

Imported Gypsy Vanner Stallion to Stand at Stud in Katy, Texas

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Horse breeder Doug Kneis of Katy, Texas, has imported dozens of rare British Gypsy Vanner horses to the United States over the last several years – but he's never, he says, had a horse quite like Sundance Kid, the stallion he's bringing across the Atlantic this month. The 6 year old stallion, dark buckskin with white splashing markings over his belly and chest, is as flashy a horse as any Kneis has seen, but he's also exceptionally gentle. "A child can handle him," Kneis recounts. "He's like a big puppy, actually."

Gypsy Vanners are a unique breed of small draft horses developed by Romany Gypsies. The gypsies have no permanent homes but travel around Great Britain with travel trailers or horse-drawn wagons, and these colorful, strong and exceptionally gentle small draft horses are an intrinsic part of the nomad's culture. Because the animals' traditional work is pulling gypsy wagons which contain both family and all worldly possessions, the Gypsy Vanner's temperament and gentleness is paramount. Showy color and bearing are important too, for gypsies are nothing if not flamboyant and horse-proud.

After becoming interested in the breed and building a 50-horse breeding and resale operation in Katy, Texas, Kneis has been searching Britain for the ideal Gypsy Vanner. A breeder in the central part of the United Kingdom located Sundance Kid, but there is some mystery about where exactly the horse was foaled. "The gypsies, when they've got a special horse, they keep it a secret." Kneis says.

Traditionally, pedigrees of Gypsy Vanner horses are verbal only, though once recorded as a Gypsy Vanner with an American registry, records for the horse's offspring will be kept. Sundance Kid will be standing at stud to a limited number of mares this year, at a stud fee of \$3000. See www.gipsymvp.com for more info.

Links to images:

<http://www.gipsymvp.com/horses/sundance/042709/April.12.2009-102.jpg>
<http://www.gipsymvp.com/horses/sundance/042709/April.12.2009-236.jpg>
<http://www.gipsymvp.com/horses/sundance/042109/April.12.2009-478.jpg>

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