

# Equicare and Sakkara

After a long wait, we have in Cairo, the first private fully-equipped equestrian centre operated by a highly professional management company. This newly developed equestrian centre in Sakkara Country Club (C.C.), managed by Equicare company, will provide a lot of new, professional services including training, moon light rides, horse-boarding, children training programs and events organization.

## EQUICARE

Equicare Company was established in 1993, by Engineer Khaled Assem, member of the national show jumping team, it started as a sole agent of Plusvital Ireland in Egypt dealing in horse feed supplements. Today, and after ten years, they are specialized in all horse care products. Equicare is very familiar with the Egyptian market. They are also co-owners in the equestrian centre at Sofitel Sharm El-Sheikh.

Moreover, Equicare organized several International shows in Egypt. These shows include: the first International Student Riders show jumping competition held at the Alexandria Sporting Club, December 93, First Egyptian International show jumping competition held in Sofitel Sharm El-Sheikh, April 97, and the first Sakkara International show jumping competition held in Sakkara C.C, November 97.

## SAKKARA C.C

Sakkara C.C was founded at the beginning of the 80s by the parents of the existing owners Ibrahim and Murad Samy. Their late father, Mr. Sherif Samy, was the first to invent the Arabian horse's festival. He first started with only twenty rooms and a small stable; now it contains a fully equipped equestrian centre, four tennis courts, twenty rooms, changing rooms, two football courts, one volley court, swimming pool, and an English style bar with a fire place.

Five years ago, the equestrian centre clientele were only Arabian horse's owners riding just for the pleasure, and people who boarded their horses in the stable. Mr. Ibrahim Samy, a talented rider and a show jumper, used to give free of charge lessons to some of the members on friendly basis, and every Saturday they would organize a warm-up competitions for the members. However, all the equestrian services stopped when Mr. Ibrahim traveled to the States to be trained as a professional rider.

The idea of the merger between these two pioneers started when Mr. Ibrahim traveled and the equestrian centre was neglected for a period of four years, at the same time,

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Equicare was doing a lot of research regarding the equestrian centers and their management in Egypt. They did several feasibility studies for different institutions like Dreamland, Mirage city, Sunset Valley, Smash tennis club, and others.

Mr. Murad Samy, at that time, decided to invite a company to manage Sakkara's equestrian centre and talked to Mr. Khaled Assem about it. "It was a very interesting chance to put our efforts to the test and see everything we have worked for in our research materialize as we believe it to be", said Mr. Khaled. Moreover, while he and Mr. Murad were done with the planning, exploring the different improvements that can be done through utilizing the greater potential of the place, and signing all the contracts, Mr. Ibrahim came back to Egypt. "Ibrahim's return was a good asset for both parties. Ibrahim is very talented socially, and in particular he has very good contacts with Sakkara's clients, with whom he had been working for a long time, so he will be of great help in marketing for the equestrian centre, also he is a very good rider and definitely

will be of great value in the equestrian centre especially after his experience in the U.S", Mr. Khaled stated. What makes this merger even more perfect is the old friendship between Khaled, Ibrahim, and Murad. They are friends ever since childhood, when they were riding together in Ferousia club, they went to the same university, and are now riding for the same team. This common background, and great expertise, united their goals and plans to create one of the best equestrian centers in Egypt. "Murad is a very sharp businessman, I have to give him this credit, he realized instantly that all my needs would put Sakkara as a leader in the horse environment, he immediately agreed to our plans in re-innovating

the facility, I definitely enjoy working with intelligent skilled partners and life time friends" stated Mr. Khaled.

The first, and most important, improvement made by Equicare in Sakkara is changing the footing in one of the riding areas to sand rather than grass, including a whole lighting facility for holding events in the evening. Equicare provided a German professional trainer and stable supervisor, Marion, to be available all the time in the place. Furthermore, Mr. Ibrahim and Mr. Khaled will start giving serious training lessons to professional show jumpers, plus the daily riding lessons given by Marion to different level of riders. They are also planning to organize national and international championships in the place. However, "the old members are still given the choice of keeping and riding their Arabian horses in



Sakkara Country Club (C.C).



Rooms for overnights or day use overlooking the gardens.

# A merger made in Heaven

the club, and we will still help in organizing the Arabian horse festival", Mr. Ibrahim stated.

In terms of competition, the centre is considered unique because of its location; "we own a big space, new sand riding track, we are increasing the number of stables available, plus the full scale magnificent desert area touching the outskirt of the place". Furthermore, concerning events organization, Sakkara Equestrian centre is considered more 'flexible', since all other institutions which organize similar events fall under certain rigid governmental specs. This makes the event more enjoyable for professionals, beginners, and more horse lovers. However, Mr. Ibrahim believes that "we are not competing with others, rather we will always try to bring new ideas, work as hard as we can and accept all different ideas from different people".

This merger will result in quiet a more complete picture in the equestrian centre. "when me and my brother started horse back riding, khaled Assem was one of the national champions, and now we are competing in one team, we all speak the same language, like the same sport, and that help this merger a lot as we understand each other perfectly, and work with each other well", commented Mr. Ibrahim. They all hope that this merger will strengthen the facilities in the centre, which will eventually help in gaining more publicity for the sport and for Sakkara C.C, encouraging people to invest in their kids so as to create a more sound generation of riders.

The new Sakkara equestrian centre aims at creating well-trained and equipped horse back riding teams. For the advanced professional riders as well as the novices, the centre will provide clinics from abroad to improve the level of the riders. And for the younger generations, they have a lot of elaborate plans, which starts with this completely new idea in Egypt. "Pony Club Camp"

## Pony Club Camp

Starting this summer, Equicare and Sakkara are organizing a two-week 'Pony Club Camp' for children starting from the age of five to the age of twelve. In these camps, Children will learn how to ride ponies, Feed and groom them, socialize, meet new friends, and enjoy their time. This camp will be under the supervision of the professional German trainer, Marion, who is specialized in training kids. These camps would help the children in developing a lot of skills and traits like working with a special and highly sensitive animal like the horse, work in teams, be independent, and reliable. Furthermore, one of the newest ideas that will be applied in the camp is 'Voltage', gymnastics on the horse. This kind of physical training helps the children in learning to keep their balance over the horse and feel its rhythm better ■



Sakkara C.C's Pool.



Mr. Ibrahim Samy and his horse "M"



Engineer Khaled Assem.



The new sand footing in the riding area.

*Article based on an interview with Mr. Ibrahim Samy and Mr. Khaled Assem.*