

## Sharing her passion for horses and ponies with her husband has been one of her favorite aspects of her involvement in the industry

Elizabeth Ghareeb and Michael Petty share a passion for horses and ponies together. In addition to their Saddlebreds and Morgans, they have a widely successful string of Hackney Ponies that excel in a myriad of divisions.

GHAREEB EQUINE:

# Happiness WITH HACKNEYS

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Some couples celebrate their wedding anniversary with a dinner for two. Others jet to a new destination for a quick getaway. Some make romantic gestures, best expressed through a heartfelt card. However, Elizabeth Ghareeb chose to commemorate her anniversary to husband Michael Petty with none other than a surprise gift of a new Hackney Pony.

“On October 14th, which is the day after our anniversary, they put a bow on Centurian’s Perfection LF and they led him out for Michael,” Ghareeb said.

Centurian’s Perfection LF is one of 15 Hackney Ponies that comprise the show string of Ghareeb Equine Investments LLC. Under the direction of the Majestic Oaks team, Ghareeb and Petty’s ponies have reached the pinnacle of success in the equine industry, and have traversed a myriad of divisions. Both Ghareeb and Petty found a passion for the Hackneys later in their show ring careers. However they have now fully immersed themselves into the breed and have blazed a trail of success in their respective divisions.

Like most young girls, Elizabeth Ghareeb quickly grew enamored of all things equine related. Her parents became involved with Arabian horses in the early 1980’s.

“I was crazy about horses and getting to spend time around them was a dream come true,” she said.”

However, Ghareeb’s family struggled to find an Arabian lesson program available close to their Birmingham, Alabama home. She instead began taking lessons with John and Anita Cowart at their Heathermoor Farm, which was where she was first introduced to Saddlebreds. Elizabeth Ghareeb’s love of the Saddlebreds flourished and she received a show horse of her own in 1984 and began showing in the 10 and under equitation division. Soon after she and her family made the decision for Ghareeb to move to Delovely to pursue her equitation dreams under the direction of the renowned Lillian Shively.

With guidance from Delovely and the Shiveleys, Ghareeb was named a world’s and national champion in the equitation ranks and amassed an impressive resume as a junior exhibitor. Ghareeb eventually stepped away from the horse scene to pursue a college education and then to join her family in business. However, she later felt a desire to return to the horses and resume her passion for showing. One new Saddlebred led to another and soon, both Ghareeb and Petty were back in the industry in full force.



Elizabeth Ghareeb was heavily involved in the American Saddlebred world as a child. She returned to the industry after a brief hiatus and soon added Hackney Pony competition to her resume. CH Hopkins was one of the first ponies that Ghareeb had success with in Louisville. They claimed the title of the 2018 Amateur Road Pony 50 Inches and Under World's Champions.

Elizabeth Ghareeb was excelling in the show ring while riding her equine teammates. Yet, it was one Saddlebred, Tory Burch, that made Ghareeb add driving to her resume. The mare was in training with Bret Day when Ghareeb took the reins and debuted in the fine harness division. Her new love of driving would soon lead to an interest in the Hackney Pony industry.

"I started getting interested in driving with Tory Burch and I showed her in fine harness a little bit and I realized that I really liked driving and that is kind of how I got interested in the Hackney Ponies," she said. "I had always really admired them and thought they were beautiful but when I was a kid, road ponies under saddle weren't a thing and I never had performance horses growing up. I only ever did equitation."

Elizabeth Ghareeb connected with Rich Campbell of the famed, Kentucky based Majestic Oaks Hackney Farm. Campbell explained that he had an exciting prospect that Ghareeb was quickly interested in. She and Petty joined the Hackney industry and became the proud owners of Heartland Romp N Stomp, who represented them in Louisville in 2018 as the Three-Year-Old Road Pony World's Champion. That same year, Ghareeb leased the great CH Hopkins, whom she drove down victory lane on the green shavings as the Amateur Road Pony 50 Inches and Under World's Champions.

"Heartland Romp N Stomp won Louisville for us as a three-year-old and Hopkins also won Louisville, so I guess you can say we jumped in with both feet," she said.

Since her Hackney debut, Elizabeth Ghareeb has continued to earn world's and national titles on the lines of her high-octane teammates and her show string, much like with her Saddlebred entries, has blossomed from one entry to many. Her last trip to Freedom Hall in 2022 included a round of honor as the Amateur Road Pony 50 to 52 Inches Section One World's Champion with Gilcrest's Blue

Chip, the reserve streamers with Heartland Over The Moon as the Amateur Hackney Pony Reserve World's Champion of Champions, and the red ribbon as the Hackney Pony Mare Reserve World's Champion with Crystal Creek's Dark Chocolate, among other top honors. Ghareeb explained that when adding to her show string, she focuses on finding a pony that is a fresh face in the show ring.

"I like something that is going to be fun, and that hasn't necessarily been around a million times-something new that is exciting that people aren't hopefully already tired of looking at," she said. "It is a case by case basis. Generally I am looking for a fresher face, something that we can generate some excitement around. I guess everybody has a type but I like to say that I want a pony in a discipline that I don't already have, but at this point I almost have one for every class."

Ghareeb set out to find a Hackney Pony for her husband Michael to drive mid-way through the 2022 show season. His beloved CH Mighty Thor had just been officially retired, leaving Petty without a teammate to show. Ghareeb thought a Hackney Pony would present a fun, new challenge for Petty.

"Michael had shown Tory Burch a few times so it wasn't his first driving experience," she said. "He had shown her during the 2018 season and took to it like a duck to water. He was very natural and comfortable driving. Last year in the middle of the summer, Michael was left without anything to show for the rest of the season. I reached out to Rich Campbell and told him I wanted a pony for Michael and the only caveat was that it had to be something he could show this season. I didn't want a project or an overly complicated pony."

Ghareeb purchased the aforementioned Centurian's Perfection LF to be Petty's first pony. They debuted together with great success in Kansas City at the 2022 UPHA/American Royal and earned topped ribbons. Ghareeb explained that sharing her passion for horses and ponies with her husband has been one of her favorite aspects of her involvement in the industry.



Michael Petty was presented with Centurian's Perfection LF as a surprise wedding anniversary gift from Elizabeth Ghareeb. They debuted together last season at the UPHA/American Royal and have continued to excel this year in the Hackney pleasure driving pony ranks.

"It is really very special to find something that we are both passionate about," she said. "He grew up not competing, but his family had horses on their property. They had a small farm in Alabama. He was comfortable around horses and incredibly supportive of me when I decided to get back in the business. It is really fun to be able to share a passion like that with him. We share in the camaraderie of our friends, and breeding and watching our young horses-it is something that we really both enjoy."

Both Ghareeb and Petty along with the Majestic Oaks team have celebrated the success of their show string as the 2023 show season has unfolded. Crystal Creek's Heaven Sent, Wait & See's Last Commander, Absolutely Mahvelous, and Heartland Dixie Dancer are a few members of Ghareeb and Petty's string that have earned trips down victory lane, spanning multiple divisions at each horse show. Ghareeb explained that she remains highly organized when switching between classes and divisions with her ponies in order to continue her show ring success.

"I keep notes on my phone of all the equines I show with a cliff notes version of what works for each one," she said. "I will review my notes prior to showing to help me remember what the key instructions are for each horse or pony. It's been very helpful over the years. I have a horse show spreadsheet that covers everything from who is showing in what session and what I'm wearing with them to where and when we are having dinner. If I'm showing multiple animals in a session I generally arrive at the show a little early so I can get my outfit changes-gloves, gowns, suits, silks, glasses etc.- organized in order of go."

This type of organization is needed when excelling in a myriad of Hackney Pony and American Saddlebred divisions. In addition to her current string of equines, Ghareeb was quick to mention other ponies that she will have the opportunity to show later this year.

"We have several things that we are excited about for the rest of the season," she said. "We have had great success so far this year with several new additions and there are a few prospects that I will hopefully get to show sooner than later that I haven't been in the ring with yet, so I am always excited about those experiences."



Elizabeth Ghareeb has a need for speed and has enjoyed many victory passes in the road pony ranks. Gilcrest's Blue Chip is one of her speedsters and earned the round of honor in Freedom Hall last year as the Amateur Road Pony 50 to 52 Inches Section One World's Champion with Ghareeb in the bike.

Elizabeth Ghareeb encourages anyone who has the inclination to become involved in the Hackney Pony industry. They have become a welcomed addition to her string of American Saddlebreds and Morgans.



Michael Petty will be making his debut with yet another Hackney, Heartland Rain Maker, at Shenandoah Classic Horse Show. Trainer Shelby Balmas has driven the pony to four straight victories in the Hackney park pleasure driving ranks this season, preparing him for Petty to take the reins. Petty underwent knee surgery earlier this season, preventing him from driving. However, he has since returned to the show ring and is being primed for his debut with Rain Maker.

“It has been a horrible rehabilitation process,” Ghareeb said. “He had to keep his knee completely immobilized for 30 days. It took a long time to get the mobility back in that knee. I am hoping he will be about 100% by the end of the summer. He got to show for the first time since his injury at Devon and he had a triumphant return. I can’t wait for him to do the honors at Shenandoah and show Rain Maker.”

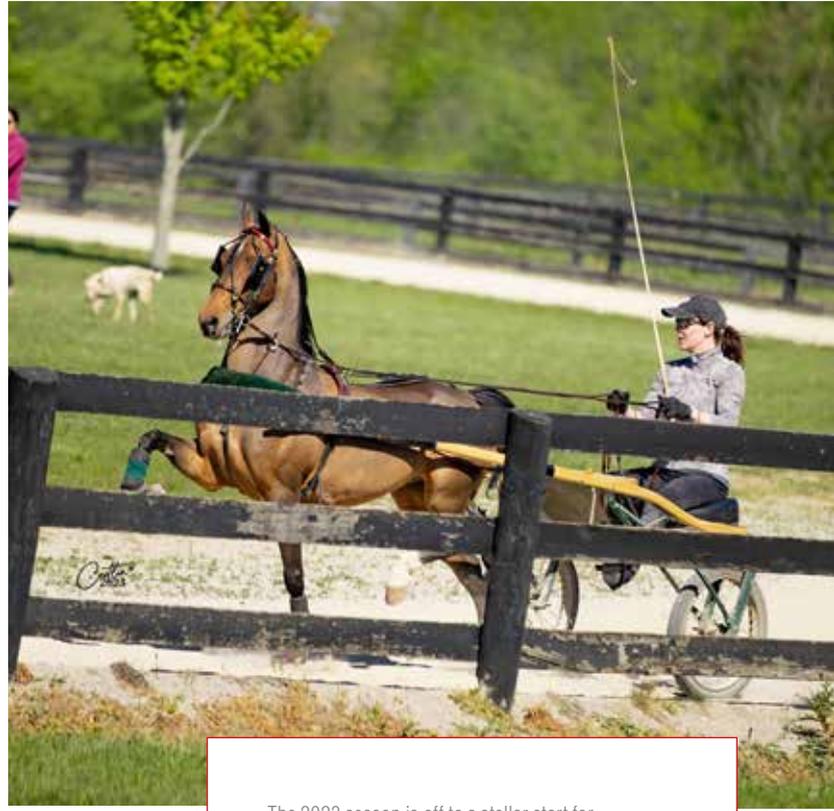
Ghareeb is additionally excited to continue her lengthy show ring partnership with her beloved Anticipation’s Warrior LF. Their resume together lists two Kentucky County Fair Road Pony Reserve Grand Championship titles in both 2019 and 2022 as well as a 2021 reserve world’s title from the amateur road pony ranks.

“He is my favorite pony,” she said. “He is just a really special guy that I just fell in love with the first time we drove him and he is the only one that I have said that I will never sell. He is very special to me and we connected in a special way and most importantly he really likes to go fast and so do I.”

The Hackney Ponies have been a welcomed addition to Ghareeb’s show string that also boasts an impressive list of Saddlebreds, Morgans, and homebreds. Regardless of breed or division, and whether riding, driving or breeding future champions, Elizabeth Ghareeb has found herself at the top of her sport. Her love for the equines has expanded to include some of the nation’s premier ponies

and her commitment along with Michael Petty to the industry has landed them at the forefront of this community of competitors. Ghareeb encourages anyone interested in the pony industry to become involved just as she has.

“Go for it,” she said. “They are a lot of fun. They are really amazing performers. They have a lot of heart. There is something for everyone out there and a lot of different divisions you can try. I would suggest that everyone who has an inclination give it a shot.”



The Kentucky based Majestic Oaks is home to Ghareeb and Petty’s Hackney Ponies. Rich Campbell is the proud trainer of their entries, including Heartland Over The Moon, the 2022 Amateur Hackney Pony Reserve World’s Champion of Champions.



The 2023 season is off to a stellar start for Elizabeth Ghareeb. In addition to success with her own string, she has taken Jack Tatum III’s reigning world’s grand champion, CH Unexpected 2, down victory lane twice.

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