

Steffanie Christensen Region 2

My name is Steffanie Christensen, I run a small breeding program in Wisconsin called MHB Gypsy Ponies, focusing on Purebred Miniature Gypsy horses 10-13hh! I became involved in the Gypsy horse breed in 2011 when I purchased my very first traditional sized Gypsy colt, Tartok. Soon after, I learned there were Mini Gypsies, same breed just smaller in size! I absolutely love anything in miniature, and when I heard of Mini Gypsies, I started searching far and wide across North America for one, but in all my knowledge of the world wide web, spending hours and days browsing websites, breeder directories, checking every website I could find for a Mini Gypsy under 13hh, I found nothing. I made posts in the online groups and forums asking if anyone had anything under 13hh, and I got nothing. So, I began my search overseas. I spoke with countless breeders, looked at hundreds of pictures and videos, and finally was introduced to Alfie Kerry in the UK. I told him I was looking for something REALLY tiny...as small as I could find. He said he had just the one I was looking for, a tiny colt, sired by Fred Walkers amazing 12hh Valentino stallion, something to stay truly small! In August of 2012, I imported this colt, who I named "The Risk Factor", because that is what he was, a huge risk, financially and successfully. This decision took every penny I owned...I maxed out my little credit cards, I borrowed money from my family, I was granted a small bank loan, and I even sold all the furniture out of my small house, no joke! I sat on the floor in my living room, in front of my one TV and ate my meals off paper plates, just to scrape the funds together to make this magic happen! In August of 2012, The Risk Factor arrived in America! He measured 11.2hh as a yearling, and never grew an inch taller, just wider and heavier! I was so excited to have him here, I couldn't wait to get him registered and start showing him! I submitted his application and patiently waited for his papers. 3 months later, no papers, I checked in with the registry, and I received a response that the Board had held a meeting, and decided to reject The Risk Factor because of his small size, and they didn't want to support a temporary "fad" (mini gypsies) so they closed their height limits to nothing under 13hh allowed. I turned to GHRA, who accepted me with open arms, having an "Under 14.2hh" division. The GHRA became my registry of choice as my program grew and bloomed! My loyalty remains with the GHRA today, not only being a very friendly registry, but also having the Breed Type and Standards that I stand behind. I started a group on Facebook in 2012, called "Purebred Gypsy Ponies Under 13hh in North America" and slowly, people joined and started coming out of the woodwork! Many of the members thanked me for starting a support group for the smaller sizes, and they finally felt excited to share their "littles"! There is a vast amount of information and history within the past almost 10 years through me, and within this group!

My vision is to see the Purebred Mini Gypsies become as loved, famed and accepted as their larger relatives, to see more acceptance and appreciation for ALL sizes of Gypsy horses at the breed shows, to see more GHRA recognition at shows across the country, to have judges be allowed proper training and seminars for following the GHRA breed standard, and applying their knowledge fairly within the show ring, inclusive of all the sizes of Gypsy breed! Even though my personal focus is on the Mini Gypsies, I love and support all of my friends, and all sizes of the breed and I strive to see breeders conform to the breed type and standard that the GHRA has perfectly set! My passion runs deep for this breed, and I want to help keep it going!