



# Q & A

with an  
**Entrepreneur**

By Khaled Assem

An entrepreneur recently interviewed by Horse Times magazine, Nayla Hayek put in style whilst showing a charming sense of innovation, passion and creativity. Those are the qualities that the daughter of the Swatch Group's founder Nicolas G. Hayek, has brought to the world's number one watchmaker.

**M**rs. Hayek has been a member of the Swatch Group's board of directors since 1998. She is also an international Arabian horse judge with top-level contacts who contribute to the business and promotional activities of the Swatch Group. With a diploma from Columbia University, USA for Artificial Insemination in Horses, she owns the only private Insemination Station for horses recognised by the European Community in Switzerland, and a breeding farm with more than 50 breeding horses. She is also a show jumper at the national and international levels as well as a western rider at the international level.

**How did your passion for horses start?**

It all happened when I was 5 years old



**I am very much looking forward to invest again more of my time in breeding. Arabian horses have been an important part of my life and hopefully I will continue pursuing this passion**



**Did you pursue that passion of breeding and judging Arabian Horses further?**

Oh of course I did. I was the president of the Swiss Arab Horse Society for a very long time and President of the show commission of the ECAHO, but I retired recently from both societies, and so I have lots of mileage to give to Arabian horses now. I am very much looking forward to invest again more of my time in breeding. Arabian horses have been an important part of my life and hopefully I will continue pursuing this passion.

**Egypt has had a lot of controversy in regards to importing horses that were from Egyptian Arabian origin back into the country, what do you think given that you are a breeder yourself?**

It's absolutely controversial and a very touchy issue, however, I personally think that some breeders have brought in old blood lines that were exported, and I don't think it's such a bad step. I remember when Madame Widgan El-Barbari imported her first Spanish stallion; it caused such a rattle and she was not allowed to participate in shows

**I understand that you shall be sponsoring some equestrian events in the upcoming Olympic Games?**



No we are not sponsoring the Olympic Games but we have been their Timekeeper for a long time. We are also the Timekeeper for the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games. Omega is doing Endurance in the Middle East. Longines is the sponsor and Timekeeper in show jumping for the Arab League in Egypt. Blancpain, which has been very involved in sponsoring Arabian horse shows for the last years, is sponsoring events like the World Championships for Arabian Horses in Paris as well as events in Qatar and Sharjah. The newest sponsorship and partnership is in Dubai though where the show is very big, popular, and professionally organised.

**HT**

when I started taking riding lessons. The real passion started when I first rode a Welsh pony that also had some Arabian blood which was called Darling. I still remember him until today! Darling was going to be sold and I asked my father to buy him; he told me I had to work to be able to buy him myself and so I worked hard until I finally bought him.

**How did the idea of becoming an international Arabian horse breeder and judge come around?**

I love breeding and judging horses. Egypt in specific is a country that I have a deep love for because it is where I first bought my Arabian breeding stock. I met Dr. Marsafi there who encouraged me and helped me a lot with information about the Egyptian Arabians and the old lines.