

Crossbreeds

Trail riders find a comfortable ride, a willing nature, and trail savvy in these hardy horses.

Gaited Curly Horse

History highlights: Curly-coated horses have been found in Chinese art dating back to 161 A.D. It's a mystery how the breed reached our shores. Some theorize that they crossed a former land bridge over today's Bering Strait, while others believe they arrived in the Northwest with Russian settlers in the 1700s. There are also those who believe the first curly horses arrived with Spanish explorers 400 years ago, eventually joining wild herds in the Southwest. Pictographs from the early 1800s show Sioux and Crow Indians riding curly-coated horses.

Modern history of the American Bashkir Curly begins in 1898, when a young Peter Damele and his father rode upon three curly horses in the high country of the Peter Hanson Mountains in central Nevada. Then, around 1931, the Dameles brought home a curly-coated horse from a local mustang herd, trained him, and sold him. After the particularly harsh winter of 1932, the Dameles observed that curly horses survived the severe conditions better than their flat-coated brothers. It wasn't long before the family started to use curly horses in their breeding program.

Today, some Gaited Curly Horses are descendants of the Damele horses. Breeders also diligently cross their Curly Horses with another gaited breed, such as the Missouri Fox Trotter, to produce a Gaited Curly Horse.

Lisa Perry and her husband, Craig, own Zion's Gate Curlies in

Lisa Perry taking in the expansive winter views of Color Country near Hurricane, Utah. Her much-loved Gaited Curly Horse, Princess Annie T, was later exported to enthusiasts in Germany.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ZION'S GATE CURLIES

Hurricane, Utah, near Zion National Park. Lisa tells us that the American Bashkir Curly Association originally accepted all gaited curly horses. However, a few years ago, it closed its books, which meant that only the offspring of ABC-registered horses bred to other ABC-registered horses could be registered. Lisa admits disappointment.

"There are relatively few Gaited Curly

At Utah's Zion's Gate Curlies, irresistible yearling Gaited Curlies, ZGC Champagne Ice and ZGC First Lady, sport thick winter curls.

Horses, and we worried about problems from severe inbreeding," she says. "So the International Curly Horse Association was formed by more progressive members of the community who believed that such inbreeding was unacceptable. The ICHO allows us to breed our valuable curly foundation horses with the finest straight-haired horses, like our Missouri Fox Trotters. We breed top-quality Gaited Curly Horses that are dual registered with the ICHO and the Missouri Fox Trotting Horse Breed Association."

Gaited Curly description: According to the ICHO, "All Curly Horses that perform an intermediate/soft gait are eligible to be included in the Gaited Curly Association. A gait and conformation analysis will be done, and all accepted Curlies will be issued a certificate of approval and receive an analysis on their Curly for gait, conformation and breeding quality."

Owners tell us: The Perrys have four children—two with debilitating allergies to horses. "But our children can ride, groom, and love our Gaited Curly Horses with no sneezes," Lisa says. "And many of our clients also find the curly coat hypoallergenic."

All of the Perrys' Gaited Curlies descend from the dominant curly gene found in the bloodlines of a Gaited Curly Horse named Curly Jim. In the 1960s, he was bred to an exclusive group of Missouri Fox Trotter mares; today, his legacy is seen in the pastures of Zion's Gate Curlies.

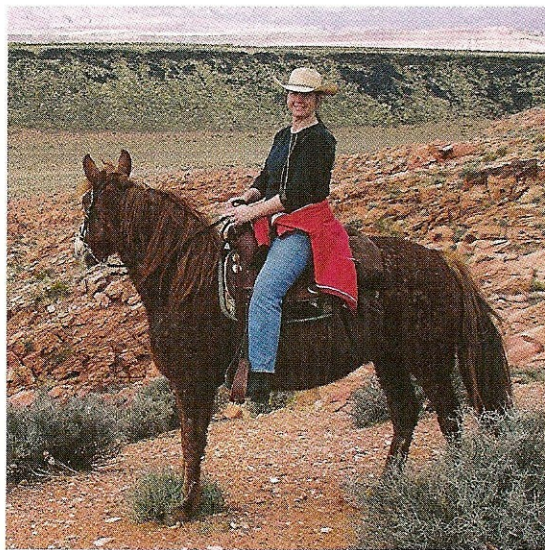


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