

Story by LAURA MILLER

Photography Courtesy of FEATHERED GOLD STABLES

Feathered Gold Stables, LLC

Ogdensburg, Wisconsin

Derek and Denise Krause, owners of Feathered Gold Stables, LLC in Ogdensburg, WI, and breeders of Gypsy Vanner Horses, didn't expect their first hands-on encounter with the Gypsy Vanner breed to be so unusual. After all, when Denise saw her first Gypsy Vanner crossbred on an Internet ad, she did what many other horse people have done. She researched the breed. She spoke with a breeder. And after finding the breed to her liking, she made arrangements to purchase a young Gypsy Vanner. At the time, this meant having a horse imported from England, as the availability of young Gypsy Vanner stock was limited in the United States.

In March of 2004, Feathered Gold Moe was only eight months old when the semitrailer hauling him flipped shortly after leaving the quarantine station. The accident killed several of the horses onboard. Moe was one of the lucky ones. He survived the ordeal and escaped injury, with the exception of a cut on his face. But now the Krauses had the challenge of gaining the trust of a horse they never met in order to haul him home.

"Moe is very laid back," Denise says, as she explains how her husband worked with the colt on loading and how that experience bonded horse and man ever since. "Moe is a real good example of the breed," says Denise. "He passes that [quality] on to his offspring."

Moe was to be their only Gypsy Vanner, but by the end of the summer Denise had purchased two more mares. They now own 30 Gypsy Vanners and are expecting 11 more foals this year. In addition to Moe, two other GV stallions call Feathered Gold Stables their home: Feathered Gold Romantic "Legend" and Mickey Finn. Denise and Derek's GV herd also consists of 22 mares and five geldings, including Paddy's Dream. Paddy is the image on their logo.



Denise Krause and SRS Seraphim.

Denise has found the Gypsy Vanner breed to be very versatile, and her horses compete in many disciplines including English and western classes, lower-level dressage and jumping. She says that they are all safe for trail riding and parades.



Derek Krause and Mickey Finn.



Justin Krause and Feathered Gold Jasmyn.

The Krauses participate in about 20 equine events per year, but they also spend time visiting local nursing homes and schools. Denise loves to share her horses with the public and enjoys giving others the opportunity to learn about the Gypsy Vanner. She equates the breed to a big, puppy dog and says their “personalities are phenomenal.”

Although Feathered Gold Stables is a breeding farm, Denise feels that mares should be broke to ride and “have a job” other than producing babies. Therefore, she rotates which of her mares will be bred each year. She maintains video monitors in the stable to ensure that she will be present for all births. She is committed to giving her foals the best start possible, which includes imprinting them at birth. She also takes the time to train the youngsters to lead, clip and tie and personally attends to the daily chores of feeding and grooming all the horses on the farm.

In addition to offering young stock, Denise strives to always have a few older, riding horses for sale. Her focus is on customer service, and she always matches suitability of her horses to their new family. After making a sale, she feels it is very important to maintain contact with the new owners. Even years after a sale, Denise will make herself available for questions or concerns. Denise cares deeply about all her horses, and she greatly enjoys seeing her babies at shows and events. “Part of my heart is with every horse from our farm,” she says.

For more information on Feathered Gold Stables, visit their website at featheredgold.com.