



FACT/BREED SHEET

The Gypsy Vanner is a breed of horse that can be traced back 80 years to the United Kingdom and Ireland. A band of nomadic Gypsies decided to develop a horse that would meet a need they saw for a powerful and distinctive horse to pull their caravans. At the same time, the horse needed to be gentle and trustworthy, since it would essentially be a part of the family. Its docile nature is a result of necessity; gypsy horses have to be patient, gentle, and quiet in order to be safe for pulling caravans and carrying gypsy children, who often ride bareback.

The Gypsies reportedly valued horses as their most prized possessions, and when a horse was particularly good, they would say, "That's a vanner." Gypsy Vanners were developed from stock that included Friesian, Shire, Clydesdale and Dales pony.

The breed is relatively compact, averaging between 14.1 and 15.2 hands. The horses generally weigh between 1,100 and 1,700 pounds. They are noted for their broad chests and heavy hips complimented by a short neck and back. The Gypsies found them well suited for both harness use and bareback riding. Their athleticism and trainability make them ideal for anything from pleasure riding to dressage.

Gypsy Vanners have a sort of mystical appearance that is created by their flowing manes, tails, and "feathers" above their feet. They are most commonly found in black and white or brown and white.

Today, it is estimated that there are between two and three thousand Gypsy horses in the United Kingdom and Ireland. However, specifically-bred Gypsy Vanners number only in the hundreds. In the United States, that number drops dramatically.