

Talk about
your **ultimate**
retail niche.

In the portion of England where Robin Hood and his men once rode, you can find a growing number of riders who look uncannily like American cowboys.

While it's not exactly "home on the range" as we think about it and no one is pushing any doggies, the interest in Western riding in the United Kingdom is blossoming.

Positioned at the forefront of the trend are retailers Jim and Lesley Lyner of Hooves Equestrian, one of only a handful of brick-and-mortar stores that stock Western products in the country.

Their operation in Birkenshaw, West Yorkshire, also includes a mobile unit, which takes a taste of all things

Western to shows far and wide.

From a handful of saddles and blankets five years ago, the Lyners have built their business into a juggernaut of Western products and in the process have become ambassadors of the Western lifestyle in the United Kingdom.

In the Beginning

Hooves Equestrian opened as a pet store with a scant number of equine products in 1996. It was to be Lesley's project, since she was about to be downsized out of a job she'd held for some time. Shortly after the lease on the 600-square-foot store in the heart of Birkenshaw

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Lesley and Jim Lyner discovered the ultimate niche in Western products. Over the years, Hooves Equestrian has become the leading purveyor of saddles, bridles, apparel and other necessities for would-be cowboys in the United Kingdom.