

In 1981, Merv and Claudia Giles left their property Circle J Ranch in Cochrane, Alberta, for a trip to New York. They returned to Alberta with some unexpected cargo: miniature horses.



The horses were the first miniatures they owned, but by 1988, Merv had them broke to drive in a four horse hitch. The hitch attracted the attention of UFA, who approached Merv and asked him to do parades as the UFA Mini Horse Hitch.

From 1988 until 2008 the Circle J Miniature Horse Hitch traveled each summer to parades and events as the UFA Mini Horse Hitch. Every year they travelled twelve to fifteen thousand kilometers and attended 260 events from La Crete in the North to Coutts in the South and from Dawson Creek, British Columbia to Swift Current, Saskatchewan, hooking up for around 400 appearances.

The four horse hitch grew to six and then to eight. Kendra Gale, Merv and Claudia's granddaughter, comments, "Driving an eight horse hitch is a challenge, more difficult even than six." Regardless of the size of the hitch, the horses were always black geldings and the vast majority of the geldings were bred in Alberta.

The eight horse team that did the parades the longest were all bred in Alberta. Some have them have since passed away or been retired, but they are all remembered by everyone at Circle J Ranch and the many people that watched them in the parades all across western Canada.

Sheep Meadow Gretz



1984-2008

Bond Turbo x Bond Chee Chee

Bred by: Roy & Mary McBride, Halkirk, Alberta.

Kendra says Gretz was truly a "Great One." He was a halter, showmanship, obstacle and single pleasure driving champ, he came to live with us in 1989 and was a leader in the hitch up until his death in 2008. He loved applause, and pranced his way through every parade."

Sheep Meadow Bunky

1988

Bond Exchequer x Sheep Meadow Bunny

Bred by: Roy & Mary McBride, Halkirk, Alberta.

Bunky and Gretz were the lead team and Kendra says they were "second to none. Bunky believes he is the most important horse and is quick to let you know if things aren't just how he likes them. He is enjoying his retirement, though he does help out with training young horses from time to time."

PitRPats Paco



Photo by @Elvez on Instagram. "I'm 10 for the day before he was gelded." Photo by @Elvez on Instagram. "I'm 10 for the day before he was gelded."

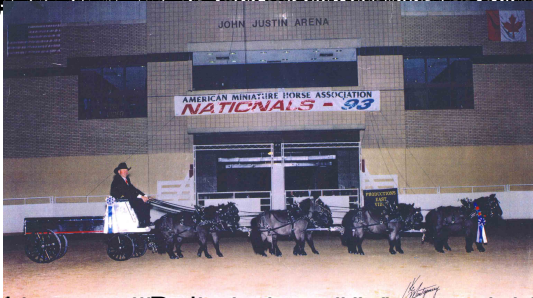


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