



Mickey and Shelley Ireland raise mini bulls for rodeo competition. They say riding mini bulls is a safer way of training young riders to help them build skills.

Canadians Raise Mini Bulls To Encourage Young Riders

While mini bucking bull events have become more common in the U.S., it is just catching on in Canada. Mickey and Shelley Ireland of Saskatchewan hope to accelerate that with mini bulls from their Stormy Acre Mini Cattle ranch. They believe providing smaller stock for less experienced riders is important to the future of Professional Bull Riding (PBR) in Canada.

Their ranch's name honors the first mini bull they purchased.

"Storm was a little whirlwind, but he could be ridden and we used him to promote PBR and had him to take photos with kids," Shelley Ireland says.

Rodeo competition runs in both of the Irelands' backgrounds. Shelley barrel raced; Mickey rode bulls. They saw their first mini bucking bull event in Montana in 2003.

"We were looking for something to keep involved because we're too old to compete," Shelley recalls about their decision to add mini bulls to their horse ranch. They recognized riding miniature bulls as a safer way of training young riders to help them build skills.

The Irelands started with a bull, cow and calf and purchased additional stock with specific characteristics in mind.

"We wanted it to look like a bucking bull with a hump and horns," she says. Plus, they wanted colorful markings and animals that could withstand Canadian winters. They crossbred Brahman (for the hump) with Highlands, Herefords, Angus, Zebus and other breeds.

3-In-1 Old-Time Washing Machine

Back in the good old days it was possible to do a lot of household jobs with certain machines, says Steve McDonough, Spring Valley, Wis., who displayed a rare old-time washing machine last summer at the Minnesota State Fair.

The belt-driven Maytag Gyratator washing machine could also be used as a butter churn and an ice cream maker. The owner simply removed the agitator and slipped the butter churn-ice cream maker on in its place. Or, he could remove the wringer and fit a standard meat grinder onto the wringer post. The meat grinder was shaft-driven the same way as the wringer.

"Maytag Gyratator Washers were made in the 1920's and 30's. I believe this one was made in 1933," says McDonough. "I bought the machine from a local man and paid \$1,500 for it. I've never seen another one like it."

The Maytag Washing Machine Co. was founded in 1893 by businessman Frederick Maytag. In 1925, the company became Maytag, Inc. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, the company was one of the few to actually make a profit in successive years.



Rare washing machine could also be used as a butter churn ice cream maker - or, you could fit a standard meat grinder onto the wringer post.

They're located in Newton, Iowa.

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Gopher Trap Collecting

While many collectors are obsessed with giant bear and wolf traps, Charlie Roncelli is intrigued by smaller ones that are often looked down upon - gopher traps.

The Californian's collection includes 240 different gopher traps and is most likely the world's largest. And the lowly traps are getting more respect, too. It's common for many antique gopher traps to sell for \$75 to \$300, with some rare ones selling for more than \$1,000.

"I think the mechanics are ingenious," Roncelli says of the designs inventors came up with. "But a real gopher trapper knows right away which ones will work."

He has been a "real" gopher trapper since his childhood, when he quickly figured out trapping gophers for 25 cents/each for a wealthy farmer was better than picking a crate of Loganberries for 35 cents.

"I bought my first car at age 15 with gopher money," he recalls.

He also purchased a variety of traps, often for 10 cents at flea markets. For trapping he preferred Macabee traps - built in a Californian Victorian mansion and packaged in shoe boxes (www.gophertrapping.com).

Roncelli resumed buying traps (for his growing collection) in his late 20's, paying no more than \$1/trap - until he learned about the North American Trap Collectors Association in the 1980's.

"I realized I had made some good deals, and I started trading traps," Roncelli says. He recalls trading one very nice bear trap for about 3 dozen gopher traps. The man he traded with likely figured he was getting the better end of the deal, Roncelli concedes, but the gopher traps were part of a trap tester's collection and have become very valuable.

"Trap inventors were very ingenious, with some amazing engineering feats. That's what makes them fascinating to study - the variety of designs," says Rex Marsh, who worked as a research scientist in the Department of Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology at the University of California. "Most never got rich on their traps and very few were major successes."

In his work and later research for his book, "Trap Guns for Pocket Gophers and Moles," he discovered most gopher traps were patented in California. Gophers girdled trees and ate roots destroying orchard trees and grapevines planted in the last third of the 19th Century.

Leg-hold traps weren't very effective, so starting in about 1870 inventors came up with a variety of designs, mostly pincher traps, Roncelli says. He purchased one of the rarest models, a Morawtz trap (1904 patent) for the outrageous sum of \$300 when internet sales first started.

"It's the Mona Lisa of traps," he says. "It's like a gripper with an over-center trigger that snaps down four clamps. The engineering is flawless," Roncelli says.

Other less successful models include a round coil with a trap door with spikes made by an inventor named French in San Francisco.

"Imagine a live gopher in that and trying to dig it out of the coil," Roncelli says.

Another model, the Horne trap, used a Mason jar and lid to capture a gopher.

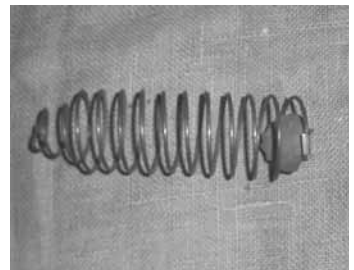
Live traps were used by scientists to tag and study gophers, and Roncelli notes that he has the only Lewis live trap that is known to exist.

His collection includes all types of traps including spear-style traps and trap guns that shoot .38 to .45 ammunition. Marsh notes the trap guns seemed to disappear in the late 1940's, probably because they could injure pets or children who dug up the traps.

Roncelli says that he plans to sell or find a



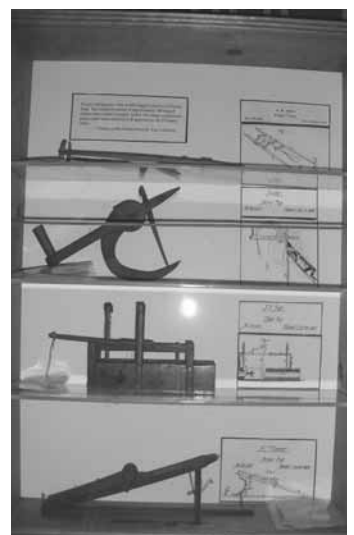
Gopher Guns



Oakland Coil



Early Pincher Traps



Roncelli Trap Collection

home for his collection.

But he doesn't plan on selling all of the traps. He still traps gophers to protect 40 fruit trees on his property. While the Macabee traps are still sold (but now made in China), he has switched to the California-made stainless steel Gophinator™ (www.traplineproducts.com).

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