



Interview with

Chris and Venesa Carter CriVen Llamas

by Sue Wilde

Welcome to Linking Up! Let's get started with your start into llamas. What was your initial introduction to them? What prompted you to buy your first llamas? How do you encourage people to buy their first llamas?

Hello! We are excited to be interviewed by LamaLink! We started in llamas about 6 years ago. After visiting several farms, we ended up purchasing our first two llamas from the first farm we visited. We bought a gelding and a pet quality female. Of course, when we bought them, we weren't going to ever have more than 4 llamas total. HA!

Where is CriVen Llamas located? How many llamas are in your herd at present? Are there many llama farms or a local club in your area?

We are located in Rogersville, Missouri which is just east of Springfield, Missouri and North of Branson, Missouri. We have about 40 llamas in our herd presently. This includes show animals, breeding females, herd sires, extra boys, and favorite pets.



There are several farms in Missouri with llamas. We didn't have to go far to get started with our new adventure.

You two are very active in the llama community at shows and sales around the country. What aspect of showing do you enjoy most? How many shows would you attend in a year? Do you have a show in your area?

We love showing! We started showing our original gelding and did very well with him. That was all it took to want more llamas and go to more shows. We do about 10 shows a year on average. Locally we have the Ozark Llama Classic in the spring and in the fall we have two ALSA State Fair shows. We have other shows in the surrounding states throughout the year that we attend. Generally, we don't have to travel more than 6 1/2 hours to any of our shows.

Do you have a main focus in your breeding program or do you have a variety of types of llamas? When you are at llama sales what type of llamas are you purchasing for you program?

When we started in llamas, we tended to like a boxier type body

style. With as much as we show, we soon found out that size and stretch are what commands the ring. We have since sold many of our smaller, boxier types and are currently going for more size, stretch, bone and eye appeal. We love many types of llamas and currently have Argentine, Suri, Silky and Traditional llamas in our herd. Our animals have correct conformation, great head and ears, excellent bone and we try for total wool coverage. We love an exotic look to our animals.

From the llamas featured on your webpage, it shows that you co-own some of your llamas with other breeders. What are the advantages to co-owning? Any disadvantages? What would be some useful tips for ensuring that the venture works well?

We aren't as formal with our partnerships as some people may be. We co-own both females and males with different people. Our partnerships are based upon trust, friendship and the good ole idea that good people will do the honorable thing. Last fall, after I purchased GHLC Oliver Twist, Rick and Jane Livingston of Renaissance Farms, approached us about selling 1/2 of him.



A smart move because he later went on to win at the 2008 Celebrity. At the 2007 Celebrity, we began a partnership with Triton Llamas on a few female llamas and most recently, we partnered up with Justin Timm on a fabulous female we bought in Oregon at Kay's sale.

The main advantage is that one can have better quality animals, but the out of pocket for each individual person is more affordable. At this point I haven't seen a disadvantage but I can imagine that if a partnership had an unscrupulous person, it could end in disaster.

You both attended the ILR Lamaribbean Cruise last year. What useful information did you get from the conference that you were able to use on your ranch?

The cruise was so much fun. We met so many wonderful people in the llama community and became good friends with several of them. The seminars were very informative. There was so much good information, I can't pick just one thing that was the best.

As you are booked for the '09 cruise, what would be some things you would like to see in the conference schedule that would be of use to breeders?

This year at the conference, I would like to see a reproduction session. All of us have had to deal with problem females at one time or another. It would be a great help to know what kind of steps can be taken to get these girls pregnant.

What would be some things that would attract more people to come along?

In the last couple of years, there seems to be a lot of internal bickering within the llama community.

My suggestion to all llama lovers is just let it all go and come on the cruise for a thoroughly enjoyable time. The cruise is designed to let people have fun, form bonds, learn about llamas and improving the industry. The ship and conference areas are big enough that there is plenty of space and fun for everyone.

Continued on page 8...



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What would be some suggestions you could make for having more successful llama sales in the industry and promoting llama shows to attract more people? You are both in the age group that the industry would love to grow with, any ideas for attracting and people in your demographic?

Honestly, we believe that until the economy picks up, the llama industry will be at a slow growth. We know people are interested in llamas, but right now with the unsteady economy and high gas prices, people are holding off on extra spending. I believe that after the presidential election and the New Year, we should see some positive changes. Advertising outside of our circle is very important.

The Quarter Horse industry did not get as big as it is by advertising to its current owners. They targeted middle to upper class citizens that didn't realize at the time they wanted a horse, but through positive advertising, ended up buying. We, personally, think ILR should be doing

that very thing. There should be llama ads in all 'Country' style and alternative living magazines.

As for our demographic...I believe it goes back to advertising. Outside advertising needs to be in magazines that people in their 20's, 30's, & 40's read.

When we are at fairs with the llamas, many of the intelligent questions come from younger generation adults. They are intrigued and just need exposure to llamas to get interested in becoming owners.

As a couple who are both very involved with the llamas, what aspects of the responsibilities of your llama business do you share and which one do you work on individually? What strengths do you both contribute to making Criven Llamas a success? I run the farm on a day to day basis,



make the breeding decisions, do all the shearing, and take care of any llama that may be sick. Chris...well, he is the CEO and the muscle behind our farm. He helps me with tasks that are above my capability alone. He loves the llamas and is very active in sales and shows. As with all llama owners, the goal is to have the farm pay for itself one day.

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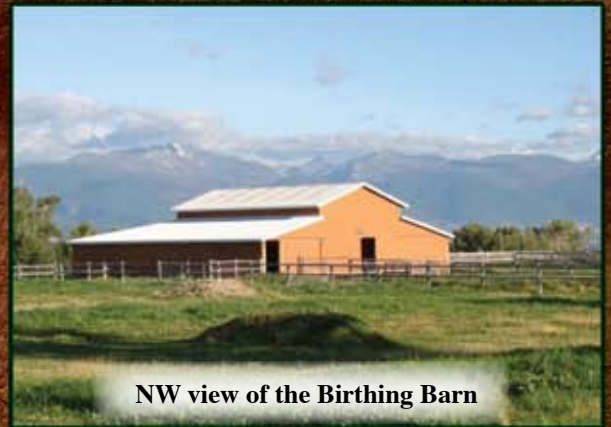


Kitchen Main House

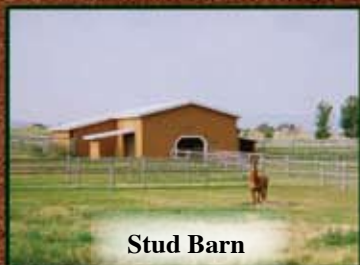


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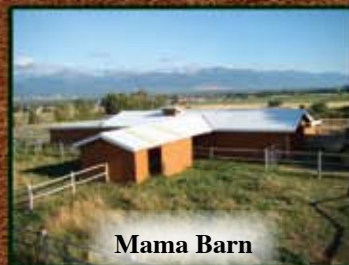
NW view of the Birthing Barn



Stud Barn



Hay/Arena/Equipment



Mama Barn



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Let Me Count The Ways

by Julie Sines



In a day and age where gas and groceries, not to mention hay and grain, are high priced, why would anyone want llamas? Have any of you experienced that question from people who know you lately? I have. It stops and makes you really think about why you do have them and why you put your extra hard-earned cash towards them. When asked the question of why llamas are so important in my life, I say, "Let me count the ways of why I love them....." See if any of these ways ring true in your life too:

Their Eyes – I'm not sure there is any species on the earth that has the eyes and eyelashes of a llama. When you gaze into them it is like looking into their inner souls. After a bad day at work I love nothing better than to catch one of my minis and look her right in the eyes. The gentleness and calmness

in them, just soothes all the aches in my soul and makes my world right.

Their Hums – Standing among my girls during feeding time and listening to them communicating to each other is a real treat. I think because they are so silent most of the time it makes me really stop and listen to

them and take heart. It's just another way my minis speak to my soul.

Their Spit – Nothing can make me laugh harder than my girls or boys fighting with each other. After a bad day at the office it is fun watching my minis fend for themselves and it makes me wish I could behave the same way occasionally to defend myself!

Their Fiber – There is nothing like giving a hug to a walking sweater. I especially enjoy this in the dead of winter when it is so cold out. Nothing makes my heart warmer than a huge hug from one of my heavy-wooled minis.



Their Friendship – Can anything be more special than a majestic creature coming into our space to say hi? Or how about that llama that you bought and it was standoffish and suddenly one day he decided to trust you? Even if

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