

German Cow Trained To Ride, Jump

When Regina Mayer's parents dashed her hopes of getting a horse, the resourceful 15-year-old didn't sit in her room and sulk. Instead, she turned to a cow called Luna to make her riding dreams come true.

Hours of training, and tons of treats, cajoling and caresses later, the results are impressive: not only do the two regularly go on long rides through the southern German countryside, they do jumps over a makeshift hurdle of beer crates and painted logs.

"She thinks she's a horse," Mayer joked on a recent sunny afternoon as she sat atop the impassive brown-and-white jersey.

It all started about 2 years ago, shortly after Luna was born on the Mayers' sprawling farm in the hamlet of Laufen, just minutes from the Austrian border. They started off with walks in the woods during which Luna wore a halter. Then Mayer slowly got her cow more accustomed to human contact and

riding equipment.

About 6 months later, it was time to see how Luna would respond to a rider on her back. Mayer sat in the saddle, and all went as planned – at least at first.

"She was really well behaved and walked normally," says Mayer, decked out in riding gear. "But after a couple of meters, she wanted me to get off. You could see that she was a bit peeved."

Luna and Mayer are now soul mates, spending most afternoons together once the teen – who aspires to become a nurse one day – comes home from school. Their extensive routine involves grooming, petting, jumps and a roughly one-hour ride. That's also the case in winter, when Mayer drapes a blanket over Luna to keep her warm. (Go to FarmShow.com to see a video of Luna in action.)



15-year-old Regina Mayer turned to a cow called Luna to make her riding dreams come true. Here Luna jumps over a makeshift hurdle.

He's On A Mission To Save Heritage Apples

Jude Schuenemeyer and his wife, Addie, are on a mission to save heritage apple varieties unique to southwestern Colorado. Their Montezuma Orchard Restoration Project (MORP) seeks out old orchards and harvests scion wood for grafting and replanting, sometimes just in the nick of time.

"We recently tracked down an apple called Colorado Orange to an old orchard in Canyon City," recalls Schuenemeyer. "It's one of the few that originated in Colorado."

The Schuenemeyer's operate Let It Grow Nursery & Garden Market. They got involved in heritage apple varieties 12 years ago when a customer asked for an old variety. In asking around, they learned about other rare varieties and about the area's history. Eventually they bought their own old orchard and began restoring it.

"We planted 40 to 50 trees a few years ago, then another 30 last year and will plant another 100 this year," says Schuenemeyer. "Out of those, I've only identified around 60 of them. Once they are blooming and producing fruit, we'll be able to identify the rest."

Schuenemeyer hopes to do more than just build and preserve a collection of old apple varieties. He also hopes to capture and preserve the history of the region as a fruit-growing center in the late 1800's and early 1900's, as well as to restore a lost fruit

economy.

"There are varieties of trees here that are near extinction. They were dropped from nursery catalogs years ago," says Schuenemeyer.

Many descendants of the settlers who planted these old orchards are still on the original farms or at least in the area. This has helped make Schuenemeyer's work possible. He has scoured century old state fair contests and even the results of the 1904 World's Fair fruit competition. In the records, he found the names of both apple varieties and the people who raised them. Finding their descendants or the farms they lived on has led him to the trees.

"This area was known for its quality fruit," says Schuenemeyer. "At the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Montezuma Valley apple orchards won three out of four gold medals. In 1906, the county won 101 out of 104 top prizes at the state competition."

To spread the word and encourage others, MORP sponsors pruning and grafting workshops throughout the winter. Schuenemeyer has also built up a network of orchard owner descendants who refer him to other old tree owners.

Sometimes an orchard that once included hundreds of trees is reduced to a few trees in a fence line. Often times the owner has no idea what the variety is, only how it tastes.

If the tree is threatened, Schuenemeyer will take scion wood (small branches) for grafting, even without knowing what variety it is.

"We went into one orchard, a Noah's Ark orchard with 40 some trees, all different," says Schuenemeyer. "The owner was trying to sell it, so we took three grafts from each tree to preserve the orchard, though we didn't know what they all were."

In that case, Schuenemeyer will give one set of young grafted trees back to the owner and keep one set for the MORP orchard. He will give a third set to a family who is restoring one of the World Fair's gold medal winning orchards.

Not every area has the history or number of orchard remnants that Schuenemeyer's area does. However, he encourages others to learn grafting and get involved in preserving the old varieties. He notes that in the 1800's there were as many as 18,000 recognized apple varieties in the U.S. Only 6,000 survive today.

In addition to apples, Schuenemeyer is also working with cherries, peaches and other fruit trees. While his orchard is still young, eventually he hopes to set it up as a non-profit and make it available to others. In the meantime, he continues to collect scion wood and oral histories.

"I hope we can get the funding to compile all the information we have gathered," he



Jude Schuenemeyer is preserving a collection of heritage apple varieties unique to southwestern Colorado.

says.

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Miniature Pumps Kept Lighters Lit

Don Sherwood has a collection of 13 old gas pumps, and they all fit on his desk. Sherwood collects miniature gas pumps that were designed to dispense lighter fluid. That's about all that's known about them, says Sherwood, who collects almost anything related to early gas stations.

"I know who made them and where, but I don't have much information on the companies," says Sherwood. "The first time I saw one, I didn't even know what it was."

Some of the miniature pumps provided free lighter fluid fills. Others had coin slots for penny donations, while others were coin-operated. A penny had to be put in to dispense the fluid.

"These were from a time when gas stations really tried to give people service," says Sherwood. "There would have been a lot of these dispensers found in a lot of different gas stations."

Sherwood's collection includes several generations of the devices. The earliest ones resemble gravity gas pumps with the fluid in the glass cylinders on top of the pump. With the turn of a vent screw, the liquid would flow

into the lighter.

The next generation used a reservoir cast into the bottom of the pump. When a plunger was pressed, fluid would be dispensed.

Sherwood described the "Bell Boy Jr." dispenser. "It looks remarkably like a full size Bell Boy gas pump. The plunger is located on top of the pump and designed to act as an advertising sign for the brand of gasoline being sold. Depressing the coin-shaped plunger dispenses the fluid. A small hollow tube swivels out of the way for the lighter to slip into position for a fill. The tube acts as a return tube for any drips of fluid to be routed back to the reservoir."

His personal favorite is a very rare "Gilmore" pump. The 16-in. tall dispenser engraved with reference to the Gilmore Oil Co. has a clear glass cylinder, push button plunger and engraved advertising. On the back is a clear glass "fluid level indicator".

The body is made of copper with top and bottom castings in brass. A large brass plate attached on the front side is engraved with "Fill Your Lighter While We Fill Your Tank With GILMORE Red Lion Gasoline" in black



Don Sherwood collects miniature gas pumps designed to dispense lighter fluid. Some resemble gravity gas pumps, with the fluid in glass cylinders on top of the pump.

and red letters. Sherwood has been collecting the devices for many years. Today, he says, it's not uncommon to pay \$1,000 for one, and that might not be a bad price.

"The economy isn't making this a good time to sell, but it's a good time to collect," he says.

Sherwood is very interested in hearing from people with an interest in the dispensers or other gas station collectibles. In addition to the lighter fluid dispensers, he has more than 60 gas pumps, antique toy giveaways, neon and porcelain signs, old oil cans and more. He

maintains a virtual museum of photographs of old gas stations and equipment on his website, as well as a 2,400-sq. ft. building loaded with items.

"I would especially love hearing from anyone who might be able to help me learn more about the individual companies who made these dispensers," says Sherwood.

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