

# MOHAMED EL GAYAR BACK IN THE SADDLE

By Sandra Adams



*Riding Mashallah during Al Wafaa Championship, Syria 2005*

THOSE PROFESSIONAL SHOW JUMPERS TAKING UP THE REINS AFTER INJURIES CERTAINLY MAY HAVE SEVERAL CONCERNS; CAN I STILL RIDE AT MY LEVEL, CAN I DO THE THINGS I DID BEFORE, AND CAN I ACHIEVE RESULTS? THE POLICE SPORTS UNION'S MOHAMED EL GAYAR AND HIS HORSES ACHIEVED AND PERFORMED BIGGER THAN ANY CONCERN AFTER A ONE YEAR ABSENCE FROM THE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL SHOW JUMPING SCENE DUE TO SERIOUS INJURIES.

El Gayar who's been around horses for 22 years, riding his mare Exception Z came in fifth place in the 2010 A2 Class of the Egyptian League and third at the National Egyptian Show Jumping Cup of the same class; the first season for the mare in this class however a good result by her partner given his absence from the ring. "I am back in the saddle and one of my main objectives is to participate fully at the upcoming Arab League season", El Gayar adamantly states. "Following my injury, I've been practicing with four very good horses who I rode at the National Championships. I worked very hard with Exception Z trying to improve upon her technique, and eventually I think the improvement worked well. Katia, a young mare owned by my friend Khaled Kamel, had only E Class shows on her resume, but we gradually rode well onto the C Class. Another mare I rode is Nour El-Ein; two years ago we came in second at the C Class. You can see I love mares very much as they give all their heart when jumping. Kyrll, a nine year old German chestnut gelding bought by the Police Club in February 2010 and only rode at the A2 Class in March, is the fourth horse. I think he has a very promising future and I look forward to riding him in the A1 Class."

He is training, coaching, competing and looking forward to develop further as a rider. "The Police Club is providing me with very good horses and training. My view of the sport is that it's a passion; my father was the head of the Egyptian Police Cavalry and so riding is a natural exercise. It's a career for me as well since I train young riders. I think what helped me get back to riding well again is understanding that to be successful, one needs to reach a certain level of maturity. That can be done after establishing a good partnership with horses; knowing the way they feel and the way they think - something I've been trying to do. Given my past years as a rider, I believe I've just started walking on a path that I found to have many different turns. Except...I think they will all be connected soon".

El Gayar seems to have had much insight



▲ Riding Honeymoon during CSI\*\*\* Tripoli, Syria 2007

from those involved in the sport and one in specific always mentioned by many Egyptian riders. "Olympic rider Gen. Gamal Harres, a mentor for many Egyptian riders and one who has trained me in 1992 and 1993, told us many things about the sport. In these years, I came in second and first place in the Junior Class. It's 2010 and only now do I truly understand what he used to explain. I wish those years of training could come back now." El Gayar continues, "I started to read a lot and my love for the horse has helped me plenty. What's more is that we are a bit far from the real sport, i.e. in the West; we do have excellent horses and riders, but why do our horses look different when ridden by their riders? I needed to find out what is it that could make us reach top levels. Furthermore, the Egyptian Equestrian Federation has assisted us by providing FEI coaching and training seminars which I think has added a

different dimension to what we know. I sense that when I took that course, I was on a track that would help me become a better rider who has a better understanding for the sport. We just finished level two from the course, and seriously, it paid off during riding and training. One of the riders that I train came in first place at the C Class of the Egyptian Cup. To achieve such a good result shows that the seminars were beneficial."

El Gayar convincingly added that excellent mental fitness comes first from excellent physical fitness. He thanks his physical trainer Mohamed Fakhry, a Pentathlon champion for helping him through his injuries. He also thanks his loving wife's constant support. Determined to make a good name for himself result-wise, he concluded, "I have vision when it comes to horses and training and I would like to develop that." 