



AGHBA Gypsy Horse Script

ANNOUNCER BEGIN HERE:

The American Gypsy Horse Breed Association is pleased to have this opportunity to share with you the beauty, magic, charm and versatility that is the hallmark of a unique horse...a horse bred by the Gypsy people. A relatively new breed...dreamed of and created by a culture known for its appreciation of bold colors, vibrant artwork and mysticism. The Gypsy's horse reflects his flamboyant appreciation of life. This magical horse encompasses the color and beauty of the gypsy culture and combines it with a kindness and substance seldom seen in other horses. Never before has a breed so touched the human heart and inspired such emotion and imagination.

Gypsies have had horses for as long as their culture has been in existence but the horse we recognize today as the Gypsy Cob or Gypsy Vanner has only emerged within the past 50 years. In the mid 1900's, the Gypsy breeders began infusing the blood of the Clydesdale and Shire horses, which gave the breed bone and feather. They then introduced the bloodlines of the Dale and Fell ponies for their economical use of forage and more manageable size. By the early 70's, a breed type was becoming established and some magnificent foundation stock had been produced. These horses were used in nearly every aspect of the Gypsy's life, from pulling the colorful wagons known as Vardos, which were the Gypsies' homes, to pulling the smaller wagons called drays (flat carts), which were used for work. A Gypsy's horses were his means of travel, his means of employment and his greatest source of pride.

Traveling the roads and often cared for by children, it was essential that the horses be strong, kind and have a willing disposition. They also had to be of a hardy nature, sound and easily kept, as there were no special provisions made for food or shelter. The horses lived on the vacant land and grass strips found next to the road. The Gypsies take great pride in the horses they breed and use themselves.

While the traveling people have now settled into more modern housing, occasionally you can still find the horse-drawn caravan on the roads. And even though the travelling lifestyle is no longer a way of life, Gypsies often attend many of the weekend horse fairs either to buy, sell or just flash their horses. Weekends that



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do not have a horse fair often see the Gypsy families gathering together for what they call a drive. A drive usually consists of meeting at a prearranged site, forming a line and driving a ten mile circuit. These drives will include dozens of horses pulling everything from the exquisitely ornate, traditional living wagon to the handsomely carved and painted flat carts, or drays, or even breaking carts and racing sulkies. Before and after the drive is a time for families to visit and compare horses. The Gypsies may not live on the road these days but traveling is still very much a part of their heritage and the weekend drives keep that heritage a part of their lives.

With the importation of these mystical horses to the United States and Europe, the Gypsy people have had a revival of inspiration to continue to breed and improve the quality of their stock, as the demand for the breed and its versatility is becoming renowned world-wide.

The Gypsy-bred horse is often used by non-Gypsy families as a great all around horse. Many are used as safe and sane mounts for the novice and many riding schools and trekking centers also use these kind and willing partners.

Easily recognized, these sturdy little horses come in nearly all colors and most have pinto markings. Though black and white is still the most prevalent color, you can also find them in red, buckskin, palomino, grey and even the occasional Appaloosa spot. Like most horses of high color, blue eyes are fairly common and can lend a mystical look beneath an incredibly long and flowing foretop. The Gypsy horse has a sweet head with a kind eye and neat ears, a short well-muscled back, well-sprung ribs, deep shoulders with a good slope, and powerful rounded hindquarters. They will have substantial bone that is flat, clean and dense and a generous foot with thick walls and open heels.

With less need for the larger, draft type of horse, Gypsies now prefer a smaller cob or pony type with an active and speedy trot. When these horses are not used for working, the Gypsies love to "flash" them in front of onlookers. The Gypsies strive to add amazing amounts of hair with each generation of stock. Thick manes that typically fall below the shoulder and tails that drag the ground are only the beginning. The crowning glory on a good Gypsy horse is the abundance of silky feather. Though you can find horses ranging from 11 hands up to 16 hands, they typically stand between 14 and 15 hands.



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When showing a Gypsy horse, it is encouraged to present the horse in its natural state. Hair is highly prized and the long, full manes, tails and beautiful feather should be emphasized as much as possible.

Clipping should be kept to a minimum, if done at all, and should not be more than the ears, muzzle, chin and possibly a very small bridle path. The mane, tail and feather should never be clipped, thinned or pulled. The feather does require some care to maintain its most luxuriant look. Heavy mud or poor ground conditions can adversely affect its appearance. Care should also be taken to keep the skin beneath the feather clean and healthy.

For years, the Gypsy horse suffered a certain lack of appreciation from within the mainstream equestrian society. Recently, however, they have developed an enthusiastic following throughout Europe and North America and they have even made their way to Australia, Mexico, and South America. The beauty of these horses is surpassed only by their gentle and intelligent nature, making them now highly sought after outside the Gypsy community.

Coming from a culture that traditionally has not kept written records, the best bloodlines were all kept and recorded only in memory. Many horses without specific names, other horses with names like the Lob Eared horse, the Horseshoe Mare, the Teddy Mare, the Roadsweeper and the General being considered some of the best of the breed. Generations of breeding have been handed down father to son without the aid of accepted means of documentation. With the now widespread popularity of the breed, crossing not only international borders but also cultural boundaries, it became imperative that proper parentage verification be administered and documented. DNA testing has been established to form a modern data bank and many people have worked countless hours to ensure the colorful history and a bright future is preserved for this wonderful breed.

While most of the mature horses have been imported either from the United Kingdom or Ireland, there are now nearly 1,000 horses currently in the United States, with the number growing every year.

Originally bred to pull the caravans, they excel at driving but are also being used for nearly all riding disciplines and can be found throughout Europe and the



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Unites States doing everything from pleasure riding and driving, CDE driving, trail riding, dressage, hunt seat, jumping, cattle sorting and ranch work.

The American Gypsy Horse Breed Association is a mission based organization motivated to educate the public, promote the breed, and make benevolent contributions of Gypsy horses to worthy causes such as therapeutic riding, horses for health, inner city youth organizations, and any and all organizations who might benefit from and care for one of these special horses. Through our program called Angel Baby, which is in direct support of these causes, our hope is to raise enough funds to support these interests. To help the funding of our Angel Baby program, the Association is sponsoring a Gypsy horse raffle for Lord Duncan, a 2 year old gelding.

Lord Duncan was donated to the American Gypsy Horse Breed Association by Happy Camp Cobs of Moorpark, Ca. He will be delivered to the winner, free of charge, anywhere in the continental United States. The drawing will be held on October 14th, 2007, at the Georgia Feathered Horse Classic.

The members of the American Gypsy Horse Breed Association invite you to visit our website at www.aghba.org where you will find more information on the Association, our Angel Baby program, the breed and on breeders in your area. Thank you for joining us in celebrating this wonderful breed.

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