

Cajun Pepper 16806

The Research of Marsha Valance, 2015

Cajun Pepper 16806 (Brown Pepper 9736 x Allen's Gillette 011057)
Solid dark chestnut, 15h stallion • **Foaled:** July 7, 1965, Moravia, New York • **Breeder:** Betty Ripley • **Died:** 1989 • Stood in Northern Illinois and Wisconsin • A local in-hand, park harness and park saddle champion, he left 131 registered Morgan progeny, including Grand National in-hand, park harness, park saddle, and roadster top ten winners, and many combined driving competitors • **Linebred to:** Ethan Allen 50 (25 crosses), and a double great-grandson of Cornwallis, Cajun Pepper was 11/16 old government, one-quarter Lippitt, and 1/16 old Vermont • **Eight Generation Coefficient of Inbreeding:** 6.0585 percent.



(Photo © Rob Heess)

Cajun Pepper spent his first three years in upstate New York, the property of Wallace and Eve Rodee, who had owned his sire, and purchased him as a suckling along with his dam as they “thought he might be good.” After Eve Rodee’s Easter 1969 death, the last son of Brown Pepper was sold to Darold and Thalia Rinedollar of Rockton, Illinois, who co-owned him with Doug and Marti Wernick until the stallion’s 1989 death. In his first full year in the Midwest, Thalia and Doug showed Cajun Pepper, garnering blues at many shows in halter, park saddle, park harness, and carriage classes. He was the Indiana State Fair Grand Champion Stallion in 1970, and took a reserve to Fleetwing’s Prophet, the Morgan Jubilee Park Harness Champion. Cajun was not shown for the next two seasons. In 1973, after qualifying for the first Grand National (in Detroit), he suffered from a severe puncture in his right eye, which left the eye discolored. After some light showing in 1974 (again wearing the tricolor ribbon for Senior and Grand Champion Stallion at the Missouri Valley All-Morgan Show), Thalia and Doug decided it was best to retire him and concentrate on breeding.

Annie Randall, of Devilwood Morgans, reminisced about Cajun Pepper: “I first saw Cajun Pepper in the fall of 1979 when I was on the hunt for my first Morgan. I was taken by the consistency of his get: mostly liver chestnuts with liberal white markings, arched necks, and superb trots. They were friendly too! I visited farms in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin looking for a Pepper daughter that I could afford and ended up buying Peppernic Holly Hawk (Cinnabar Heatherwald x Estee’s Lass), a Cajun Pepper granddaughter. Later I bred Bridlesweet Danseuse (Tillicum Roland Ash x Bridlesweet Dimity) to Cajun Pepper twice. She produced two liver chestnuts, Devilwood Esprit (filly) in 1985 and Devilwood Encore (colt) in 1986. When I dropped her off at Bellmara Stables in South Beloit, Illinois, to be bred, Doug Wernick was bareback atop Cajun Pepper bringing in the cattle. The big bold park stallion was also the family pet and reliable go-to horse.”

Marti Wernick, who, with her husband Doug, co-owned

Cajun Pepper with the Rinedollars, recalls the stallion, “was really nice to work with and had a wonderful disposition. He had a lot of natural motion, and went level in plates.” Their 14-year-old daughter Denise exhibited the powerful stallion under saddle at the Midwest Horse Fair, demonstrating his poise, balance, fluid motion, and tractability.

In addition to his athletic prowess, Cajun Pepper was known for his kind, affectionate temperament. In an article in the Autumn 1988 *Classic Morgan Admirers*, Christine Fiege told of three small girls who, growing cold watching an equine exhibition, entered Cajun Pepper’s stall and fell sound asleep atop him, cuddled up for warmth. Describing an appearance at the Midwest Horse Fair, she observed, “the first impression he gave me was of wonderful breed type... When he was led out and posed, I was struck by his elegant bearing and presence, his sloping shoulder, great heart girth, good bone, short back, and powerful rear end. Later... in the arena... his style, balanced way of going, and presence were that of a born show horse.”

Regarding Cajun Pepper offspring, Christine Fiege wrote “they have wonderful temperaments, breed type, airy trots, intelligence, athletic ability, and are upheaded and proud.” In Wisconsin, Cajun Pepper played a major part in the Hi-Mist and Mt. Hope breeding programs. Probably his best-known sons were Brass and DW Murphy’s Law (both out of Hi-Mist Sunbeam). His son Mt. Hope Sharp Pepper, age 31, still stands today at Marti Wernick’s. Cajun Pepper is a good example of a mid-20th-century Morgan who made his impact regionally, before semen transport. In an article run in the December 1988 issue of *The Morgan Horse*, “American Morgan Horse Register Volume XX, Facts and Figures on Sires” compiled by the American Morgan Horse Association Registry Department, Cajun Pepper ranked 15th in its list of top producing sires, with a total of 130 offspring (at that date). “Almost all of his foals had talent and were much loved by their owners. Unfortunately a lot of them were not bred on, and his bloodline is thinning out.” (Marti Wernick, in a 2013 letter). ■