



From the horse's mouth

www.easyhorsecare.net

phone 652021980

Registered charity in Spain G54405618

Mini horses sold as playthings



A healthy mini bred by an expert breeder. But their cuteness is seductive, making them vulnerable to mis-selling

Kept in small cages by unscrupulous pet shops and sold as children's toys, many miniature ponies are neglected by owners who have no idea how to care for them...

A growing fashion for keeping miniature ponies as pets is creating a big problem in Spain, with more and more of the animals going to unsuitable homes.

Sold as an alternative to a dog or cat, and as a perfect 'toy' for children, many of these ponies will end up abandoned or suffering terrible neglect at the hands of owners with neither the space nor knowledge to look after them.

Says Lorraine Webb, Easy Horse Rescue Association Secretary and miniature horse expert and breeder, "Minis do make wonderful pets but it is a big undertaking and long-term commitment. A reputable breeder can advise people correctly and help them to decide if a mini is for them.

"The problem is people are being misadvised by pet shops that are just eager to sell, and the result is many minis pay the price with suffering.

"People think that because they are smaller than normal horses they will be easier to look after. But, despite their size, they are still horses and need just as much care and attention as their larger cousins."

Since starting Easy Horse Care Rescue Centre a year ago we've been shocked at the number of cases of neglected miniatures that have been brought to our attention. We've rescued four minis, although one sadly died, and are currently involved in trying to help a fifth.

Three of the miniatures we rescued

Welcome...

Another month has passed at the Easy Horse Care centre and once again our feet have barely touched the ground.

Quite apart from the day to day work of looking after all our rescue horses, it has been a busy month. Our open days are attracting ever more people and proving a huge hit. In fact, they are so popular that instead of stopping them at the end of the summer as we'd planned, we've decided to make them a year round event. So, if you've not already been why not visit us one Wednesday or Sunday between 1pm and 4pm to see what it's all about.

In this month's newsletter we have highlighted the plight of the many miniature ponies in Spain suffering neglect. It is a huge problem, and one that in the coming months and years we hope to help change. It will be a slow process but with time, publicity and education, and by working with Spanish animal welfare groups and the authorities, we are sure we can make a difference.

We are sometimes frustrated that we cannot make change happen more quickly, but when we feel like this we have to remind ourselves that we have not even been going for a full year yet. And in that time, with the help of our volunteers, fundraisers and everyone who has supported us, we have achieved so much.

We are celebrating our first anniversary on September 27th with a bit of a party. We think we deserve it. And we'd love you to join us.

Sue and Rod Weeding

were kept in appalling conditions while being fattened up for meat by a local butcher. It is highly likely that these ponies would once have been pets before their owners realised they were too much work and expense, or their children grew up and lost interest.

Like all horses, miniature ponies need space, regular visits from a farrier to keep their hooves in check, regular dental treatment from an equine dentist, vet checks, worming every three months and a good diet.

Without this care they can develop serious health problems.

And miniature ponies, just like the big ones, are pack animals and should not be kept alone. Keeping a horse on its own can lead to psychological damage and depression.

The miniature that we are currently trying to help is a typical example of a horse being inappropriately kept as a children's plaything by owners who cannot, or will not, give it the care and attention it needs.

It is a young male, housed alone in a small enclosure where it can do little more than pace. Its owners use the house where it is kept only as a holiday home, so for much of the time it has no human contact. And with no other horses for company it is desperately lonely.



Lorraine with her Falabella stallion, Prospero



Two of Lorraine's American minis, Dougal and Sabrina

It has not seen a farrier so its back hooves have grown upward into Dutch-clog-style curves, damaging its legs and joints. Its front hooves are only short because it constantly paws at the concrete wall of its enclosure in a bid to escape. If things do not change its condition will worsen and it is in danger of developing serious health problems.

The horse is kept as a toy for the owners' grandchildren. A number of people have spoken to them about the state of the horse but they see nothing wrong.

We will continue to try to help this horse but without the owner's cooperation and with the authorities reluctant to act, it is a difficult battle. And we are only too aware there are many more miniatures out there suffering a similar fate.

Says Easy Horse Care president, Sue, "What is needed is tighter control on the sale of animals and better education. We are hoping that by stepping up our work with Spanish animal welfare groups and the authorities we can highlight these issues and make a real difference in the longer term."

If you do have the space, time and dedication to look after a miniature pony properly they can be lovely pets.

Says Lorraine, "The mini can make a wonderful companion. They have gentle personalities and tend to be much friendlier than larger horses. Their loving nature means they are

often used as therapy animals.

"Miniature horses can be ridden by small children, and they excel as driving horses.

"They live for an average of 35 years so long-term commitment is required. And although they are small, they do need space, with an outside area no smaller than 40 feet by 60 feet, although the larger the better."

Lorraine breeds American and Falabella minis and is a recognised authority on their care. If you are thinking about getting a miniature, or already have one and would like some advice on looking after it, Lorraine will be only too happy to talk to you. Call her on 661458304.

And look out for Lorraine's article on caring for miniatures which will appear on our website shortly.

To see the type of minis Lorraine breeds, visit her website at www.miniature-horses-spain.com



Lorraine's American foal Milly

Meet our artist in residence

At Easy Horse Care we are incredibly lucky to have our very own artist in residence.

Jacarilla artist Graham Strachan arrived at our centre one day to offer his help, and has since become a regular fixture. He has even drawn some beautiful pictures of our horses.

Said Graham, "When I set up my business, Art Antics, in Spain, I was looking for a worthy charity to support. As soon as I came across Easy Horse Care I knew I had found my good cause. Rod and Sue were so genuine and I loved the work they were doing."

Graham can be found exhibiting his work at Easy Horse Care every Sunday at our open days. All his paintings and drawings are for sale, with a donation to the centre for each one that is sold.

As well as being a talented artist in his own right, Graham is an



Magic

art teacher and holds classes for both children and adults through his Art Antics business.

He is passionate about teaching art and firmly believes he can teach anyone to draw. In fact, the Art Antics motto is "Anyone can draw; you just need to know how."



Ginger and Linda-May

Graham, who is a graduate of Putney Art College and West Sussex Art and Design School, also studied in the US where he learnt a teaching method called Monart, aimed at beginners.

He's now developed a teaching style that's so successful, often parents of his child students refuse to believe that their children really created the pictures they leave the class with.

"I have parents insisting I must have

Graham, right, at Easy Horse Care centre. Prints of Graham's drawings of our horses are for sale at the centre for only five euros each



done the drawing and the child just coloured it in," laughs Graham. "I then have to let the parents sit in on a class to see for themselves."

Graham holds various classes around the area, and is hoping to start a class at the Easy Horse Care centre soon.

Check out Graham's website at www.costablancakidszone.co.uk

Or if you wish to put his motto to the test email Graham at artantics@hotmail.com or phone him on 965350156 to book a lesson.



"Charity"

Please help us raise the roof

Although the sun is still blazing most days, the rain is already threatening to fall and we know winter will be with us all too soon.

Before it arrives we desperately need to raise the money for a roof to cover in our stable block.

With 18 horses using the area, it

doesn't take much of a downpour to turn the stable block floor into a quagmire.

We have been quoted 11,000 euros for a roof to cover the area. It's a lot of money, but it really will make a difference.

Not only will it solve the problem

of the mud in winter, it will also make the stables more comfortable for both horses and volunteer workers in the summer heat.

And, as an added bonus, it will give us an area we can use as temporary pens if we need to house horses in an emergency.

If you can help us raise some money toward the roof, we will be grateful for every centimo.

Anglo European Miniature Horse Show - Spain



"Looking Glass Black Spirit"

To be held at
Easy Horse Care Rescue Centre
Rojales, Costa Blanca, Spain

Spain tel: +34 661458304 - UK Tel: +44 (0) 7511 699199
All proceeds to: www.easyhorsecare.net
to support their work with abused and neglected horses

Sunday
18th Oct 2009

Download Schedule
www.aemhs.com



Mini horse show...

We are delighted to be hosting the Anglo European Mini Horse Show Spain on October 18th.

It promises to be quite an event, with expert breeders bringing their minis from the UK as well as Spain.

It will be a chance to see just what these endearing creatures can do as they will be put through their paces in the arena. And you will be able to listen to a talk on how to train and show minis.

The show will be open to all minis. So if you keep miniature horses and would like to bring them along contact Lorraine Webb on 661458304 for further details. Or email rainewebb@yahoo.com

Show starts at 1pm.

...and for the big horses

Kay Barry, our equine dentist, is organising a horse show to be held at Easy Horse Care on the 11th October.

For more details, or if you wish to enter your horse in the show, contact Kay by phone on 618 508056, or email her at kmbarry9@hotmail.com

In brief...

Private functions

Need a special venue for a private function... look no further than Easy Horse Care centre. Afternoon or evening, we can cater for 20 to 70, and you pick your menu to suit. We can also arrange entertainment. Contact George on 699765578 or Sue on 652021980.

Working holiday

Mucking out stables is not everyone's idea of a holiday, but a few volunteers over the summer have spent their hard-earned holiday time doing just that. We have been amazed by their kindness and would like to say a big thank you.

Some dates for your diary

Our September quiz night promises to be a really special event with UK entertainer Paul G on hand to liven things up.

Paul, who is well known around Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex, not only sings and plays guitar, but does a hilarious Elvis spoof and Benny Hill impersonation, amongst other things.

And luckily for us, he also happens to be a good friend of Rod.

Catch Paul at our quiz night on the 24th September.

Anniversary

We are celebrating our first year anniversary on September 27th.

On that day, our usual open day will be extended for a bit of extra partying. From 6pm Paul G will do another spot, and of course there'll be plenty to eat and drink. So why not come and join us.



Princess and the Pig

With the arrival of Rod and Sue's new pet Vietnamese pot-bellied pig, Isadora, Princess has a new best friend.

The little piglet loves spending time in the garden with Princess, although we're not quite sure whether it is Princess or pinching Princess's food that she loves the best.

