



"Camels are smart, but they can also be stubborn," say Scott and June Allen, who train camels to ride and pull buggies. They also make camel saddles and harnesses.



The Allens also use their camels to pull a plow.

Camel-Training Experts Also Sell Saddles, Harnesses

Scott and June Allen train camels to ride and pull buggies, and they make the saddles and harnesses needed.

"If you want to use your camel for rides at fairs and other special events, you want a platform saddle with a metal hoop. If you just want to ride it yourself, you want a trail saddle with special padding or a rope base that cradles you on top of the hump," says June.

She says the trail saddle is the more com-

fortable of the two with the ropes acting as a shock absorber. She notes that camel riders sit higher than horse riders, which creates more of a rocking motion. Every saddle comes with a pad, halter and lead rope.

"We've formulated a way to measure camels for saddles," says June. "Customers are asked to take the measurement and provide a picture of the camel so we can judge the size and stature."

Harnesses are also built to order. The Al-

lens build several types for fieldwork and training, as well as more showy styles for parades. They've used their camels to pull wagons in parades, snake logs out of the woods, and even to plow up a cornfield. They say regular workouts are good for camels.

"We do all kinds of pulling with wagons or forecarts," says Allen. "Camels are very smart, but they can also be very stubborn and hard headed. One will take 90 days for what was supposed to be a 30-day training

period, while the next will take to the training immediately."

The Allens sell camels and offer training, in addition to selling saddles and harnesses.

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It's estimated there are about 5,000 Akhal-Teke horses worldwide, with about 500 in the U.S. and Canada. The breed has 3,000 years of history.

Breeders Reviving Rare Turkish Horse Breed

The Akhal-Teke breed has 3,000 years of history, the brain of a border collie and the body of a greyhound. Breeders say there's just something about the horses and they hope to increase their numbers and make people aware of their unusual athletic abilities.

Akhal-Teke horses served as war mounts in Turkmenistan and were named after the nomads that bred them. They are thought to be predecessors of Arabians and English thoroughbred breeds. They are survivors, built to survive extreme desert heat and cold temperatures. They don't do as well in hot and humid or rainy climates.

The breed's worst enemy was the Soviets who nearly slaughtered them to extinction. Ones that were left were bred with thoroughbreds until Turkish breeders proved the Akhal-Teke's worth with an 84-day, 2,700-mile trip to Moscow, including a 225-mile, three-day leg across a desert without water.

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They thrive in northern regions, says Cynthia Swensen, who is the largest Akhal-Teke breeder in Canada with 20 of the horses near High River, Alberta. She recently established an organization to register and define the breed in Canada. The U.S. also has a couple of organizations.

Swensen likes the size of the breed, at less than 16 hands tall. She also likes their long, lean, narrow-chested look and the way they hold their heads high. Most of all, she appreciates their intellect.

"They're hot-blooded like a thoroughbred, so you have to treat them a little bit differently," she notes. "When training them you can't do three hours of circles or endlessly repetitive exercises. They are really smart horses, and they just want to be engaged, learning new things everyday."

Their athleticism makes Akhal-Teke horses perfect for dressage, racing, eventing and show jumping. The problem is that there aren't enough of them to make a big name for the breed, though one Akhal-Teke named Absent won Olympic gold for the USSR in 1960 with the highest points for any dressage horse to date.

Since the breed is rare, horses tend to be expensive. Prices range from \$4,000 to \$25,000, with many in the \$10,000 to \$13,000 range. Swensen hopes prices will come down as breed numbers expand and that they become much more common for sporting use and ranch work.

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Mini V-8 Engine Runs Like The Real Thing

"It took more than 5,000 hours over 7 years, and a lot of that time went into making the tooling," says Jim Moyer about the creation of his working 1/6th-scale Chevy 327 cu. in. V-8 engine. "For example, I had to build dies to draw (like stamping, but deeper) the oil pan, timing cover and rocker arms. I also had to make molds to cast the water pump housing, valve covers, flywheel housing and pistons. We also hand-cast porcelain to make the scaled-down spark plugs."

Even the castings required multiple crafts, starting with mold making on his 12-in. lathe and Bridgeport-style mill. The water pump and flywheel housing were sand castings. Pistons were made by vacuum casting, which he did with a yard-sale vacuum pump and jury-rigged vibrating table made from an old etching machine. Valve covers were made with a "lost wax" casting process, which Moyer had never done before. After making the molds for the wax, he had to make a pump to force the wax into the molds. A local second hand store gave him a broken ceramic kiln that he used for a furnace.

"I could have spent \$5,000 to 6,000 in tooling, but I didn't have the money, so I made what I needed instead," says Moyer.

Making a camshaft was a special challenge. Full-size ones are made on camshaft grinders. Rather than build a mini-grinder, Moyer built a duplicator for his lathe and used a full size cam shaft as a pattern, turning it in unison with the blank being machined for the mini V8. The duplicator was also a reducer, so a 1-in. move on the original translated into a 1/6-in. cut on the blank.

Not everything is what it appears. Moyer admits that while the carburetor looks like a four barrel, it is actually a twin with two 7.9/1,000-in. jets. Also, the coil and the battery can be found under the wood base of the engine.

Fuel is a 50-50 mix of unleaded gas and Coleman lantern fuel with a little lead replacer mixed in. Oil is a 5-20 synthetic. To start it, he turns a coupling with a one-way clutch on the end of the flywheel.

Moyer's finished engine has a 1.1 cu. in. or 18 cc displacement, a 0.006-in. bore and



Jim Moyer made this working 1/6-scale Chevy 327 cu. in. V-8 engine.



Making camshaft was a special challenge.

0.487-in. stroke.

"I don't know the horsepower the engine produces, but it's actually a pretty powerful little engine," says Moyer.

Moyer has made several other mini engines, including a single cylinder, overhead valve model with 0.0560 cu. in. displacement.

"I'm retired and like working on small engines," says Moyer. He says he's available for consulting or even building an engine or components. His website has detailed photos and videos.

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