

This is the beginning of a feature that will highlight a deceased stallion, mare or gelding who has forever changed or influenced the Miniature horse breed through showing or breeding. Let's take an insightful look, thru the eyes of the owners and the people who loved these great horses.

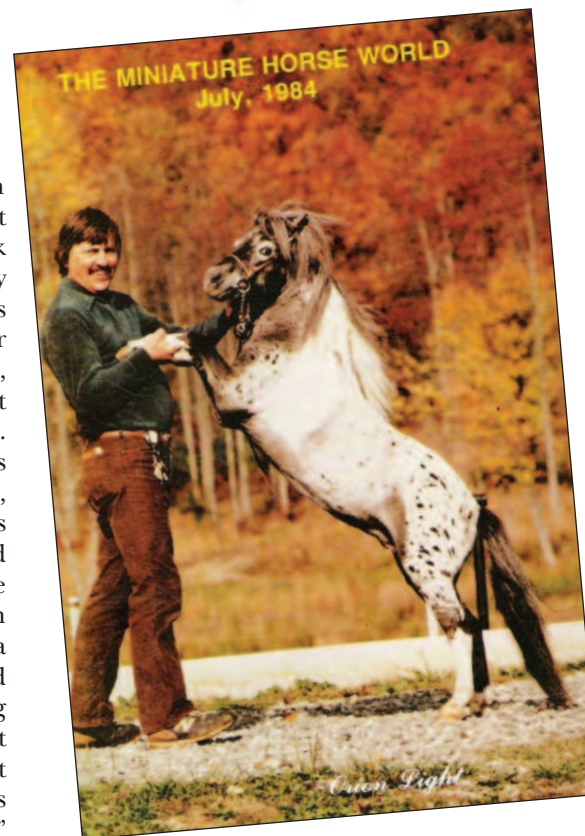
Legends IN MINIATURE

A Horse called Orion...

As recalled by Roy Brewer

Orion's story began with a miracle birth, almost an immaculate conception Orion was born in a driving rainstorm and soon became an orphan as his dam, Dell Teras Jane must have been frightened by the storm and left him. Luckily J.C. Williams, owner of Dell Teras Miniature Farm and his visitor Mark Verhaeghe stumbled upon the little Pintaloosa colt before he was too far gone. They took him to the barn and began bottle feeding him. The colt thrived and before too long captured Mark's attention. Having just moved to the United States from Belgium, Mark needed a herd sire for his draft type mares. A bargain was struck between Williams and Verhaeghe; a pickup full of halters and tack was swapped for the young colt. Mark named the colt Orion Light Vant Huttenest, an unusual

name for an unusual horse. In Belgium the name Vant Huttenest means "bird in a bush nest." Mark kept Orion but did not breed any mares to him until the stallion was about 8 years old. Vern Brewer became Orion's third owner in 1985, but had to purchase 42 other Van't Huttenest horses in order to get him. Mark had turned down Vern's \$65,000 offer just two years before, but his family had lost interest in his Miniature horses and he wanted Orion to prove himself and be the herd sire he was born to be. Orion has consistently proven himself as a sire producing 37 National Grand Champions. "He was an amazing horse", says Roy. "He was the first stallion to produce true refinement in his foals. He sired small horses with beautiful heads and long legs." Orion continues to leave his mark on



In 1984, Orion Light Vant Huttenest graced the cover of the Miniature Horse World with owner Mark Verhaeghe

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the Miniature horse industry even today. Vern Brewer sold Orion to his son Roy on December 26, 1994. Orion was such a part of the family; he was always Vern's favorite horse. Roy remembers, "About 8 years ago, we had a bad storm and we thought a tornado was coming. I got my mom and the rest of the family settled safely inside, and ran back out to get Orion. He was always a pasture stallion, but for safety's sake, Jackie Crisp and I decided to put Orion between the barns in a pen where he could weather the storm. Then we hightailed it back in the house to wait out the storm! "Some laughed that horses



These photos are from the AMHA registration archives. The win photo was added to Orion's certificate when he was transferred to Mark Verhaeghe.

came first, people second, but he was extremely valuable to us and still is." And as his legacy continues, the Brewer family still sees the impact their father made by choosing the leggy Pintaloosa stallion. Roy continues "There have been several times at the World Show, where I'll see a horse that I particularly like, and when I look up the pedigree on that horse, it's always out of the Orion line. There was just something about him, an aura or something that made him special. And he has passed that characteristic on to his foals."

Roy continued to use Orion as his premier stallion until 2001 when his last foals were born. Orion lived out his last years of retirement in the Brewer family backyard. Orion always loved children and received lots of petting and attention. He died of natural causes in January 2005 at the age of 31.

As remembered by Tony Greaves

In July of 1982, Vern Brewer and I took a trip to the east coast, one of several such trips over several years, looking for Miniature horses. On this particular trip, we visited

Mark Verhaeghe's animal park where he had his Miniature horses. Mark had moved from Belgium some years before and his herd of mares averaged 29" in height, which was very small for that time.

We toured the pastures and had just arrived at the barns for a look around when we noticed a young stallion being turned out in a paddock. We asked about the stallion and Mark said that he only used him in his appaloosa program because he was afraid that at 31" refined and leggy, he would not cross well on his little draft-type mares. This beautiful pintaloosa stallion that we could not take our eyes off of was, of course, Orion-Light Van't Huttenest.

While we were standing there watching Orion run from one side of the paddock to the other, Mark's wife called him to the phone. While he was gone, Vern and I both were excited about what was in front of us. We both thought that he was the most beautiful, refined, elegant stallion that we had seen on any of our trips looking at horses.

When Verhaeghe returned, we visited for a while and he said that he really did not want to sell the stallion. Both Vern and I really wanted to see some of the foals sired by him and out of the little Belgium mares. He said that his trainer had been trying to get him to breed some, but that he thought that the foals would just be too big. We discussed the possibilities at length and he finally said that maybe he would breed some mares to him that season, just to see what would happen. All the way back to Texas our conversation seemed to drift back to that beautiful stallion. I thought that he was the most beautiful horse that I had ever seen.

"He was the first stallion to produce true refinement in his foals. He sired small horses with beautiful heads and long legs."

The following year, Vern was able to buy some of the foals resulting from those breedings as Mark was still not willing to sell the stallion. Among the group were two colts, Happy Appy and Xenon-Light Van't Huttenest. When they were yearlings, the Brewers had both of them in their show string. Later on in the year, they decided to sell Xenon, the bigger of the two colts; which he allowed his son Roy to purchase. I bought Xenon from Roy at a show in Austin as he came out of the ring, after winning his class, but before he was named Junior Grand Champion at the show. It is a purchase that I have never regretted. Many years later, he is still one of my premier herd sires, and I have many of his daughters and granddaughters in my broodmare band.

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Pictured is Vern Brewer holding the feed bucket with Orion.

After several years of negotiating to purchase or lease Orion, Vern Brewer finally bought the entire remaining herd of forty-two head in order to get Orion. It was a long and arduous negotiation, but Vern was up for it. Since the early 1950s he knew that the importance of a stallion could not be over emphasized. The time and money that it took to get the right stallion was time and money well spent. History seems to continually prove that opinion.

The prepotency of the Orion line continues to amaze and please me even after all these years.

Stats:

*Orion Light Vant Huttenest foaled 5/9/1974
bred by J.C. Williams*

Sire: Unknown

Dam: Dell Teras Jane

Sired 37 National Grand Champions

Vern Brewer sold Orion to his son

Roy Brewer on December 26, 1994

Orion passed away in January 2005-he was 31 years old.

The following are National Champions, out of the Orion line according to the AMHA Studbook On Line

YASHICA LIGHT VANT HUTTENEST

1985 JUNIOR STALLION RESERVE NATIONAL
GRAND CHAMPION
7 National Grand Champions
3 Reserve National Grand Champions
15 National Champions
10 Reserve National Champions

BREWERS ORION ECHO

1987 JUNIOR STALLION NATIONAL GRAND
CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION LACE

1987 JUNIOR MARE NATIONAL GRAND
CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION MYSTIC

1987 WEANLING STALLIONS NATIONAL
CHAMPION

RUBYS SAPPHIRE LIGHT

1987 SENIOR MARES OVER 28" TO 30"
NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION CLASSIC

1988 JUNIOR STALLION NATIONAL
GRAND CHAMPION

1988 YEARLING STALLIONS NATIONAL
CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION ILLUSION

1988 MULTI-COLOR STALLIONS
NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION LEGACY

1988 JUNIOR STALLION RESERVE NATIONAL
GRAND CHAMPION

1988 TWO-YEAR-OLD STALLIONS NATIONAL
CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION MELODY

1988 LIBERTY RESERVE NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION ELATION

1989 JUNIOR MARE NATIONAL GRAND
CHAMPION

1989 YEARLING MARES NATIONAL CHAMPION

1991 SENIOR MARE NATIONAL GRAND
CHAMPION

1991 SENIOR MARES OVER 28" TO 30"
NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION MONARCH

1989 WEANLING STALLIONS RESERVE
NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION ELEGANCE

1990 TWO-YEAR-OLD MARES RESERVE
NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION FANTASY

1990 WEANLING MARES RESERVE
NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION IMPRESSIVE

1990 JUNIOR STALLION NATIONAL GRAND
CHAMPION

1990 YEARLING STALLIONS NATIONAL
CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION SPECTACULAR

1991 JUNIOR STALLION NATIONAL GRAND
CHAMPION

1991 YEARLING STALLIONS NATIONAL
CHAMPION

1991 MULTI-COLOR STALLIONS AND GELDINGS
RESERVE NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION IMPRESSION

1993 SENIOR MARE RESERVE NATIONAL
GRAND CHAMPION

1993 SENIOR MARES OVER 30" TO 32"
NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION TRIUMPH

1993 TWO-YEAR-OLD STALLIONS 30" & UNDER
RESERVE NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION COMMANDER

1994 SENIOR STALLIONS OVER 30" TO 32"
RESERVE NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION MIRAGE

1994 MULTI-COLOR STALLIONS AND
GELDINGS NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION VALENTINO

1994 FORMAL PARK DRIVING NATIONAL
CHAMPION

1994 AMATEUR GELDING NATIONAL
CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION CAPTIVATION

1995 TWO-YEAR-OLD STALLIONS 30" & UNDER
RESERVE NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION BRIDESMAID

1996 SENIOR MARES OVER 28" TO 30"
RESERVE NATIONAL CHAMPION

BREWERS ORION MAIN ATTRACTION

1996 YEARLING STALLIONS OVER 28" TO 30"
RESERVE NATIONAL CHAMPION

1996 MULTI-COLOR STALLIONS AND
GELDINGS NATIONAL CHAMPION

1997 TWO-YEAR-OLD STALLIONS 28" TO 30"
NATIONAL CHAMPION