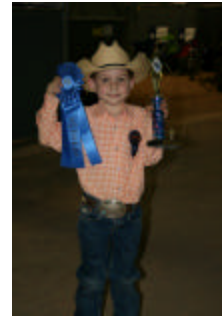




The National Miniature Donkey Association National Show was held this year in Waco, Texas April 5 & 6th. There were 137 miniature donkeys and 73 classes. Two days of showing included a full slate of halter classes, showmanship classes, in-hand trail classes, in-hand



jumping, obstacle driving, gamblers choice driving, pleasure driving, pole bending (cart driving), single stake driving, cloverleaf barrels (a version of barrel racing with donkeys pulling carts around barrels), and snigging, where the donkeys are harnessed up to pull a log through a course without hitting the cones or markers. There were classes for everyone, with plenty of youth classes. Out of



the 73 classes, 20 were youth classes with at least 5-8 youth in each class. Most donkeys were entered in to 3-10 classes each. (Miniature donkeys are strong & tough & seem to love to show off & can be shown more often than horses).

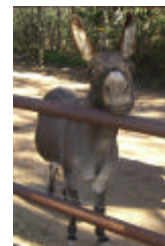
As a former reining horse enthusiast, I am a casualty of rising gas costs, horse training & maintenance costs; & showing costs. The miniature donkey is a great alternative & is definitely coming in to it's own. The miniature donkey is easy to train, cheap to feed, and hardier than horses. People unfamiliar with these sweet little equines often ask "You can't ride 'em, what are they good for?" At 36" and smaller (most are 32"-34") they are definitely not rideable. Unless you have been around one close enough to touch & pet, it is difficult to understand the appeal at first glance, but just wait a minute, you'll see.

Walk out in a pen where 2 or more miniature donkeys live & you will soon be surrounded by inquiring, rather pushy little furry big eared creatures pushing each other out of the way just to get your attention. Don't start petting one, because if you stop, he might "nose" you to remind you that he's still there waiting for more attention.

The miniature donkey is definitely a beast of burden, evidenced by how quickly he can be trained to pull a cart. Stubborn? That's a misnomer. Donkeys, especially miniature donkeys, will give you their heart if they understand what you want & are trained to complete the task. The stubbornness they are so famous for is their way of self preservation. A donkey can be trained to walk over water or a creaky bridge, and once the donkey learns it, he never forgets it & rarely refuses to do it. But if he is *forced* to do any of these scary things, forget it, his self preservation is so strong, not even a 250 pound man can make him go. Training a miniature donkey is easy because they are so susceptible to verbal praise. Unlike a horse, a miniature donkey can be talked in to almost anything.



Whether they are a pal for their bigger equine friend the horse or whether they are a primarily a show donkey or both, there is one certainty: *they will make you smile.*



Submitted by Elizabeth Moore, miniature donkey enthusiast.

For more information about these special little creatures, go to www.eebbray.com. Or www.nmdaasset.com.

Thanks to Sarah Hall Photography, Charla & Kade Schooler (youth picture), Boot & Guido Moore, and Someday's Pepe (affectionately known as Luigi, winner of NM State Fair 2007 Hi-point Miniature Donkey, & numerous other awards). Luigi's jumping picture courtesy of Gayle Clark.

