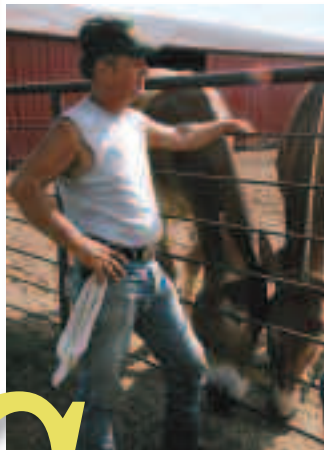




*The Diamond JK Ranch in Kentucky provides a scenic backdrop for the A Touch of Ear hitch.*



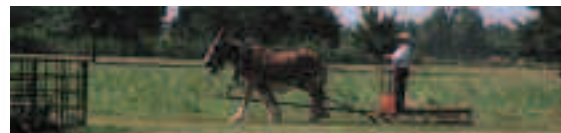
Cyril's J. Mack Bohn is living it up with an adventurous lifestyle and a wandering soul. He is chasing a dream across the country, and as he travels, his fantasy is fulfilled with 10 tall blondes. Ten tall and blonde sorrel mules, that is. A long-time cattle rancher with roots in Kentucky and the Deep South, J. Mack decided to transform a childhood dream of owning a draft mule hitch team into a reality.

"The basis of what I'm doing goes back to great granddad. Some old pictures of him driving 16 mules hooked up to a threshing machine really fueled this idea many, many years ago," J. Mack said.

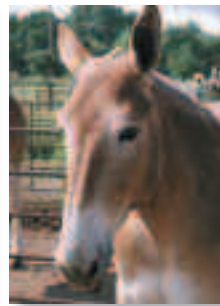
Although horses most often are associated with early transportation and farming, he is determined to keep the distant memory of mules in agriculture alive.

Five years ago, he acquired four blonde sorrel draft mules from a farm in Kentucky, and training began for J. Mack and his young group of blondes. Having never hitched and driven a team, he trained with the mules six months before finally purchasing the final four.

"It was drug out over a period of about a year, and it involved a lot of courage building, skills and acquisitions."



*Two of J. Mack's mules join him at the corral on the ranch at Cyril. The big sorrel mules spend time pulling a skid at Bohn's Cyril ranch to get ready for shows and parades. J. Mack poses with one of his big, beautiful blondes. Some stand nearly 20 heads tall and weigh more than a ton.*



The eight-team hitch, named “A Touch of Ear,” consists of a matched set of blond sorrel mules that pull a custom-made wagon.

A team of this size requires four different pairs that individually perform different tasks while pulling a load.

The wheel team, which is closest to the wagon, feels the most

impact of starting and stopping a load. They are the largest pair of the hitch, and it is their responsibility to keep the load under control.

Weighing almost 2,300 pounds and standing 19 hands tall each, J. Mack’s wheel team is a brother and sister believed to be the largest male and female in the world.

In front of the powerful wheel team stands the swing team made up of two sisters that take their spot behind the point team. Finally, the flashy and agile lead team makes a statement at the front of the hitch. With their heads and



ears up, they lead the action of the hitch.

“They’re what the balance of the hitch fires off of. You want to be able to really drive them and put on a show with them. Everybody works off of the lead team.”

The lead team is the smallest pair, weighing 1,800 pounds and standing 16 hands. The hitch’s wagon weighs almost 3,800 pounds, but J. Mack says the mules don’t even know it’s behind them.

These big, beautiful blondes steal the attention and hearts of frequent crowds as they demonstrate their strength and power. Although 10 mules travel with the hitch, only eight are used at a time. This allows J. Mack to shuffle his team to adapt to different situations an event presents.

“The eight hooked together, when you ask them to get down and serious about pulling, can pull something in the neighborhood of 16 tons.”



*The mural on the trailer J. Mack uses to haul his hitch paints an attractive picture, drawing curious onlookers when it is parked at shows. This A Touch of Ear big blonde waits for the next show. A team as large as A Touch of Ear*

*requires many people to prepare the hitch for shows. J. Mack Bohn and his mule hitch, A Touch of Ear, take a lap in the arena at Equifest. J. Mack is dressed in his cowboy finery and is ready to climb aboard and take the reins.*



*This view from the driver's seat on the wagon provides a different perspective of A Touch of Ear.*

# W

ith a crew of six hired hands, J. Mack and his hitch travel the United States demonstrating their power and performance at western heritage events, parades and horse shows.

“We get to do some of the largest, most prestigious western heritage events and rodeos in the U.S. such as Cody Stampede in Wyoming and Equine Fair in Columbus, Ohio,” J. Mack said.

He and his hitch have participated in the Kentucky Derby Festival twice and even were invited to the 2005 Presidential Inauguration Parade last January.

Mules usually carry a reputation of being stubborn and slow, but J. Mack believes this reputation is a mere myth. He says he is the only stubborn one of the hitch because persistence and relentless hard work resulted in the success of “A Touch of Ear.”

“I am the only one crazy enough to want to do this,” J. Mack said.

The upkeep and maintenance of a team this large is a challenge, but he wouldn't trade it for the world. The team requires day-to-day care of shampooing and grooming, and stalling is a major job for 10 large draft mules.

Two people can polish 10 sets of harness in 2 1/2 to 3 days, and when it is finally time to hook up the team, all eight are harnessed and hitched in just under two hours.

J. Mack makes appearances at around 30 events with the hitch, traveling the countryside 100 days out of the year. Due to the wide range of states that he and the team visit in the western, southern and eastern states, Oklahoma has become a “geographical necessity” and is the primary home for the hitch.

“A Touch of Ear” is financed through a partnership of J. Mack and a friend in a Brangus cattle operation. Known as Diamond JK Ranches, this large operation has branches in Oklahoma and Kentucky.

# N

ow with five years of experience and publicity under their belts, J. Mack and the hitch are seasoned at promoting the history and significance of draft mules and their abilities.

Although mules are similar to horses and members of the equine family, they do possess defining characteristics that set them apart from the horse. J. Mack's draft mules are the result of a cross between a Belgian mare and a mammoth jack.

“Mules have played their role in life for a variety of reasons. Being a hybrid, a combination of a horse and a jack, they're a lot tougher. They are indeed work animals.”

J. Mack and the hitch continue to increase in popularity across the country, but no matter how big this rancher and his team become in the equestrian world, he intends to stay focused on the sole purpose of his team.

“I'm a firm believer that history and heritage can't be allowed to die, and a lot of it has. I think there are a lot of things about this country that deserve to be recognized, memorialized and emphasized, especially mules. In the southern half of the U.S., mules were the backbone of production agriculture.”



*The team heads home at the end of the day. The hitch makes its way into a barn at its second home, the Diamond JK Ranch in Kentucky.*



There is tradition, pride and history wrapped up in the dream of this rancher who holds a special place in his heart for the 10 tall blondes. With the premier draft mule hitch in the country, J. Mack is on a mission to remind today's generation of yesterday's lifestyle.

"The mission of this hitch is to create smiles and memories, and the beauty part of it is ... for everyone we create, I get one."

Smiles and memories are easy to come by with J. Mack and his hitch, and whether it is to remember the past or enjoy the present, these blondes continue to attract a lot of attention.





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Chrysler Financial





Joe Rick Parsons feels guilty when he sneaks in a game of golf nowadays because there's so much to be done to assure the success of one of the state's newest wineries.

He and his wife, Joyce, opened Parsons Vineyard & Winery in early August after years of planning, experimenting and acquiring the skills necessary to become a vintner of quality Oklahoma wines.

"You have to work so much," said Joe Rick. "You need to start at 25, not 55."

The opening of the winery culminated years of hard work and costly inputs. It was a dream-come-true for the Parsons.

"This is Joyce's deal. She was just drinking some wine one evening and she started seeing articles about people making wine. It was a chance deal."

Family land allowed them to live the dream.

**The Parsons Vineyard & Winery product line includes nine varieties of red and white wines. The whites include Seyval Blanc, Vignoles, Chardonnay, Traditional Chardonnay and Pinot Gris. The reds include Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Villard Noir. The wine will sell for \$12.50 per bottle.**



# *is a dream come true*

*Opening culminates years  
of hard work, costly inputs*

*By Mike Nichols*



Parsons  
Vineyard & Winery  
MALBEC

Parsons  
Vineyard & Winery  
TRADITIONAL  
CHARDONNAY

Parsons  
Vineyard & Winery  
CABERNET  
FRANC