

## Today's Shetlands: Small But Sporty

Shetland ponies are often thought of as the short, chubby, wild-eyed ponies in Thelwell cartoons, but today's Shetland is more like a small, refined sport horse.

Shetland ponies are easy to keep and provide an affordable equine outlet for children and adults of all ages. Whether you are just getting started in horses, introducing your children to riding and driving, or are an adult looking for a fun and safe way to get involved with horses, you'll be thrilled with what these small equines have to offer.

Shetlands are excelling in a wide range of disciplines. The American Shetland Pony Club (ASPC) recognizes four distinct types of ponies: the Classic Shetland Pony, the Modern Shetland Pony and two types of pony crosses, the American Show Pony and the National Show Pony.

Classic Shetland Ponies are a refined version of their Scottish ancestors. They have been selectively bred for 100 years and the result is a sturdy pony with appealing conformation. Classic Shetlands can be up to 46" at the withers. They are the perfect size starter pony for children. From their early history of pulling ore carts in coalmines, Shetlands have retained an innate driving ability and their popularity as a driving pony is ever growing. The versatile Classic Shetland pony can be found doing jobs ranging from children's leadline and mini-stirrup classes at shows, to school ponies to driving teams with four or more ponies in hand.

The ASPC also gives special recognition to Classic Shetland ponies that qualify as Foundation Shetlands. Foundation Shetlands are smaller and more closely resemble their Scottish ancestors. They excel in the same areas as the Classic Shetlands.

Modern Shetland Ponies combine the beauty and hardiness of the Classic Shetland and the excitement and animation of a Hackney pony. The result is elegance in motion. This sophisticated pony, with its extreme action and spirited personality, is at home in the show ring. Modern Shetland Ponies are shown in two height categories, under 43" at the withers and 43 to 46" at the withers. They excel in performance classes including roadster, harness and pleasure driving. In addition, a well-trained Modern Shetland makes an athletic, responsive mount for a child and can be used for everything from gymkhana to the pony jumper division.

The American Show Pony is similar to the Modern Shetland Pony in its animated gait and brilliance. However, American Show Ponies can measure up to 48" at the withers. They can be of Shetland or Hackney breeding or a combination of the two. These larger, flashy ponies are especially



**DISPELLING THE MYTH** that all Shetlands look like Thelwell Ponies, this pair competes in a driving competition.

nized by the American Shetland Pony Club is the National Show Pony. National Show ponies are required to have one purebred Shetland or Miniature Horse parent and can measure up to a full 14.2 hands at the withers. National Show Pony divisions for hunters, Western and driving are currently being developed and integrated into Shetland Pony shows. These larger National Show Ponies will enable children to enjoy riding a pony with Shetland and Miniature attributes longer. In addition, they will serve adults as a larger carriage pony for a variety of uses.

All the small equines in the American Shetland Pony Club share the best attributes of the original Shetland Ponies imported from the Shetland Isles over 120 years ago. Americans fell in love with Shetland Ponies back in 1885 and that love affair continues today.

In 1888, The American Shetland Pony Club was formed to preserve the bloodlines of the Shetland pony while improving and refining the breed. The result is the versatile Shetland we know in America today. The American Shetland Pony Club hosts hundreds of annual awards programs to recognize the achievements of Shetland Ponies and their owners.

Shetland ponies are athletic, quick learners and extremely hardy. They generally have excellent hooves and a propensity toward soundness and good health. These qualities, combined with their endearing dispositions, contribute to their ongoing popularity.

For more information about Shetland ponies visit [shetland-miniature.com](http://shetland-miniature.com), write the American Shetland Pony Club, 81-B East Queenwood Road, Morton, Ill. 61550 or call them at (309)263-4044.



Horse News: Lillian Shupe

**SMALL BUT MIGHTY**, Theodore O'Connor with Karen O'Connor takes on a big ditch at the Jersey Fresh CCI\*\*\* on June 3. The 14 2 hand gelding who is 1/8 Shetland Pony, finished ninth compe-