful coat colors, long mane and tail, extreme feathering on a

densely muscled horse with proportional, yet heavy substance of bone, which some think of as a “small draft horse.” The Gypsies laid the foundation for the evolutionary breed



process that is occurring in North America today. To foster the concept of breed preservation, a group of breeders came together to form the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society [GVHS]. These people had a vision for the preservation of the Gypsy horses as a breed, through establishing standards for registration

in a studbook with the issuance of a certificate of registration for all qualified horses. This vision included the use of DNA for verification of parentage, in addition to photography to record the coat color and color patterns of each applicant. Also included were standards for conformation and movement. These were not procedures followed outside of North America.

.....  
...some may ask about the origin of the name of the breed?  
.....

Some may ask about the origin of the name of the breed? If we make a quick survey in England and Europe for the names referencing Gypsy bred horses, they range from Welsh Cob, Gypsy

named Gypsy Vanner horses. Carrying the Gypsy name for their original breeders, and ‘Vanner’ as it references the vehicle these animals once pulled. And within the GVHS, the range of heights of the horses follows the traditions for the once-acceptable uses for the animals. With the creation of a breed registry and its standards for the Gypsy bred horses, the GVHS has continued to advance its emphasis on quality breeding stock. Recently the GVHS introduced an evaluation program whereby owners voluntarily bring their horses for a visual appraisal and

livestock, as well as horses. The process serves as a means for breeders to have their horses objectively assessed. The GVHS evaluation is a very important tool to build genetic likeness, creating a single vision for this new breed of horse in North America. One breed, one vision is an absolute necessity for any group of animals to be perpetuated. Hence, the GVHS is working to achieve this goal, by maintaining the Gypsy Vanner horse true to its foundation through selective breeding and preservation of ancestral pedigrees.



Cob, Irish Cob, Proper Cob to Tinker and so forth. In essence, there is not one accepted name for these horses outside of North America. So, the formation of the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society [GVHS] solved the problem for one breed in North America, by simply saying the horses from this genetic background will hereafter be

assessment of the horse’s qualities and traits, as well as its conformity to the standards of the GVHS. Each horse is given a numerical score for 7 anatomical regions plus the walk and trot, with a separate classification score for breed type. The evaluation process has been proven to be a success in many other breeds of

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## PREMIER PHOTOGRAPHER

# Mark J. Barrett Interview

by Ross Ulysses Munroe

Mark J. Barrett is a renowned equine photographer and filmmaker. His photo-artistry can be found worldwide in magazines, books, calendars and videos. Vanner Fair Magazine recently spoke with Mark and his wife, Jackie...

**VFM: How long have you been photographing horses, Mark?**

**Mark:** I started photographing horses around 1982, when I opened my own studio. I learned photography while serving in the United States Marine Corps. I attended the U.S. Naval School of Photography and got interested in filmmaking there. Later I went to the University of Central Florida, where I studied film and television production. After working for a few producers, I started my own production company, doing photography and video in Ocala, Florida – horse country. I met one Arabian horse farm manager who took a chance on hiring me, and it just took off from there.

**VFM: What is unique about photographing horses?**

**Mark:** You have to know something about animals, about their behavior.

Unless you have an instinct for animals, you're not going to be ready for what they do next and you're not going to know when to shoot. It's a lot more than just me out there clicking the shutter. My wife is a very good photographer in her own right. But by default, she has become the person who wrangles the horses, catching their attention and getting them to express themselves. She is very good at it.

**VFM: Tell me what makes a good shoot?**

**Mark:** When you're directing actors in a film, you have a make-up person, a set director, and so on. It's similar when you're shooting horses. The horses need to be clean, and groomed to look good. The set has to be ready. Hopefully this will happen before we arrive at the shoot.

**Jackie:** At first, people don't realize how much work is involved. Making a great image is teamwork. And it's important to meet with your team early. We start talking to the horse owner weeks before our date, about everything that goes into a shoot, including grooming, background, pasture choice, halter styles, helping hands and the weather.

**Mark:** The horse only has, at maximum, about 15 minutes of the best energy to give. We ask the owner to keep their horse in the barn the day before, and not turn him out until we are ready to shoot – so he is raring to go. Often a shoot can be done in one day, but not always. Some clients want both stills and video. These need to be shot on separate days. All of this takes staging and competent help.

**VFM: Is there much work to be done to a photograph after you've taken it?**

**Mark:** That's when most of the work takes place. I spend an incredible amount of time on the computer. All images need to be input, color corrected, labeled, sized for delivery, etc. Also, I am not a photojournalist, and have no qualms about retouching images to suit my interpretation, my style. For me, that's what makes the image come to life.

**VFM: Were you ever in danger while shooting?**

**Mark:** I've had horses charge me numerous times but it's pretty much a game to them. They know they can turn. I have not been run over. My wife was kicked by a horse running by one time.

That was not the horse's fault. Somebody pressed the horse from the wrong side. His back hoof flew up and caught her in the side. It broke her rib. I came pretty darned close to being trampled once. I was sitting in the corner of a very small paddock, and the horse just came at me, reared up right over me. I also had a horse destroy a very expensive video camera when someone pushed him at the wrong time. The horse had nowhere else to go. So it's very important for safety that all hands on a shoot pay attention.

**Jackie:** Most horses, regardless of their breed, are good creatures, gentle; they have a sense of you and your vulnerability.

**VFM: What techniques do you use to get the performance you want?**

**Mark:** We have to do crazy things sometimes to get them to react, especially the Gypsy Vanners, who are so easy-going.

**Jackie:** Like any prey animal, though, they are constantly reading your energy, deciding whether you're friend or foe.

You start acting strange and their attention is alerted. This alertness is what we want to capture.

**Jackie:** Some people have the false impression that we spook them, that we try to scare them. But the last thing we want is a photo of a frightened horse.

**VFM: Are some horses easier to photograph than others?**

**Mark:** Oh yes, some horses will bow their necks, start strutting around and begin just showing off. Horses don't have egos, but they definitely have personalities. Some are shy, a little wary, not sure of themselves. It takes a little longer with them; it's a little harder.

**Jackie:** The most difficult for me, as a wrangler, is the Gypsy Vanner mare with her foal. They're so laid back anyway. The mare knows where her foal is every minute. She doesn't even have to look up. When they are let out into the paddock, the mare immediately starts munching grass, and just glances at me sideways. I try all my tricks, but she's thinking, "Whatever is the matter with you, you'll get over it."

**VFM: What makes the Gypsy Vanner so great to photograph?**

**Jackie:** They are magic in motion.

**Mark:** They are unlike any other breed. I started shooting Arabians because I thought they were one of the most beautiful breeds. And all the time I was shooting horses, I was creating images in very different ways. I was shooting portraits with backdrops and studio lighting, sandwiching slides together, compositing images, all kinds of things to get that magical look. It is much easier on a computer now. And then I photographed the very first Gypsy Vanners in this country at Dennis Thompson's Gypsy Gold. The breed had that romantic look – like an Andalusian, with three times as much mane and feathers everywhere. I thought, "This is a photographer's dream."

Although Mark travels far and wide to photograph beautiful subjects, he can most often be found at his home, with wife Jackie, in Silver Springs, Florida. Mark can be contacted via his web site at [www.markjbarrett.com](http://www.markjbarrett.com).

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# On Gypsy Vanners, Gourmet Fare, Relaxation & Heli-Trail Riding



by Antony Brown, CAC

Just one visit and you'll understand what makes DeerFields Stables Country Inn so magical. With a 2 to 1 staff-to-guest ratio – all of them empowered to say 'Yes!' – you're in for the getaway of your life.

Whether you're an equine enthusiast, a nature lover, a health buff, a gourmand or simply someone who wants to get away to it all, you deserve the very best. And as this writer can attest to, you'll find it at DeerFields Stables Country Inn.

Discover the beauty of Ontario's country lifestyle and outdoor heritage on the back of one of the Inn's glorious

Gypsy Vanner horses. Gypsy Vanner horses are judged by many to be 'the perfect horse.' Beautiful, gentle and spirited, they offer the ultimate riding experience – and there's no better

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**...the most amazing trail-ride adventure you will ever experience...**  
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place to get to know them than on the winding woodland trails and rolling hills of DeerFields Stables. Equine facilities include a full-size indoor

arena, an outdoor training ring and spectacular stables with dedicated birthing stalls.

Exploring the splendor of the countryside on horseback is an adventure you won't soon forget. You can ride all day – or half of one, or for a few days – from one place to the next. Both beginners and seasoned riders will love this destination. The on-site coaches will enable the novice to feel relaxed and confident in the saddle, so after just a few lessons, you'll be able to ride out on a complete trail. And because there is so much for everyone in the family to do at DeerFields, non-riders will also love their stay at the Inn.

In addition to providing every luxury you can imagine, DeerFields offers hospitality of the first order. Canadians are warm, welcoming people who enjoy sharing the pleasures of life with others: a visit to the spa, a comforting meal, an inspiring sunset or a glass of wine.

The dining fare is first class, prepared by Master Chef, Christopher Woods. His culinary delights are specially prepared for you, and offer an exquisite delicacy to pamper every palate. The selection of fine wines is remarkable. Peruse the farm-fresh market menu, while overlooking the sweeping countryside. In the summer, dine on the patio – a stone's throw from a spring-fed pond. A hearty country breakfast is served buffet-style, included in your room rate.

DeerFields offers private, luxurious suites with every comfort you could desire. Amenities include King and Queen Suites with sitting area and soaking tub for total relaxation, a private ensuite, widescreen TV and much more.

The Vineyard Suite is located on the ground floor of Piccola Casa. It features a private outdoor Jacuzzi overlooking

the vineyard and stables, perfect for stargazing.

The Headwaters Suite is in the main manor – Casa di Campagna – with breathtaking views of the Estate's Koi pond. The Dream Suite is also located in the main manor, with tall cedars outside the window, where the deer abound.

When it's time to really indulge yourself, drop into the spa for a gentle massage, a facial or a pedicure. This is your

.....  
**...the dining fare is first class, prepared by Master Chef, Christopher Woods...**  
.....

personal time, and you deserve every comfort DeerFields has to offer. Inquire about the experiential weekend retreats, where you'll learn practical techniques for restoring natural energy, balance and harmony from the experts. It's a great way to release the stress of everyday living, while learning new skills that will last a lifetime.

The DeerFields team has made it easy to find the perfect gift for those

hard-to-please loved ones. Heli-Trail Riding is for anyone who wants to participate in the most amazing trail-ride adventure you will ever experience.

You'll enjoy a two-day ride from one place to the next, never seeing the same trail twice, returning each evening to the Inn's comfort before sundown by helicopter. Your magic carpet ride will return you and your group back to the horses each morning to enjoy a new trail destination. A picnic lunch provides the perfect mid-day venue, a moment of peace and tranquility with friends, listening to the crickets and watching wildlife appear. The genetics of the mystical Gypsy Vanner horses will be your ride through history.

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# The Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club

by Dan O'Neill

Starting a horse club is a lot more difficult than one might think. The Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club was started in 2007 by a very small group of Gypsy Vanner enthusiasts. It has faced a variety of trials and tribulations in those few short years but has persevered – growing slowly but steadily.

In 2005, six Gypsy Vanner owners in Ontario began showing their Vanners at various events such as the Can Am in London, Ontario plus local fairs and community events. They quickly got to know one another and, as lovers of the breed, had a lot to talk about. From the start, several of these owners wanted to start a club. And in 2007 the inaugural meeting of the as yet unnamed club was planned. Interested people were to meet at Crabby Joe's in London on the Saturday evening of the Can Am. But even though everyone had a lovely meal at Crabby Joe's that night, the meeting never took place. As out-of-towners, nobody realized that there was more than one Crabby Joe's, so everyone was not at the same restaurant! Another attempt to meet was made the following evening. After a long day of showing horses and talking to what felt like millions of people, six owners – the same six who had been 'bumping' into each other for two years – Debra and Terry Elder of Spruce Ridge Farm, Julia and Dan O'Neill of OnceUponA Farm, Jackie Sherring of Gemstone Farm and Sherry Rupke of Mystical Meadows –

all sat down at a dismantled booth and finally started a club.

The club was given the name Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club, as all agreed it was a clear and simple statement of who we were. We tossed around a lot of ideas for our Mission Statement and had even more ideas for events we could participate in as a group. Everyone agreed that the purpose of the new club would be to promote the Gypsy Vanner breed and to have fun with our horses. But the main thing we accomplished that day was starting the CGVHC. The rest, as they say, is history.

The CGVHC founders kept in touch by phone and email, but it was decided that we needed to meet again to do further planning and allocate responsibilities for various jobs that included designing a logo and banner, coordinating events and setting up a website. We met in Picton this time. We finalized our Mission Statement: 'to promote and enjoy the Gypsy Vanner Horse, support the mission of the GVHS, and educate others about the breed.' Within a few weeks, the club had a logo, a banner to take to events, and a website ([www.canadiangypsyvannerhorseclub.com](http://www.canadiangypsyvannerhorseclub.com)).

Earlier this year, the largest CGVHC meeting yet was held in Cobourg, Ontario with an attendance of 15 members: 12 in person and 3 others by conference call. Much was accomplished at that meeting with

members volunteering their skills to help the club grow.

The main events that the new Gypsy Vanner Horse Club has coordinated as a group have been the 'Spirit of the Horse' at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto and the Can Am Equine in London, Ontario. Currently, members across Canada represent the Gypsy Vanner breed, the Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club and the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society at such

venues as the Morris Manitoba Stampede, All About Horses in Lindsay Ontario, Manitoba Royal Agricultural Fair, The Calgary Stampede, plus numerous agricultural fairs, open breed shows, parades, community events and celebrations. On September 24th and 25th, CGVHC members will be participating in the first ever Vanner Fair in Caledon, Ontario – hosted by member Jim Wilson at his farm, DeerFields Stables.

The Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club is still young and will surely continue to suffer some growing pains. But with the current roster of 25 member families, our 'little club' can only get better.

*Dan O'Neill is co-owner of OnceUponA Farm with his wife, Julia. Both are founding members of the Canadian Gypsy Vanner Horse Club.*



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by Dr. Randy Knipping, BSc, MD, CCFP



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*Athena of Stonegate*

Mare  
D.O.B. May 27, 2004  
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Colour: Tri-coloured tobiano

A pleasure to ride, especially trail riding. She is very willing and would take the lead on the trail ride or be just as happy in the middle of the pack! Athena is broke to ride English pleasure.



*Dasher*

Gelding  
D.O.B. 1999  
Height: 14.1 HH  
Colour: Black-white tobiano

Dasher is a driving Gypsy Vanner. He was also broke to ride English pleasure.





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## MAKING MEMORIES AT LA CUCINA



### Fine Dining, Superb Service & Great Company Are Only The Beginning...

by Bev Jones

There aren't many things in life that surpass all your expectations.

But whether it's Tapas, Spring Brunch, Thanksgiving Dinner or an Evening Under the Stars, La Cucina – the Dining Room at DeerFields Stables Country Inn – always delivers. Prepared by Executive Chef, Christopher Woods, the food is consistently exquisite.

As a member of the DeerFields Club, I enjoy so many pleasures of the place, be it riding a Gypsy Vanner horse along spectacular trails, exploring the pastoral countryside or relaxing and rejuvenating in the Sea Horse Spa. La Cucina's outstanding dining fare, superb service and magnificent ambience add another jewel to the crown of this escape from the city. In fact, my friends Laura Tucker and Tanya Murphy became members of the DeerFields Club themselves, after sampling one of Christopher's luscious brunches.

The service at La Cucina is truly unbelievable, with a staff to tend to your every need. The philosophy is 'Whatever the guest wants,' which can include anything from receiving personalized cooking instructions in

the kitchen to night caps beside the pond. My husband, Steve and I have experienced so many memorable meals at La Cucina, though certainly a favorite was my birthday celebration, in which the staff set our table up on the hill overlooking the fountain – my favorite view at DeerFields, next to looking at my husband.



La Cucina's cuisine compares with that of the finest restaurants in North America that I have visited. Christopher and his staff work with locally raised meat, game and fish as well as market-fresh fruits and vegetables. The sumptuous entrees include among other delectables:

- Roasted Local Organic Suckling Pig with Braised Red Cabbage & Sautéed Apples;
- Butter Roasted Sable Fish with Silky Mash and Spiced Lentils;
- Red Wine Braised Beef Cheeks with a Sweet Pea Risotto;
- Gnocchi with a Venison and Rosemary Ragu;
- Butternut Squash Veloute with Lobster and Shrimp Ravioli;
- Whole Roasted Organic Wild Salmon stuffed with Creamed Baby Leek and Fennel;
- Locally Raised Baby Spring Rack of Lamb with Oven Roasted Potatoes & Truffle Oil.

There is a wide variety of healthy and delicious vegetarian options, as well as an array of original, mouth-watering desserts. La Cucina boasts a remarkable selection of fine wines, including my own favorite, the Italian Pinot Grigio, Santa Margherita.

At La Cucina – prepare to be astonished!

For reservations, call Isabella Devine  
905.880.5585 ext. 700.

Website: [www.DeerFields.ca](http://www.DeerFields.ca).



# Discipline Diversification

by Lynn Palm

It was shortly after bringing The Gypsy King into the country, that Dennis Thompson sent him to me for training. I had a great time working with this magnificent horse and quickly fell in love with the breed. Their athletic abilities are amazing, considering the stocky draft type conformation. Their beauty is exceptional. They are definitely head turners! And a grooming nightmare, unless you are a horse hairdresser! However, when you clean up the horse's naturally long fetlock, mane and tail and beautiful feathers, they are surely one of the most – if not the most – elegant breeds of horses on earth!

I had a fantastic three years training The Gypsy King, and created a unique exhibition that we performed at two different Equine Affaire events in the Fantasia Entertainment Show. I had special clothing made to match the

traditional clothes that are worn by the Gypsy women. It was entertaining and thrilling to be a part of introducing the Gypsy Vanner horse in America.

I am now a proud owner of the 2007 stallion GG Vanner, grandson of The Gypsy King. He is extraordinary: black and white, with fabulous hair; he is going to be a remarkable all around horse. He is broke to drive and started under saddle. I plan to show him Dressage, as he has great movement with lots of knee and hock action! I also would love to show him in Gypsy Vanner shows in the near future. I know that he will be wonderful in both the western and hunt seat saddle. I have played with him jumping at liberty; it is so easy for him, and he loves it! I also plan to do tricks with him, as he is well-started, and to put together a wonderful exhibition to show the world what a superb horse the

Gypsy Vanner is. His training will be based on Dressage Principles. And with my past experience using this training on quarter horses, paints and warmbloods, I know he will truly be a happy, willing, confident performer in the competition and entertaining arenas!

*A pioneer among women in the equine industry, Lynn Palm Pittion-Rossillon has long had a passion for teaching. In fact, she instructed her first clinic in 1970 – long before any of her contemporaries at the top of today's clinician market had even considered horsemanship instruction as a viable profession. Palm offers a unique video and book library, including her most recent release, 'The Rider's Guide to Real Collection.' Palm and Pittion-Rossillon host a show on HRTV featuring a variety of topics for all horse enthusiasts. Lynn can be reached at [www.lynnpalm.com](http://www.lynnpalm.com).*

# Vanner Fair 'Best In Fair' Trophy



*“When creating the perpetual trophy for Vanner Fair, I chose this design as a tribute to the magnificent gentle giant. To me, the infinity ring surrounds and protects the Gypsy Vanner and symbolizes ‘now and forever’ ... which offers a beautiful and peaceful vision for those who appreciate this extraordinary breed.”*

JUNE TOWILL BROWN

To commemorate the accomplishment of the horse and owner judged to be preeminent at Vanner Fair, the organizing committee commissioned an original sculpture, to be awarded annually. June Towill Brown is the founder of J.T. Brown Sculptures and is a distinguished member of Women Artists of the West and

International Equine Artists. She is well known for her art throughout North America, and for the past 15 years has created works of art to acknowledge and preserve the character and beauty of cultures, characters and their stories. For more information about June and her work, visit [www.jtbrownsulptures.com](http://www.jtbrownsulptures.com).

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# Nimue – Canada's First Gypsy Vanner

by Dan & Julia O'Neill

Once upon a time, at Kincsem Farm in Archer, Florida, a beautiful Gypsy Vanner filly was born. The filly was given the name Nimue, after the mystical Lady of the Lake of Arthurian Legend. Nimue was destined to travel to a distant home at Lake-on-the-Mountain – a geographic wonder surrounded by legend, romance and mystery – in Prince Edward County, Ontario, Canada.

More than ten years ago, Julia O'Neill spotted an advertisement featuring a photo of a Gypsy Vanner. Even though she did not know what breed of horse that glorious creature was, Julia was totally enthralled and began her search to discover its identity. Thanks to the world-wide web, Julia soon collected a plethora of photos and information about the Gypsy Vanner horse.

In 2003, Julia and her husband, Dan, traveled to Kentucky to visit Equitana, and it was there that they met, not one, but several Gypsy Vanner horses in the flesh. Dan had always been supportive of his wife and daughter's equine activities, but upon meeting a number of Gypsy Vanner horses and their enthusiastic owners, he began to understand Julia's love of the breed. They both realized that they needed to own one of these amazing animals. That weekend, Julia and Dan had the good fortune to meet Jeanne MacDonald, owner of King's Kaulo Ratti, and the breathtaking Gypsy Vanner stallion, The RoadSweeper, owned by Dennis Thompson, the founder of the GVHS. Not long after that meeting, plans were made to breed Kaulo Ratti and The RoadSweeper to produce a foal for Dan and Julia.

They named their farm, "OnceUponA Farm" while awaiting the arrival of their very first Gypsy Vanner horse, Nimue. It seemed an appropriate name for the home of such a magical creature, and her arrival was indeed, a dream come true. In November of 2004, Nimue arrived at OnceUponA Farm in Picton, Ontario – Canada's first Gypsy Vanner horse! Nimue's illustrious pedigree includes the The Lion King, The Gypsy King and the P.O. Mare.



From the day she arrived, Nimue has attracted numerous visitors to the farm, has been the subject of several newspaper articles, and continues to be invited to visit many community events. Nimue was shown extensively from 2005 to 2007, competing at up to fifteen horse shows each season, and was always in the ribbons. In 2006 and 2007, she won High Point English Horse in Hastings County. Nimue was also one of the top ten Gypsy Vanners in the "Vanner Advantage" program.

She participated in many events, including parades, weddings, Canada Day festivities, Heritage Days, county fairs, exhibitions such as the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto,

Ontario and the CanAm Equine in London, Ontario, as well as the first-ever Gypsy Vanner Horse Show in Columbus, Ohio. Her education has included training under saddle and in harness – Nimue drives both single and double.

In 2008, Nimue embarked on a new career as a "Mom" when she gave birth to a colt, D'Artagnan, to be followed by another colt in 2010, OnceUponA Moonlit Knight. Since 2007, Nimue


has been joined by three other mares: Crystal, Phoebe and Belle, as well as a gelding, Bedevere, plus several youngsters. Nimue's son, D'Artagnan will be standing at stud in 2012.

"Wherever we take them, these horses draw a crowd," said Dan. "Nimue, Crystal and Bedevere, in particular,


have developed quite a following. We love to talk to people about them, and take the Vanners to shows or have people visit the farm. We are sharing something we love...and it's so rewarding to see others fall under their spell."

OnceUponA Farm ... because we believe in Fairy Tales and that dreams do come true!


To learn more about Nimue and the other Gypsy Vanner horses at OnceUponA Farm, visit their website: [www.gypsylvannerhorses.ca](http://www.gypsylvannerhorses.ca).



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# My Personal Journey With Gypsy Vanner Horses

by Bill Ricci

It is my honor and privilege to be the sitting President of the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society, established in 1996 by Dennis and Cindy Thompson, to recognize a breed of horse developed by the Gypsies of Great Britain – the magnificent Gypsy Vanner.

The GVHS has four main goals to which we are committed: To establish the breed with the look envisioned by the Gypsies. To establish the breed with the genetics that created the look. To establish the breed with the feelings of the status and pride that Gypsies feel for their selectively bred horses. And to establish the breed in parallel to the values that Gypsies place on their selectively-bred horses.

My own history with horses, and Gypsy Vanners in particular, began later in life. My wife, Wendy, grew up with horses in Davie, Florida. But I was from the city of Boston and the only horses I knew were ridden by the occasional mounted policeman on the street corner, telling us to move along.

I was very timid around horses in the beginning. We had a couple of Haflinger mares when we met our first Gypsy Vanners in 2001, while visiting Wendy's brother who brought us over to Bit of Both Farm and introduced us to Bill and Joanne Thorup. They owned Esmeralda and Jasmine, two of the first of 16 Gypsy Vanner horses imported

into this country. Not only were they beautiful, they were renowned as the #1 tandem in North America and were on the cover of The Whip Magazine.

Wendy was smitten from that very first encounter! For the next few years she would search the internet looking for Gypsy Vanners. In 2002, we found Pie on the web and decided to import both Pie and her dam Panda. That started us on our Journey.

On a visit to Gypsy Gold, we met Dennis Thompson, who told us the history of the breed, the importance



of the Mission Statement and the need to protect the Gypsy Vanner breed. As we walked through his paddock that had a number of amazing horses, Wendy started pointing and said, "That is the one I want."

It was Kuchi. Dennis told us that she was the first Gypsy Vanner born in America and was not for sale. Wendy said, "If she ever is for sale, let us know." A few years later Dennis called and we were able to acquire Kuchi, who has been a great ambassador for us and the breed. Over the years we have been able to purchase a number of wonderful mares, including Jasmine and Esmeralda and have become breeders ourselves of Gypsy Vanner Horses.

As a newcomer to the equine world, I was able to learn first-hand what a wonderful breed the Gypsy Vanner is,

especially for someone as inexperienced as I was. Their gentle natures and forgiving dispositions, as well as their innate intelligence, made the process extremely rewarding. Learning from experts how other breeds changed over time and lost the qualities that defined them as a breed, became a concern.

There have been a number of challenges that the GVHS has had to overcome during my tenure as its president. I have found that the value of having a Mission and Vision statement cannot be underestimated:

*It is the Mission of the GVHS to respect the spoken words of Gypsies who have dedicated lifetimes in the pursuit of breeding the perfect caravan horse... the Gypsy Vanner. The Gypsy Vanner Horse Society's Mission is to bring honor, recognition and a better understanding to one of the world's most colorful and least understood societies and the horses they love so dearly. This registry was established to protect a vision that was born over half a century ago, to create the perfect horse to pull their colorful caravans.*

When confronted with a choice of alternatives, a default to the Mission Statement is always the way to go. Whatever the question, the answer must be what protects the breed. And although this is not always the popular way to go, it is the right one. This is reaffirmed as I look out to my pasture and see Esmeralda and Panda, and once again my breath is taken away.

*Bill Ricci and his wife, Wendy, own WR Ranch in Oxford, Florida. Bill serves as President of the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society. [www.wrranch.net](http://www.wrranch.net).*



## Artist Cory Trépanier Captures 'Best In Fair'

by Virginia Munroe



Celebrated Caledon artist Cory Trépanier has been commissioned to create a one-of-a-kind original landscape painting of the Caledon Hills, featuring the Vanner Fair 'Best In Fair' trophy winner as its focal point.

The award will be presented to the owner of the horse judged to rise to the highest standards of equine excellence.

"This commission is a great honor," said Cory. "I have always loved horses, and the Gypsy Vanner is one of the most stunning breeds."

Trépanier is renowned for capturing on canvas Canada's lands, waters and skies. He has a profound love of the natural world, and a genius for translating it into magnificent works of art. In 2001, Cory created the *Coast To Canvas Project*, a four month, seasonal exploration with his family along the coasts of Lake Superior and Georgian Bay. This led to a touring exhibition and an award-winning documentary entitled, *A Painter's Odyssey*.

In 2006, Cory launched his multi-year *Into The Arctic* project that is seeing him develop a collection of 50 paintings from 3 extensive

journeys into some of the most remote landscapes of Canada's north. He has just completed *Into The Arctic II*, his 2nd film from the project, which will be airing on television this fall, along with theatrical screenings and a DVD release.

Cory's 'Best In Fair' oil painting will be a one-of-a-kind award, bringing to the winner's wall not only an image featuring their prized Gypsy Vanner, but a Trépanier original that will be a point of conversation and a valued part of their collection for generations to come.


*More of Cory's fine art is at [www.TrepanierOriginals.com](http://www.TrepanierOriginals.com).*

*His Arctic painting project can be found here: [www.IntoTheArctic.com](http://www.IntoTheArctic.com).*




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# An Inspiring Gypsy Vanner Breeding Program

by Virginia Munroe

In the middle of the last century, British Gypsies began selective breeding, with a vision to create the perfect horse to pull their colorful caravans. That effort reached its culmination in the beautiful Gypsy Vanner horse, first brought to North America by Dennis Thompson and his late wife, Cindy.

Once his breeding program at Gypsy Gold Farm was well established, Thompson started thinking about how to make it more productive. Since a gestation period of eleven months puts a very valuable animal out of commission for an extended period – as well as causing health risks – embryonic transfers to recipient mothers seemed like the answer.

His first approach was to use horse mares. But his equine reproduction veterinarian, Dr. Pablo Toro, had another thought – mules.

“I implanted a molly mule in Puerto Rico, and she made the greatest equine mother I have ever witnessed,” Dr. Toro said. “Watching her care for her baby brought tears to my eyes.”

Thus, the idea for the Mule Moms program was born.

## THE BEST MULE MOM A GYPSY VANNER COULD EVER HAVE

Given the qualities inherent in mules, it was clear that if mules could have babies, they would make wonderful mothers. For anyone who has had

close contact with mules knows them to be intelligent, powerful, caring animals whose attributes go far beyond the stereotypes that so often define them. The offspring of a male donkey and a horse mare, mules have been put to work on the farm and as pack animals for millennia. Patient,

with remarkable endurance, they are particularly adept at negotiating tricky terrain – even with heavy loads – thereby becoming the vehicle of choice for countless armies and expeditions.

Although generally good-natured, there is one lament that has cursed this equine breed since the beginning of

time. The females cannot conceive. Despite the fact that they lactate and exhibit all the other virtues of motherly love that nature has bestowed, they are naturally barren, their parental instincts and innate desire to nurture unrequited.



In fact, it is common knowledge among mule owners that a molly mule will try to steal a horse baby if left in the same pasture. That all changed with the arrival of the Mule Moms embryonic transfer program.

On Canada Day 2010, Mule Mom ‘Mary Francis’ gave birth to a Gypsy Vanner filly at Gypsy Gold Farm in Ocala, Florida. The baby was named Prima Sora – Spanish for First Sister. The next day, Mule Mom ‘Flo’ had her own Gypsy Vanner baby, Princess DeerFields, at DeerFields Stables in Caledon, Ontario.

These first foals were just the beginning of what has grown to be a vigorous North American breeding program by partners Dennis Thompson and James D. Wilson of Gypsy Gold and DeerFields Stables, respectively.

To showcase the near-miraculous phenomenon of a mule raising a Gypsy Vanner as its own, the installation of a mule mom and its foal is in full swing at Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa, Florida.

“Jim Wilson and I share a great love for the Gypsy Vanner breed,” said Thompson, “and we’re thrilled to be able to introduce this glorious horse to the public at large.”

There’s no better introduction than to experience the magic of seeing a mule mom care for her very own Gypsy Vanner foal.

For more information, visit [www.GypsyGold.com](http://www.GypsyGold.com) or [www.DeerFieldsStables.ca](http://www.DeerFieldsStables.ca).



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