

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL WITH COURSE DESIGNER AHMED TALAAT

By Khaled Assem

A YOUNG GENTLEMAN LIVING HIS LIFE BETWEEN EGYPT AND LONDON, AN ENGINEER, A COURSE DESIGNER WITH LOVE AND PASSION FOR HORSES SHARES BITS AND PIECES OF HIS LIFE, PASSION, CAREER, ASPIRATIONS AND DREAMS WITH HORSE TIMES.

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A Course Designer on the Go

My work as a course designer opens the world for me to travel and explore. Just like a traveller, I spend every weekend in a different city, with different people from various cultures. Also, when I started working as an architect, I had to travel continuously between Egypt and London, so I am always on the go. My professional life definitely affects my personal life as I have no other option except long distance relationships or whatever you want to call it. I am still searching for the Mrs; I am still young and the night is still young for me.

Professional life

What are you doing at the moment in terms of core business? I know that you have quite a big investment in terms of effort and achievement in the equestrian field, but I also know you are an engineer so tell us a little bit about both sides.

I work as an architect and I do a lot of work in Egypt, London and different other countries. As for my equestrian-related work, it has been part of my life since I was 17 years old, and then I decided to follow the career path of an architect to make a good living.

Once, the course designer Arno Gego asked me why I was studying engineering. I answered right away saying that it makes a person stronger. Engineering, in one way or another, improves your talent and architecture makes you creative in a way that makes you see shapes and forms with your own eyes. That was only my point of view and Arno Gego shared with me his philosophy on being an engineer. His words were as follows: It will make you stronger in decision making as the nature of the business environment comes with challenges and paths to follow. He continued saying your values have to be your compass. For example, if you are only doing business, you will always say yes to requests and offers, but it will actually make you a stronger person to say no if something goes against your beliefs. This way you will improve because you will be the way you want to be, not the way anyone else wants you to be.

How do you manage being a course designer and an engineer simultaneously? Also, could you tell us a little bit about your qualifications now as a course designer?

I am actually never restricted to one place only; my work takes me to Egypt, London among other countries. My business as an architect is basically a full-time job. It takes a lot of my time that I used to dedicate for shows. For example, out of 52 weekends a year, I used to do at least 30, now I participate in only three to four international shows a year.

Did that affect your continuous intake of experience?

Definitely! However, I am always studying in one way or another. I always surf the internet and see what other international course designers do, I watch a lot of shows and I analyse them from my dimension, so I am always up-to-date as to what is happening. It is only when I stop following, I feel bad as I wish I have been part of a great event that I could leave an impact on. On other hand, I have my satisfaction from the other business that helped me a lot to be who I am now. I am still thanking God for doing both and if time were to go back I think I would have made the same choices.

Dreams and Aspirations

For the near future, I want to keep learning and improving in what I am doing. If you ask me about my dreams, it actually has nothing to do with architecture. I have always dreamt to be the first Arab course designer in the World Equestrian Games or the Olympics.

I think I was the only Arab to be the main course designer in a World Cup qualifier. I might have been the second; I am not sure. I am one of the few whose international course designing banners are level three which is the highest level you can apply for.

Passions

I have a new passion for tattoos. It is like an addiction; when you get

the first one, you cannot stop. I got four tattoos in seven months. For me, getting a tattoo is not about a good design, it is about something you already carry in your heart and soul and believe in at the back of your mind. I can answer all questions about why I got this tattoo in particular, but it will never tell the full story. If it was only about the design, I will get bored of it in couple of months.

One of my dearest passions is cooking. I try to explore and try new recipes and watch different cooking shows. One of the role models in my life is chef Gordon Ramsay.

Also, football is one of my passions. I love Chelsea in particular and Zamalek.

And it goes without saying, horses of course.

How travelling added its own touch

Living in London has definitely changed something in me. It is a city where everything is available. If you want to go to museums and art galleries, you will find it. If you want to go clubbing, you will find variety of nice bars and lounges and if you want to have a fine diner, it offers the best quality. Whatever you want, you have the high end of it.

Your eyes get used to the nice things, just like riding. If you go to a show for five weeks and you see Steve Garda riding a seven year old, and then he is riding his Olympic horse in the main arena and then a stopper horse in the open arena. When you see this every day for five weeks, your standards become higher by default.

And horses...

I am grateful I had horses as part of my life. My love for horses stopped me from doing a lot of bad things my friends went through at a younger age. I learned a lot from my boss and role model Dr. Tarek Nadeem. I met his sons, who are my best friends, through sharing a love for horse. When I look back at everything, horses have been involved in every part of my life. I could not be more grateful knowing I am in the right place. 🐾