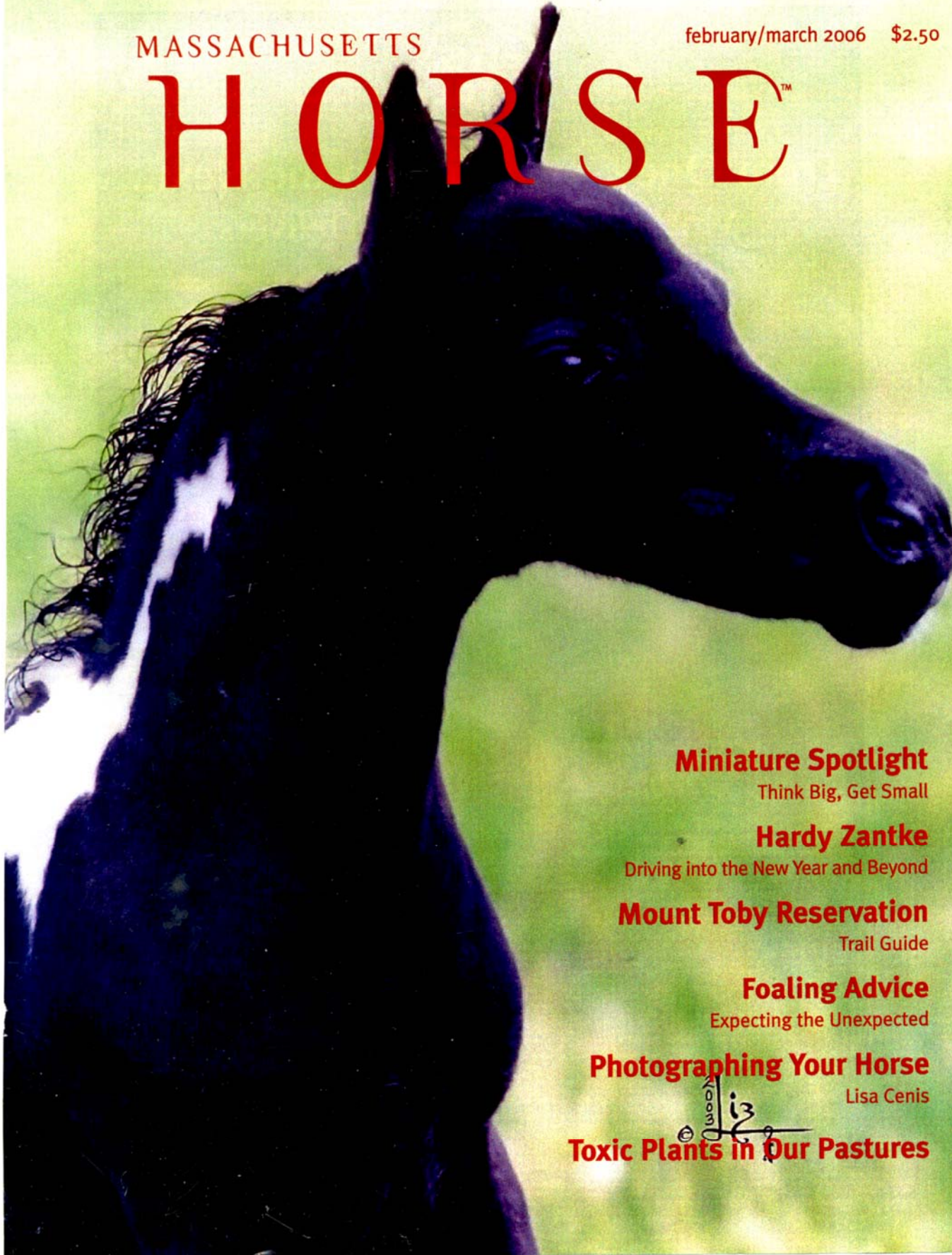


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Miniature Spotlight

Think Big, Get Small

Hardy Zantke

Driving into the New Year and Beyond

Mount Toby Reservation

Trail Guide

Foaling Advice

Expecting the Unexpected

Photographing Your Horse

Lisa Cenis

Toxic Plants in Our Pastures

Liz
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spotlight miniature horses



Liz McMillan

SRF Nobility, Smithdeal's Rowdy's Buccaneer (a Rowdy grandson) x NFC Dandys Shady Lady, one of Sawmill River Farm's top stallions, in West Brookfield.

Miniature horses play remarkable roles. Free of the intimidation inherent to working with larger animals, they encourage people of all ages and physical capabilities to become better horsemen. Such diminutive proportions allow horse lovers to safely explore new avenues — driving, competing, breeding, and training — and find success. In every way, Miniature horses offer a perspective different from that typically found while tall in the saddle.

No Small Wonder

"Horse and pony lovers who want to think big are going small," says Johnny Robb, marketing director for the American Miniature Horse Registry in Morton, Illinois. The AMHR was the original Miniature horse registry in the United States. Johnny says people are curious about what these small wonders have to offer.

Nationally speaking, "Miniatures are popular," Johnny continues. "In 2005, AMHR registered 13,638 horses and transferred 10,460, not including foals born that were not registered in their foaling year."

Alison Elrod, marketing manager for the American Miniature Horse Association (AMHA) in Alvarado, Texas, confirms

that state registrations are also on the rise. "In 2002," she says, "there were 508 AMHA-registered Miniatures in Massachusetts." By December 2005, AMHA vice president Tom Roberts, noted 992 registered horses, estimating 75 foals are registered each year in Massachusetts. The AMHA is the world's leading Miniature horse registry, with more than 150,000 horses and 12,000 members in 30 countries and provinces.

Opportunities for small equines are also on the upswing. At AMHR shows, participation has increased annually. "Last year, we broke AMHR national championship records with more than 5,000 entries and \$50,000 in prizes. Miniature horses are hot and there is no slowdown in sight," says Johnny.

"The Miniature horse is one of the fastest growing breeds in the country," note Tom and Lorraine O'Connell, of Crystal Ridge Farm in Roxbury, Connecticut, breeders of Blue Boy bloodline, Arabian-style Miniature horses, and owners of many AMHA world champions, including 27" reigning world champion senior mare Crystal Ridge Carousel Charisma.

"People are purchasing Miniatures for many reasons, including a desire to show in halter or one of the performance cate-

Think Big, Get Small

by L.A. Pomeroy

gories including hunter, jumper, driving, liberty, and obstacle."

Benefits to Downsizing

"I'm happy to see Massachusetts with a thriving Miniature interest," says former hunter/jumper rider Pamela Corsa, of Sun Swept Miniatures in Center Valley, Pennsylvania. "Miniatures are intelligent, social animals. My mini foals play like crazy with each other, toys, or anything else they find to amuse themselves. A worker who came to fix one of my sheds complained that every time he put a tool down, one of the foals would take it and run off with it!" she says.

Pam's first Miniature replaced a beloved Anglo-Arabian who had passed away. "I went horseless for two years. It wasn't a good time. Part of me was missing. I wanted to stay involved with horses but knew I could never replace my old friend, so I went for something different."

Many small-horse owners start off as big-horse riders or handlers. Scaling down to something different does not mean lowering expectations. "Lorraine has always been a 'big-horse' person," says Tom. "We still own a Thoroughbred gelding and an Arabian mare. She wanted the challenge of producing top-quality