



# Minshall Farms: Creating Horse History and New Beginnings

Story & Photo credits: B. Ryan

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Surely the very best part of being in the horse business is the arrival of a healthy new foal. New beginnings are what Minshall Farms does really well, and has done for a long time.

The Minshalls are a third generation Erin family who spread their love of horses across several equine disciplines: Thoroughbred horse breeding, foaling, training, and racing. They also do Standardbred horse foaling and Quarter Horse cutting competitions and events.

Minshall Farms is a family business, owned and operated by Shaun and Lisa Minshall. Aubrey Minshall, Shaun's father, was the founder, a businessman and breeder of champion Thoroughbreds. Aubrey Minshall was inducted into the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame in 2012.

One of the many champions foaled at Minshall Farms was Mt. Sassafras. This horse was bred, raced and trained by members of the Minshall family and his accomplishments were many. Mt. Sassafras was voted 1996 Champion, Older Male Horse and Canada's Horse of the Year. Other notable Minshall horses are Bold Ruritana, two time Champion Turf Mare, and Sprint Champions, King Corrie and Field Commission. Stephanotis was a major stakes winner for Minshall Farms and went on to be a leading sire in British Columbia.

Shaun followed in his father's footsteps, in business and in horses. He took up roping and became an avid cutting horse competitor. This kind of competition originated in the United States in the

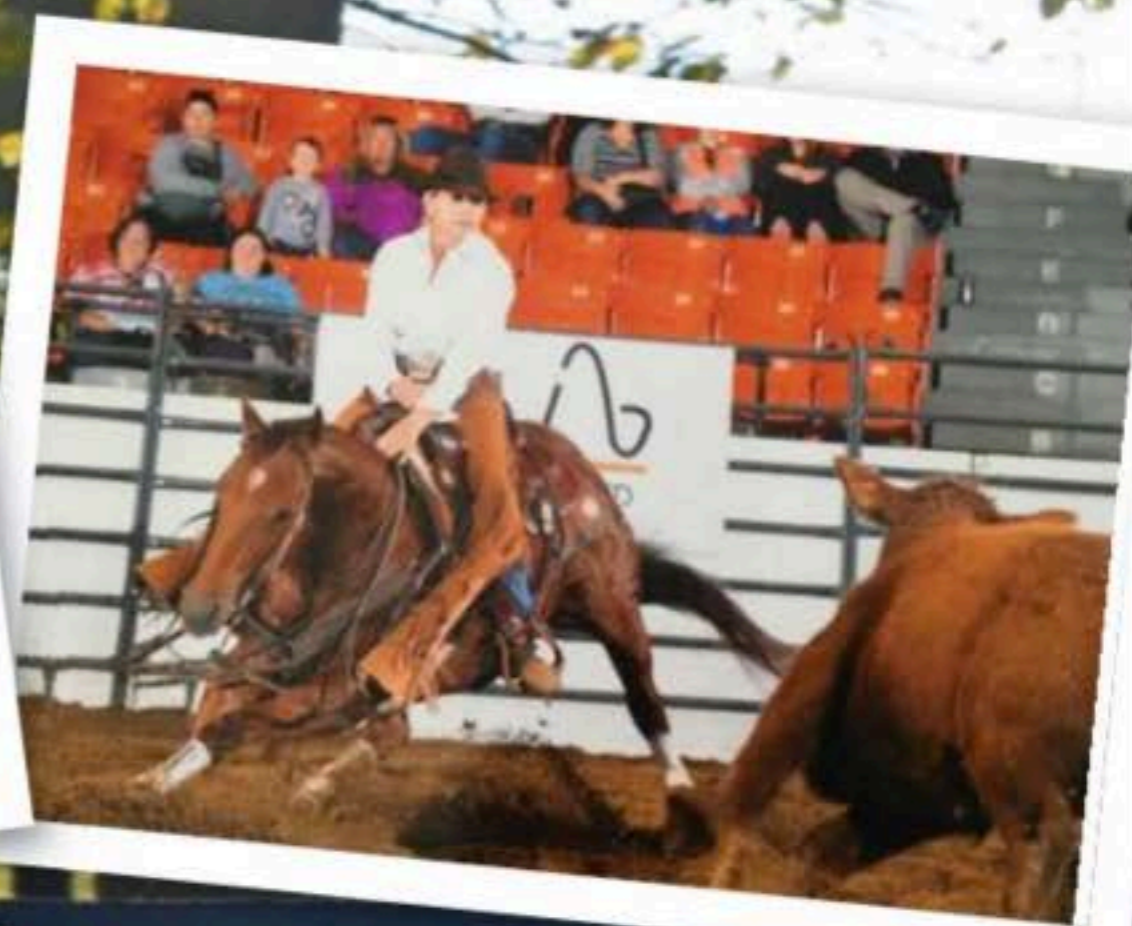
1800s, when American cowboys used their best horses to separate or 'cut' individual cows from the herd. The sport was brought to Ontario in the late 1950s and the Ontario Cutting Horse Association (OCHA) was incorporated in 1973.

Lisa Minshall is an Erin girl who first started riding in the English discipline and competed in the pony races at the Erin Fair. Lisa caught the cutting horse 'bug', and has never looked back. Lisa says that what holds her interest is that you can have a good horse, you can have your name selected for the best run position, you can have co-operative cattle, but they all have to line up—and that is just the luck of the day. That is also what keeps it interesting; that mental component of thinking like a horse, and continually trying to figure out what the cattle might do.

Lisa and Shaun met through the sport, and both were active in the EBHO (Erin, Ballinafad, Hillsburgh, Ospringe), a local horse club that hosted shows out of the Erin Fairgrounds. The Minshalls continue to host cutting competitions and welcome the public to these events at their farm.

Lisa and Shaun have three children. Lauren, their 28-year-old daughter is an accomplished rider and a championship winner as well. Lauren won the NCHA (National Cutting Horse Association) Brooks and Dunn Futurity competition when she

Minshall Farms  
heritage photos  
ribbons



Aubrey Minshall at a  
Roping competition  
in Hillsburgh.



Lisa Minshall at a  
cutting competition



Photo: Courtesy of The Rider

was just 15 years old. More recently, Lauren was reserve champion in the Limited Non-Pro Derby at the Summer Spectacular, in the in the 2018 NCHA Super Stakes, on CR Sister Tuff, owned by owned by Lisa and Shaun. Lauren and her partner Gabe Reynolds operate a Cutting Horse training facility in Kentucky, specializing in amateur and non-professional riders, and training young horses.

After the excitement of the shows are over, there is the reality of running a working farm and horse business. This includes horses to care for, staff to manage, and all the logistics that go with it. Lisa has high praise for their staff, especially their manager, Jo-Marie Martin who specializes in birthing the babies and looking after a stable of horses. Rachelle Harrington is another long-time employees who keeps the farm running smoothly. DJ Lawrence is a local student who helps out with

First Drink: Thoroughbred  
mare and foal

everything from stall muck- out to birthing foals and is an active 4H member.

The office and tack room at Minshall Farms is decorated with a wonderful collection of buckles, saddles, trophies, historic photos and heritage ribbons dating back to Aubrey Minshall's day, and Quarterama. As we walked around outside, Lisa pointed out a pregnant mare, who was ready to birth at any time. The prize arrived the next morning: 100 pounds of brown hair and hooves, and a new beginning once more on Minshall Farms.



## Race Horse Definitions

For the non-horse person:

### The Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf

A weight for age Thoroughbred horse race on turf for fillies and mares, three years old and up. It is held annually at a different racetrack in the United States as part of the Breeders' Cup World Championships.

### The Canadian Champion Sprint Horse

A Canadian Thoroughbred horse racing honour that was part of the Sovereign Awards program awarded annually to the top Thoroughbred of either sex competing in sprint races in Canada.

### The Canadian Stakes

A Grade II Thoroughbred horse race, run annually at Woodbine Racetrack in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. It is an event open to fillies and mares, three years of age and older. It is raced on turf over a distance of "about" 1 1/8 miles.