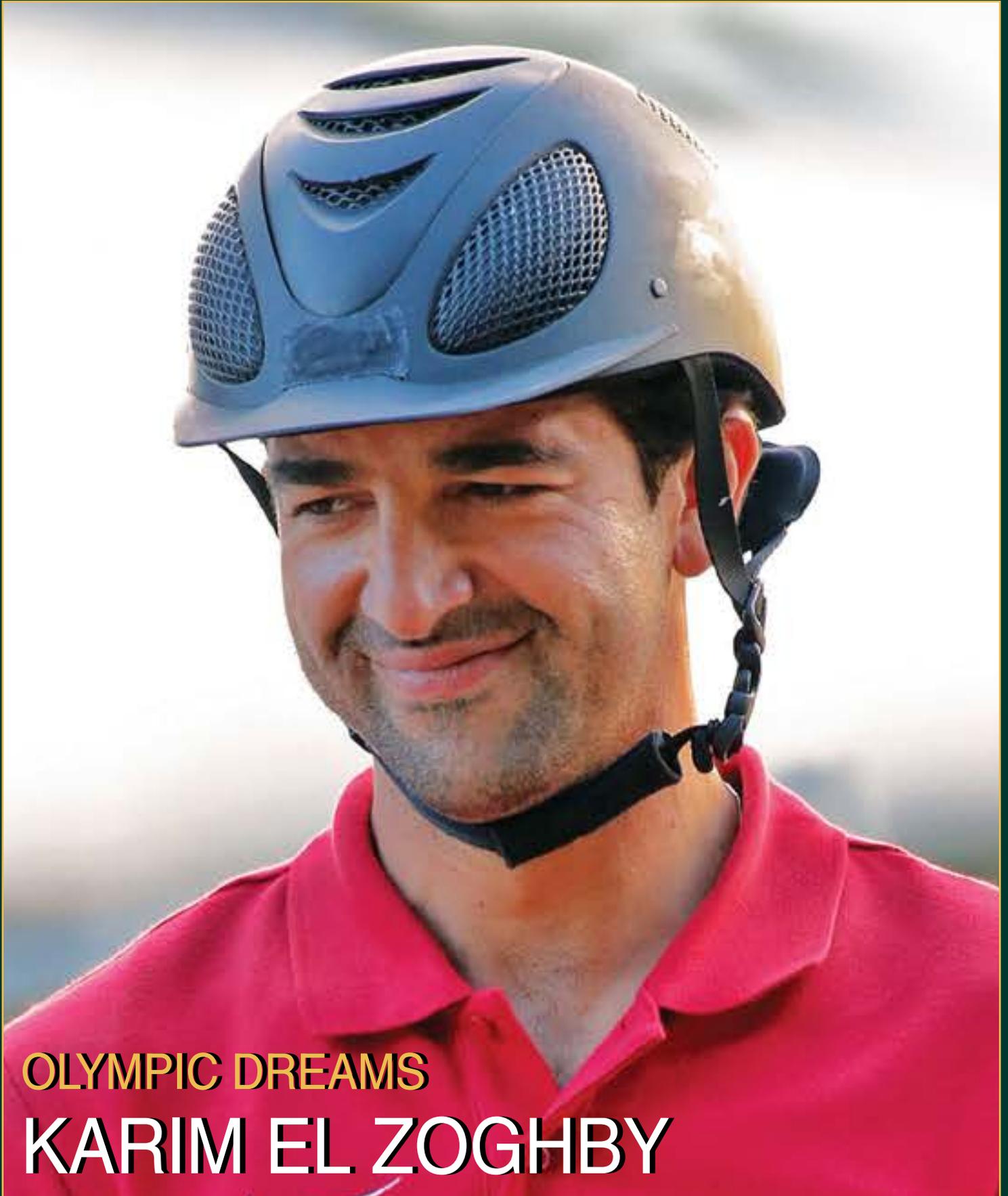


# H RSE TIMES

no. 50

SUMMER 2016

THE LEADING EQUESTRIAN MAGAZINE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



OLYMPIC DREAMS

KARIM EL ZOGHBY

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# VIEW POINT

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Readers,

The 2016 Summer Olympic Games are fast approaching and the world is anticipating this spectacular show of athleticism as never before. We at HorseTimes are particularly excited; we will be there in Rio to record and report the equestrian events on social, print and video media minute-by-minute as they happen. We are excited as well to be present and to proudly support our native son, Egyptian show jumper Karim El Zoghby, and other Egyptian Olympic hopefuls.

Why is an Olympic medal so special? There are so many other Championships and Grand Prix's, yet

an Olympic medal has a value that is unmatched. The Olympic medal represents not just an athlete but a whole nation. Perhaps this profound feeling of responsibility is what keeps the Olympic Games in a league of its own and an Olympic medal is truly the bond between an athlete and his people.

And it is with this excitement that we present our special Rio 2016 issue of HorseTimes highlighting Olympic equestrian history, riders, organisation, enthusiasm, hopes and young dreams. Read the short history of the equestrian sport in the Olympic Games filled with fun facts and the wishful musings about a return of polo to the Olympic roster. Meet our main feature star, the Olympic hopeful Karim El Zoghby and his mare Amelia on their way to the Games and their love story that is filled with sweet dreams. A behind-the-scenes look at the Egyptian Olympic Committee and its President Eng. Hesham Hatab trying to make ends meet and raise the bar when it comes to performance, results and medals. Visit the local scene with

the talented Aly Sabbour in our 60 Seconds article and young rider Amina Ismail Shaker, both with a common goal -- the Olympics.

Beyond Mt. Olympus this issue also brings you the French connection and a bond with UNIC, French trainer Minostrande Bruneau, and the prestigious Platinum Club. A polo day-out at Abu Sir Farm to honour an Egyptian polo legend Salah Foda. A Chinese 'Leap Forward' in equine business, marketing, and know-how in our recurring legal commentary. And this issue's training tips and dressage will bring you back to the very basics: learning to walk and learning the pillars of performance. After your studies, enjoy the romance of the Arab horse in Orientalist art by our expert Judith Wick-Wenning and the movingly beautiful equine paintings of James Gillick, followed by a walk down Memory Lane with Omar Mamdouh Ismail and his life with horses.

Read and enjoy. See you Rio!

Sincerely,

**Khaled Assem**

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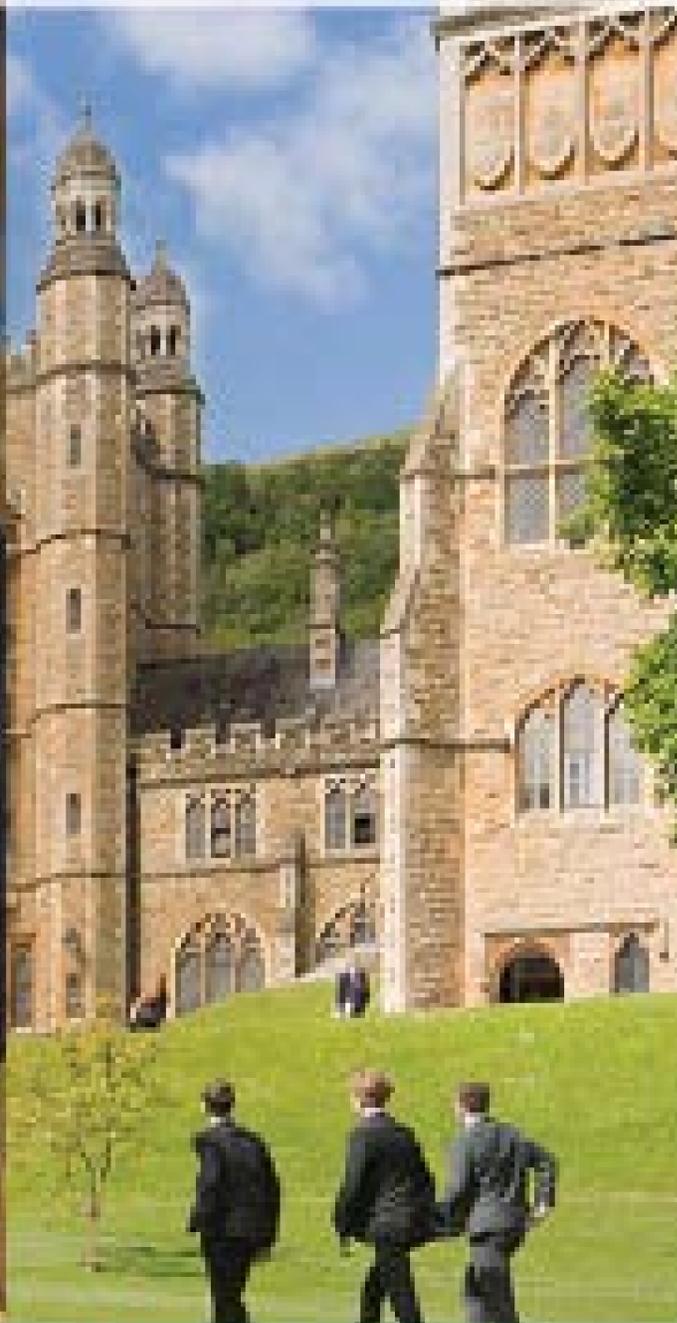
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AN OLYMPIC PERSPECTIVE  
EQUESTRIAN FACTS  
AND UPDATES

By Sallie Pisch



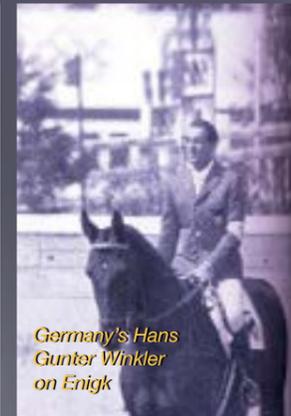
## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EQUESTRIAN EVENTS IN THE OLYMPICS

EQUESTRIAN EVENTS HAVE BEEN PART OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES SINCE JUMPING WAS FEATURED IN THE PARIS GAMES IN 1900; HOWEVER, THERE WERE NO EQUESTRIAN EVENTS IN THE FOLLOWING TWO GAMES. IT WASN'T UNTIL 1912, IN STOCKHOLM, THAT EQUESTRIAN EVENTS BECAME REGULAR AT THE GAMES, AND THE SIX EVENTS FEATURED NOW – INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM EVENTING, JUMPING, AND DRESSAGE – HAVE BEEN REGULAR SINCE 1964.

THE EQUESTRIAN EVENTS AT THE OLYMPICS IN SOME WAYS HARKEN BACK TO THE ORIGINAL OLYMPIC GAMES IN ANCIENT GREECE, WHERE THE EVENTS WERE BASED ON MILITARY PREPAREDNESS. EACH OF THE EQUESTRIAN EVENTS NOW PART OF THE MODERN OLYMPICS ALSO HAVE THEIR BASE IN MILITARY TRAINING: DRESSAGE WAS INVENTED IN ANCIENT GREECE TO DEVELOP COORDINATION BETWEEN HORSE AND RIDER, NECESSARY IN BATTLE, AND EVENTING WAS DEVELOPED TO TEST THE PREPAREDNESS OF CAVALRY HORSES AND TO PROVIDE A MEANS OF COMPARING THE TRAINING METHODS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. INDEED, UNTIL 1951 ONLY MILITARY PERSONNEL COULD TAKE PART IN EQUESTRIAN EVENTS. PER A 1951 DECISION BY THE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE, CIVILIANS AND WOMEN WERE FIRST ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN EQUESTRIAN EVENTS IN THE 1952 GAMES IN HELSINKI.

THE EQUESTRIAN EVENTS AS WE KNOW THEM NOW HAVE REMAINED MORE OR LESS THE SAME SINCE 1964.





Germany's Hans Gunter Winkler on Enigk



Germany's Isabell Werth on Satchmo

### Riders of note

Reiner Klimke (1936-1999) of West Germany is the most decorated dressage rider in Olympic history, with six gold medals. He also won two bronze, making him one of only three riders to have won at least eight medals. He participated in six Olympic Games and came home with medals from five of them: '64, '68, '76, '84, and '88.

Anky Van Grunsven of the Netherlands has earned the most medals of any Olympic rider: she holds 3 gold, 5 silver, and 1 bronze for a total of nine medals. What's more, at the Beijing 2008 games she became the first rider to win three consecutive Olympic

titles in individual Dressage.

Hans Gunter Winkler has the finest record of any German Show Jumper, and holds a number of records in the Equestrian Olympic Games: he is the only Jumper to earn five gold medals, has earned more medals than any other Show Jumper with 7 total, and is the only rider in any discipline to earn medals at six different Olympic Games.

Lis Hartel of Denmark was the first woman to win an Olympic Equestrian medal, at the 1952 Helsinki games – the first in which women were allowed to participate. What is more remarkable, though, is the story of how she got there: after suffering

a polio attack in 1944, at the age of 23, she began a gruelling programme to regain the use of her limbs. When she took home the silver medal in Helsinki in individual Dressage eight years later, she was still paralysed below the knees and walked with a crutch. Gold medallist Henri Saint Cyr of Sweden helped her onto the medal stand, perhaps one of the most touching scenes at the games.

### The most remarkable horse

Halla, ridden by German Hans Gunter Winkler, is the only horse to win three gold medals. Halla stood at 16.2 hands. She was

sired by Oberst, a Standard bred, out of a French trotter mare of unknown parentage named Helene. She and Winkler won 125 competitions together, and she lived to the ripe old age of 34.

### Interesting facts

Equestrian is the only Olympic sport in which men and women compete against each other on a level playing field.

Only three riders have earned 8 or more medals: Anky van Grunsven, Netherlands (3 gold, 5 silver), Isabel Werth, Germany (5 gold, 3 silver), Reiner Klimke, Germany (6 gold, 2 bronze).

The discipline of Jumping was developed after an English decree saw fences put up around farmland, and for the first time foxhunters needed horses that could jump.

At the Rome 1960 games, Italian brothers Raimondo and Piero D'Inzeo won the gold and silver medals in jumping respectively, delighting the home crowd.

The US and Canada are the only non-European countries to win Dressage medals. The US has taken home one silver and seven bronze, Canada one bronze. Germany holds the most Dressage medals, with 19 gold, 11 silver, and 9 bronze.

Canadian Show Jumper Ian Millar made a record-breaking 10th Olympic appearance in London 2012. He competed in the equestrian competition at every Olympics from 1972 to 2012 except for the 1980 Moscow Games that Canada boycotted.

The horse made its first appearance at the Ancient Olympic Games in Greece in 680 B.C., when chariot racing was introduced. 🏇

Source of all photos: *The FEI's 'Equestrian Sport at the Olympic Games 1912 to 2008' Book by Max E. Ammann*



OLYMPIC DREAMS

# KARIM EL ZOGHBY

By Aya Amr

WHY IS THE OLYMPIC MEDAL SO SPECIAL? THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER CHAMPIONSHIPS AND GRAND PRIX'S, YET AN OLYMPIC MEDAL HAS A VALUE THAT IS UNMATCHED. THE OLYMPIC MEDAL REPRESENTS NOT JUST AN ATHLETE BUT A WHOLE NATION. PERHAPS THIS PROFOUND FEELING OF RESPONSIBILITY IS WHAT KEEPS THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN AND AN OLYMPIC MEDAL IS TRULY THE BOND BETWEEN AN ATHLETE AND HIS PEOPLE.

EL ZOGHBY CAME UP THROUGH THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS. BUT THE COINCIDENCE OF THE PROXIMITY OF HIS CHILDHOOD HOME IN EGYPT TO THE RIDING CLUB PUT THE YOUNG EL ZOGHBY ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH WHAT WAS TO BECOME HIS DESTINY, A LIFE LONG PASSION FOR HORSES AND SHOW JUMPING.

PARTICIPATING IN HIGH-LEVEL COMPETITIVE JUMPING SINCE 2002, WINNING MANY MEDALS, AWARDS AND FANS ALONG THE WAY, WITH TWO OLYMPICS BEHIND HIM, EL ZOGHBY NOW HAS HIS SIGHTS ON RIO. EL ZOGHBY TOOK SOME TIME TO TALK TO HORSE TIMES AND WE COULD SENSE IN HIS TONE AND MANNER HIS SINGULAR DETERMINATION TO MEET OLYMPIC EXPECTATIONS, FOR HIMSELF, FOR HIS FAMILY AND FOR EGYPT.

HERE ARE HIS THOUGHTS ON HIS GOALS, HIS READINESS FOR THE OLYMPICS, AND HIS SPECIAL MARE, AMELIA.

*Karim El Zoghby and Amelia at the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games 2014 in Normandy.*

*"I feel that I am the ambassador for the sport and for my country. I pray to be on that final day and I hope that luck will be in our favour, so I could make my country and my family proud and whatever happens I will always try to do my best."*



Karim El Zoghby and Amelia at the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games 2014 in Normandy.

#### **How did you come across Amelia and when?**

I came across Amelia when she was 4 years old; I was looking at horses at my friend's farm and he told me that he has a good 4-year-old that needs some work, so I bought her and that's about it!

#### **When did you realise that she was a mare with a spectacular future?**

It's very difficult to say about young horses and their future, they have to have the character and the heart and she has both. I sold her to my dear friend Samir Abdelfatah when she was turning five. I told him that she is a good mare but he has to put the future in her because at that time I didn't ride young horses very often as I was busy building my stable. She came back in the middle of her eighth year but she was like a five-year-old because she didn't know much.

About the future, I think we all know it takes a lot of time, it takes building the character, it takes building the

heart and making a happy horse, and creating the confidence between the horse and the rider. All of that takes so much time. When all those things are put together that's when you can see the future more clearly but it takes a lot of time before reaching this point.

#### **What is she like at home in training?**

In the beginning training with her was quite impossible because, let's put it this way, she's been the boss for years in Egypt and Samir realised this and kept her away from a lot of shows and a lot of riders. What he did was good but she lost a lot of her youth and a lot of her education when she was young. So in the beginning it was very difficult to train with her. Now she has been with me for two and a half years and training is basically keeping her fit, happy and keeping the muscles long and short and just a lot of work. She is out of the stable for 7 or 8 hours per day which keeps a mare like her in a happy mood all the time.

#### **What is she like at shows?**

At shows, she is a completely different horse. In the beginning she was a handful! She still is but she is super brave, super honest, she wants to do the job and she knows as soon as she arrives at the show that there is something going on and she wants to prove herself. This is what makes her who she is. It is lovely that she knows at the shows that this is work.

Now, we've been training in 1.30m. Classes which are actually more difficult than a Grand Prix as she is in competition mode but the fences are small! So it's definitely funny with her.

#### **How do you build such a relationship with a horse?**

Well, how to build this relationship is a very good question! Because it's basically the time you spend with the horse and she is my best friend. For me, when I finish all the work at 6 pm, I just go and spend time with her in the stable and play with her in the

indoor. It takes time, effort, forgiving and it takes so many things from both sides to be able to become best friends and accept each other's good sides and bad sides. This is what every rider has to know, you have to accept your horse the way he is. There isn't just one way to deal with horses and no right or wrong, we all wish it was but it isn't. So just accept them and give them trust and deal with every horse depending on his personality and habits.

#### **How many Amelias did you come across in your career?**

That is a very difficult question. I have had a lot of very good horses but I never carried on riding them. I used to take a horse maybe 8 months before the show and sometimes 3 months and then sell them directly after, as a way of building myself. A lot of horses didn't stay more than a year and a lot of good horses came across my path but I had to sell them as young horses. So I think I'm blessed to have Amelia at the right time and the right moment in

my career. I am also very thankful for Samir and Wael for being very patriotic. They had many chances to sell this mare but they decided to go for the sport. I think the puzzle has fallen into place at the right time and I am blessed to have such people around me.

#### **They say that every special horse is a freak in some sense? Is this true and how does that apply to Amelia?**

That saying is actually very true! Amelia goes into her box and into the truck backwards; she just has her own tick and I don't try to change that or force her to do something. Also, in the beginning it was very difficult to take her to the field as she would run as soon as she sees the door open, while now she just walks behind me without a rope. It just takes time as I said and don't try to change them because that will destroy their character; you have to work with the character and make it work for you, not against you.

#### **Is she ready for the Olympics?**

It's a new experience for me to have a horse for this long, so what I am trying to do is to keep her fit and she still goes to shows. It's the sport and everyone thinks they are ready but it's a very thin line between success and failure. I am doing my best to keep her happy and still keep her jumping, but not like she was jumping for the past year and a half to get qualified for the Olympics because that in my opinion was very hard for all the qualified horses.

#### **What are the things that you would be careful with regarding her performance?**

Regarding her performance we have to be very careful with her muscles because by nature, she is a horse that jumps way too big and she's been that way since she was four. So after every show we have to massage her and get her muscles to relax because she is a fanatic. She overdoes things which sometimes works in her favour and other times against her.

**What are your hopes for the Olympics knowing that there is a bit of luck in play on that day?**

We are 75 riders and I think we all have the same dream, the Gold medal, and for sure we need luck because this isn't like any other sport. Also, the Olympics is different than the world championships because it starts big the first three days and then the last day is very big. I really hope I make it to the final. The chances are open for everything, but we all know how the sport is! One pole can cost you a lot and in the London Olympics a time fault cost me that final. I pray to be on that final day and I hope that luck will be in our favour.

**How will you prepare mentally for the games?**

This time I'm trying to be relaxed and easy because every time I had that extra pressure of building a horse in a short time, they come to me jumping 1.30m and in five months I need to make them jump 1.60m which is very difficult and adds so much pressure on you. They are green horses and they are allowed to make mistakes but you can't let them make mistakes and that makes life a lot more difficult. Now, I know Amelia very well and I had her for two and a half years so I'm more relaxed trying to manage the little details.

**This being your third Olympic games, do you still feel it's an enormous responsibility representing your country and being watched by the Egyptian people?**

I am very proud of the team that's working with me, very proud of my owners. It is a team effort that got us all the way to the Olympics. I always tell all my students that they are ambassadors for their country whether they are riding an old horse or a young horse. So for me it's the same, I feel that I am the ambassador for the sport and for my country. I hope I can make my country and my family proud and whatever happens always try to do your best. 

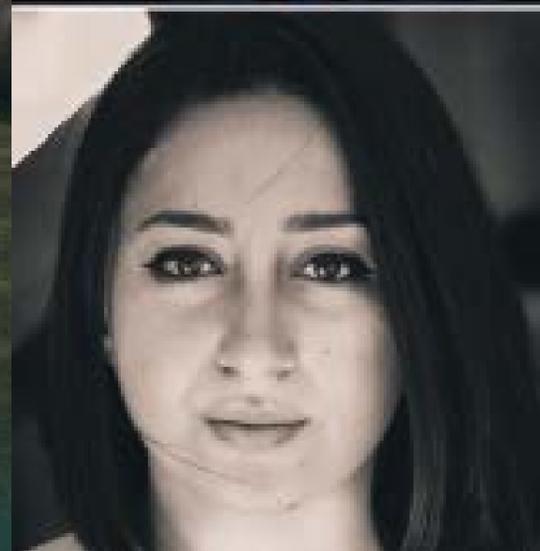
*Photos by Jacques Toffi*



*Karim El Zoghby and Amelia at the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games 2014 in Normandy.*

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Eng. Hisham Hatab

## A NATIONAL PRIDE

THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
EGYPTIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

# ENG. HESHAM HATAB

By Khaled Assem

ENG. HESHAM HATAB, A FORMER RIDER WHO REPRESENTED EGYPT IN SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL EVENTS BEFORE BECOMING THE PRESIDENT OF THE EGYPTIAN EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION (EEF) AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE EGYPTIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE, REFLECTS WITH HORSE TIMES UPON HIS INVESTMENT IN THE EGYPTIAN SPORTS FIELD AND GIVES AN INSIGHT INTO HIS EXPECTATIONS FOR EGYPT'S PERFORMANCE IN THE RIO 2016 OLYMPIC GAMES.

**During your term of presidency in the EEF, what do you see as most important developments of the last season?**

The last season witnessed immense amounts of effort from the board of the EEF; it's not just one person but the entire board has worked so hard to develop the sport. The harmony and cooperation between our organisations made this season very successful and inclusive. It included different disciplines not only show jumping, but also dressage, tent pegging and endurance. We tried to be as close as we can to the international levels; our age ranges and their integration in the different levels are now almost identical to the international standards.

The number of national shows over the season created a gradual demand on the rider and the horse through a set of guidelines that the course designer adopts from the yearly plan. Similarly the course builder, the choice of the arena used, and naturally the gradual increase in height, not to mention two international shows per year, create the ring craft and competitiveness with foreign riders to raise the bar for the Egyptian riders.

The sport today is infused in our daily life and is part of the political foot print and that is why the EEF held some national and international shows in Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada to create change as well as to portray the positive image of the safety of Egypt and hopefully aid in revitalising tourism to those areas at least from a sports perspective.

We hosted training clinics and workshops in cooperation with the FEI Technical Committee in various fields: coaching, judging, course building and course designing. Egypt also conducts training of veterinarians and farriers as part of its mutual cooperation with several entities such as the French and German Equestrian Federations.

We are hoping that next season will be even better than the last one. We have an international competition in October and we are trying our best to lift the ban off Egypt so that the horses could travel in and out easily.

**Could you explain to our readers the problem of the ban on Egypt?**

The ban is a national issue regarding not just sport horses and Arabian horses but donkeys and mules as well; luckily, we don't have any kind of diseases. What we do have is a very strong deficiency in the veterinarian system where the FEI lost confidence in our medical facilities. This is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and the General Organisation for Veterinary

Tools. I have met 8 Ministers to try and solve this problem but it is very difficult.

Neglect is the main reason behind this ban, and the Europeans won't allow any horses inside their country from Egypt except with the right paperwork, proper tests and a good system. They gave us their standards but no one is moving and they are not trying to help remove the ban probably because the Ministry of Agriculture only gives attention to plants, not animals.

We have held many conferences regarding this matter but we weren't capable of achieving the required results. Recently, we had a deal with a key person who will support our cause, through personal funding and private sector investments, to remove the ban through the required changes. We already have a solution to the problem and we still have a lot of work to do hoping to remove the ban by the end of this year.

**What are your hopes for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games?**

We are very proud of Karim El Zoghby as he was able to qualify for the Olympics with limited resources at the time that Saudi Arabia and UAE and other countries in the Middle East, with all their resources, weren't qualified. Karim is ranked fourth in the World Olympic rankings. If we had a team we could have had a chance in the team competition and four chances for an individual medal. We weren't able to achieve all that we had planned for, yet there is solid hope for a medal and with a lot of faith and a bit of luck we might pull through.

As for other sports, we have many Egyptian athletes in various sports that were qualified for Rio in international competitions like, swimming, judo, shooting, taekwondo, athletics, weight lifting, boxing and archery.

We can't guarantee getting a medal but we are strongly hoping for one. We did our homework in terms of preparation in accordance with our financial capacity. We've done all the required tests and we prepared our athletes physically, psychologically and mentally.

We hope that God will be on our side, yet if we don't go home with a medal then we still would have come a whole lot closer to one because, as you know, according to the International Olympic Committee, an athlete winning a medal is worth 4 million dollars of investment in all the associated fields around his sport. Moreover, the technology today has gone miles ahead where some of the devices are able to measure the efficiency and length of the muscles and give feedback to address deficiencies as well as strengths and naturally countries in the lead ranking of medals will take full advantage of this technology. 🏆





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# POLO

## SHOULD THE SPORT OF POLO RETURN TO THE OLYMPIC ROSTER?

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

FROM THE SUMMER OLYMPICS IN PARIS IN 1900 TO THE 1936 GAMES OF THE XI OLYMPIAD IN BERLIN POLO WAS INCLUDED IN THE SUMMER OLYMPICS AS AN OFFICIAL SPORT IN COMPETITION. SEVENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THEN AND IT'S TIME TO ASK WHY THIS PHYSICALLY DEMANDING, THRILLING, CROWD-PLEASING TEAM SPORT PLAYED BY ATHLETES OF THE HIGHEST CALIBER IN SCORES OF COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD IS NO LONGER NUMBERED AMONG THE ELITE OLYMPIC SPORTS AND, FURTHER, TO ASK WHETHER IT SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THAT STATUS

The first Olympic polo tournament to be played premiered at the 1900 Summer Olympics in Paris. This was the first Olympics to include horse sports. Polo was contested at nearly every Olympics except during the war years until 1936, the last time polo was to appear on the programme.

The situation remained in this moribund state for many years. It was thought that Great Britain might have weighed in on a return of polo for the 1948 Summer Olympics which London hosted, but alas the Hurlingham polo fields had been requisitioned for public use during the war. It was not until the late 1970's and early 1980's that measures were taken to start the process of reclaiming eligibility to compete in the Olympics.

First, the national polo associations had to come together and create an international federation to govern the sport as a prerequisite to consideration for recognition by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Thus, in 1983 the Federation of International Polo (FIP) was born and has since dreamed of reintroducing polo as an Olympic event. After years of campaigning finally in 1996, the IOC decided to designate polo as a "recognised sport" and in 1998 the IOC granted the sport "outright recognition", which makes polo eligible for reintroduction. Poised to be brought back into the Olympics family with all eligibility requirements met, what has prevented polo from stepping onto the Olympic field?

Well, it's complicated. The IOC is an enormous multi-faceted machine that runs on the interplay of national interests, international interests, logistics, diplomacy, and the love of sport, an incredibly intricate balance of myriad factors, not one of which actually predominates. Here are some of the arguments surrounding the inclusion of polo in the Olympics:

**Polo is expensive.** This is a fair statement of fact. To put together a team of players, a string of ponies, transportation, and all of the necessary support for a polo tournament is very expensive, make no mistake. And the costs to the host country in building stabling and preparing and maintaining playing fields cannot be underestimated. But costs could be reduced by adopting rules reducing the number of players and chukkas, and reducing the field of finalists through regional qualifiers, in addition to the costs which might be saved if a FIP World Cup-type system were embraced. In any event all Olympic team sports are going to entail higher expense than individual competitors and if national teams are able to drum up financial support to cover these expenses, then why should the expense per se be an obstacle to inclusion?

**Polo doesn't attract crowds needed for ticket sales and sponsorships.** Of course, the IOC must aim to be self-sustaining and the host countries need the maximum attendance and sponsorships in order to at least cover the costs of building and maintaining the facilities and providing security. But if the enthusiastic sold-out crowds at Deauville for the World Equestrian Games Exhibition Polo in 2014 are anything to go by (see, Horse Times, "Polo in Deauville", 6 September 2014), there is a strong appetite for this hard-hitting breath-taking sport.

There are so many polo players, patrons and fans around the world vigorously promoting polo and bringing these special sporting events to the general public. Polo players and celebrities such as Sunny Hale, Mohammed Al Habtoor, Nacho Figueras, Prince Henry, and so many others, as well as local and regional polo clubs and the major polo associations are working hard to open doors and make the events fun and family-inclusive. FIP, in particular, has been robust in efforts towards inclusive outreach. Indeed, FIP's stated principal aim is to enhance the image and status of polo internationally and to promote the practice of the sport of polo worldwide. So the ball is rolling.

And it must be said that there are probably many Olympic sports which only gather an entourage of family and friends, but that does not disqualify them from consideration as worthy of continued Olympic recognition.



Mallets at the ready: the bronze-winning British polo team at the 1924 Paris Olympic Games

**Polo has other venues for international competition.**

The Federation of International Polo (FIP) holds an international championship tournament which is specifically suited to polo competition by national teams. Since 1987 the FIP World Championship has been held once every 3 years in a different location around the world. It's a competitive tournament from 10 to 14 goals. Horses are provided by the host and pooled among participating nations to give teams equal conditions.

In addition, the World Equestrian Games also might provide a home for international polo competition for national teams, having taken baby steps by including a polo exhibition at the 2014 WEG. So, in fact there are suitable opportunities and venues to test the national polo teams.

However, two responses come to mind in respect of this argument. First, there are plenty of Olympic sports, perhaps most, that have independent inter-nations competition, including swimming, skiing, and ice skating,

just to name a few. Second, there is something very special about "climbing Mt. Olympus" that independent world championships can never offer; no matter how many Cups one wins, it's not like taking a bite of a gold medal on the podium for your country before the whole world as an Olympian.

**The Basics.** Although there is probably a lot more here than meets the eye, it seems to me that the biggest obstacle to the inclusion of polo in the Olympics lies not primarily in the IOC, but rather within the various national and international entities governing polo. Over 30 years ago national polo associations created a unified international polo association, FIP, but unless the members can come together and present a clear, practical, unified vision of how they see polo in the Olympics, with specific details on special rules and structure of play, then there really doesn't seem to be anything solid for the IOC to consider. Sadly, as matters stand, for a spot on the Olympic roster polo is on the same footing as frisbee! 🐾

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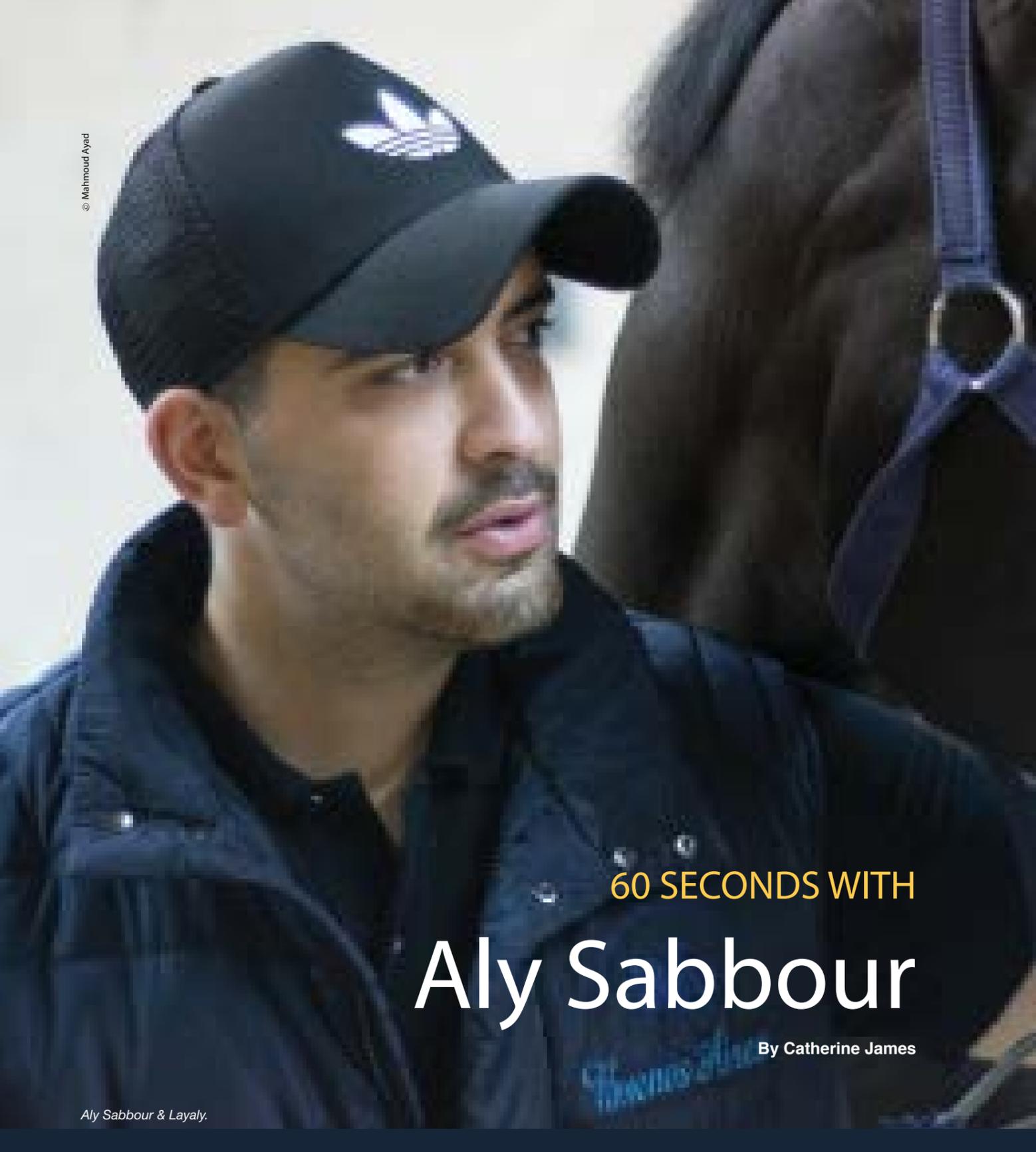


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# 60 SECONDS WITH Aly Sabbour

By Catherine James

Aly Sabbour & Layaly.

**COUNTRY:** Egypt

**DATE OF BIRTH:** 03/07/1994

**STAR SIGN:** Cancer

**PROFESSION:** Business owner/professional ShowJumper

### Give us a short introduction about yourself

Horses are my passion and definitely a large part of my future. My daily schedule revolves around my training time while still staying totally focused on my office. In the ring, I forget everything and focus on my riding craft. Riding and competing is the adrenaline that navigates my momentum forward.

### Describe your typical practice?

My practice in general depends on the horse, but mainly I work on the horses' down sides and the issues I face during shows. The issue I usually face with my main mare 'Layaly' is that you can never expect what her reactions are, she has a very unique character and she becomes very tense in competitions, so usually I focus on discipline while working her at home and I try to be very spontaneous to how she would react during shows.

### Where is your favourite place for practice?

Platinum Club, New Cairo. Platinum is one of the top places to ride in Egypt, it offers every single facility a horse and a rider needs in addition to the exceptional ambiance.

### Tell us one or two things in your training that contributed to your success.

Like all riders, riding different horses taught me a lot but what really made a huge difference in my riding was my trainer, I was blessed to have a true horseman who gave me his all. Alaa Mayssara, who brought me up from the 80cm class up to the A class. Alaa taught me a lot in terms of horsemanship, establishing the connection between myself and the horses in general and of course giving me all he has in terms of ring craft.

### What was the best advice you were given?

My father always told me to follow my passion no matter how hard it was.

### What advice would you give to young athletes?

Only effort, wisdom and commitment lead to success!

### What is your best achievement?

Being part of the winning team in the World Cup 2010 for young riders.

### What are the goals that you aspire to achieve?

I dream to raise the Egyptian flag on the podium of the Olympic Games.

### Who has been your greatest support?

My family of course, they are always there for me every time I need them.

### What are your greatest motivations?

To watch other great riders, like Marcus Ehning, it makes me feel humble and motivated that I still have so much more to learn and achieve.

### Who is your sporting hero?

Mohammed Ali

### What is your second favourite sport?

Like all Egyptians, my second favourite sport is Football.

### What is your favourite genre of movies?

Comedy.

### What kind of music do you enjoy listening to?

I am a huge fan of minimal house.

### What is your favourite book and who is your favourite author?

The forty eight laws of power by Robert Greene.

### What is your favourite food?

McDonalds!

### What is the most memorable place you ever visited?

Bali! It is mesmerising.

### What is your strength and what is your weakness?

My strength is my passion for the sport which motivates me to work even harder, and my weakness is that I am a perfectionist so sometimes I stress a bit too much.

### What is the biggest challenge you have ever faced?

To start riding again after being away for five years; and going right back to jumping big classes.

Another challenge was with 'Layaly' my mare; I bought her when she was 3 years old. At the beginning there was a 50 percent chance I won't be able to ride her and that's what most people thought, as she was a really stubborn young mare but I always knew she has plenty of ability to learn and show off her talent; and now she is 13 years old proving everyone wrong and my patience payed off by being placed in most of the classes we compete at.

### What is the biggest reward you ever got?

An outstanding mare called Andiamo, she won each and every class she entered.

### If you had the power to change something in this world, what would you change?

I would take away hatred and negativity from people's hearts.

### If there is something about yourself that you would like to change, what would that be?

To spend more time with my family.

### If you weren't who you are today, what would you rather be?

I would have wanted to be my father, he has always been my role model ever since I was a child, his success has been my true inspiration and he always supports me by all means and how he believed in me and pushed me to my limits. 🙏

## YOUNG GOALS

# AMINA ISMAIL SHAKER

By Sarah Taylor

WE BELIEVE THAT FINDING AND NURTURING YOUNG TALENT IS VITAL TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE EQUESTRIAN SPORT. SO IN SEARCH OF YOUNG TALENT, HT INTERVIEWED THE 15 YEAR OLD RIDER AMINA SHAKER TO LEARN HOW SHE CAME TO THIS SPORT, HOW SHE VIEWS HER TALENT, HER COMMITMENT, AND HER ASPIRATION FOR THE FUTURE.



© Mahmoud Ayad

Amina Ismail & Palma

### When did you start riding?

I started riding at 10. For the first year I rode a pony called Cenderlina. She was very calm and kind and I really enjoyed riding her. She helped me develop my balance and helped me through the basics of my riding, but she was quite old and wasn't fit for jumping larger fences. I then started riding Oreo, who was much larger in size than Cenderlina, so it was a step up for me. I was very nervous and fell many times because Oreo was very active, energetic, and much stronger compared to Cenderlina and she was able to jump bigger fences. For the past two years I have been riding my mare, Palma. She is much more powerful than what I was used to, so it took me a long time to get used to her and to gain control before entering competitions. After a couple of months of riding Palma, I started competing in our national Show Jumping competitions, and small courses in various clubs. Ever since I started competing, I gained confidence and set several different goals that I wanted to accomplish to improve next time.

### Did you choose riding because your father is a rider?

The idea of riding was first introduced

to me by my father, Ismail Shaker; however, I chose to carry on with riding because I really enjoyed it and felt connected to horses. I really enjoyed it because you are surrounded by a completely different atmosphere and environment, compared to most other sports. Riding teaches patience, trust and confidence as well as the sense of responsibility.

### What do you hope to achieve in the future?

I hope to keep improving and developing and compete in higher levels; as for a long term goal, one day I would like to ride professionally and represent Egypt in different countries around the world.

### What does the horse represent to you?

My mare is something special to me that I really care about.

### Do you feel that you have enough harmony with your mare?

I do; I try as much as possible to spend time with my mare. In the beginning it was very difficult to get used to her because she was more advanced than the horses I used to

ride but eventually we connected and we both got used to each other and created our own bond and harmony.

### Do you do all the chores like in Europe, grooming - cleaning - tacking up?

It's very difficult to make time for these things, since I live quite far from where I ride. In Egypt it is much more different than in other areas. Riders depend more on grooms for maintaining their horses' health, along with completing most, if not all, of the chores. However, during holidays and in the summer I try to be more involved.

### Do you read to learn about the sport?

When I first got my mare, I used to read a lot on ways to connect with her and ways to improve; I also read training tips to help me develop more.

### Who is your role model?

My dad because he has always been there for me, he is the one who introduced me to the sport and always motivated me to carry on riding. When I watch him riding I get motivated to work on myself and one day to be like him. 🐾



# EQUESTRIAN ART JAMES GILLICK: PART 1

By James Gillick

HIGHLY RESPECTED FOR BOTH HIS STILL LIFE AND EQUESTRIAN ART, THE PAINTINGS OF BRITISH ARTIST, JAMES GILLICK, WERE RECENTLY SHOWN IN THE ROYAL BOX DURING HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AT WINDSOR CASTLE. HE MAKES ALL HIS OWN MATERIALS BY HAND USING TECHNIQUES THAT DATE BACK TO THE 17TH CENTURY. HIS WORK RANGES FROM THE SMALLEST OF STILL LIFES TO GAME PAINTINGS AND LIFE SIZE HORSE PAINTINGS. USING TECHNIQUES DEVELOPED OVER MANY GENERATIONS GILLICK WORKS IN THE TRADITION OF EVERY ARTIST WHO HAS HAD A FASCINATION WITH AND RESPECT FOR THIS SUBJECT, FROM THE FIRST TO DEPICT THE HORSE IN ANCIENT CAVES, THROUGH GREAT BRITISH MASTERS SUCH AS GEORGE STUBBS, TO THE PRESENT DAY. THROUGHOUT JUNE 2016 HIS UNIQUE

EXHIBITION, 'THE HORSE', DEPICTING ARABIAN HORSES AS WELL AS BRITISH THOROUGHBREDS AND POLO PONIES WAS ON SHOW AT LONDON'S SLADMORE GALLERY. (IN MAYFAIR, LONDON) IN ASSOCIATION WITH JONATHAN COOPER GALLERY OF CHELSEA. IN THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF CONVERSATIONS, GILLICK TELLS HT HOW HE DISCOVERED HIS PASSION FOR THE ARABIAN HORSE.

FOR PEOPLE who really know their horses, the pure bred Egyptian Arabian is surely the pinnacle of Arabian horse breeding: an animal entirely distinct in its type. As an artist, you must have an understanding of this from the moment you start painting. Sadly, in England where the British Thoroughbred is so highly prized, attitudes can sometimes be dismissive of Arabian horses.

However, I am a painter more than I am a horse-person and what I see in the Arabian, from a painter's point of view, is an animal of great working and practical use as well as great beauty. I can appreciate the struggle for perfection which is bringing the breed to where it is now. To visit the wonderful Middle East and see Arabian horses at 'home' properly for the first time was a truly glorious experience

My opportunity to see the Arabians in their studs came about last year through Gerry Farrell, owner of the famous

Sladmore Contemporary Gallery (32 Bruton Place, Mayfair London, W 1J 6NW, www.sladmore.com). We visited Kuwait last November 2015 where I immersed myself in the equestrian world of Bait Al Arab and there, through Her Royal Highness Sheikhah Sarah Fahad Al Sabah and her good friend Mr Mohammed Jassim Al Marzouq of Ajmal Arabian Stud, I was able to experience the true personality of the Arabian horse. I spent a wonderful few days.

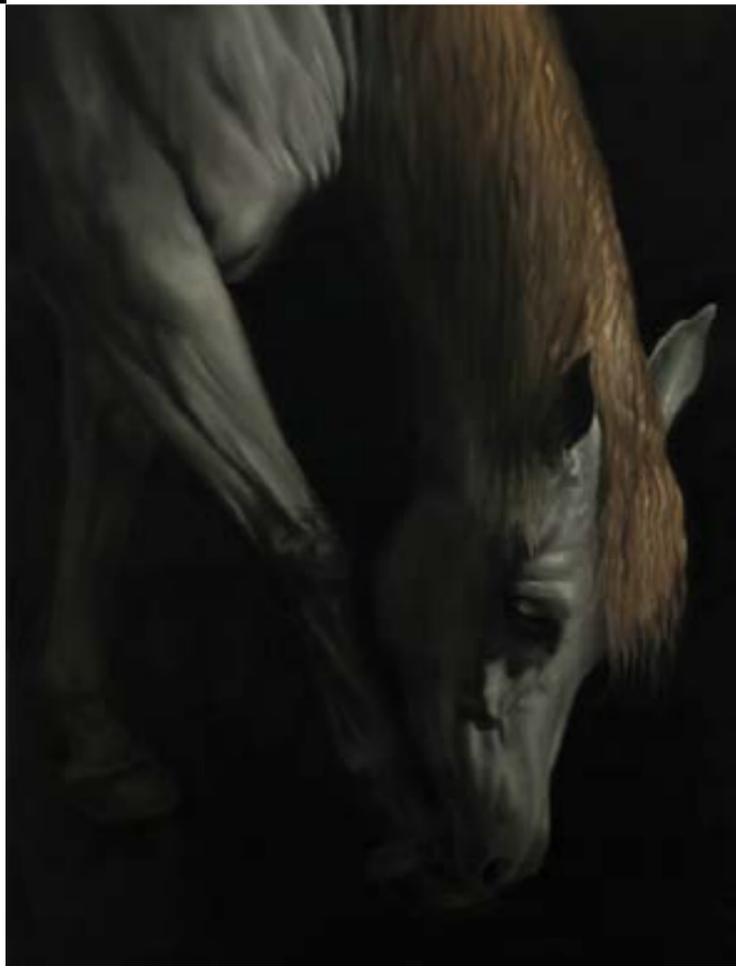
A high point was meeting Judith Forbis who made a huge impression on me. Through her work, particularly The Blue Book, Judith's contribution to the breed is staggering. She has greatly added to our understanding of the bloodline, and also located the Arabian more centrally in the equine world. She has done so much to restore the purity of the Egyptian Arabian, by re-discovering the original dam and stallion lines of so many famous horses on the very brink of their elimination from history.

The Egyptian and the Arabian people are rightly proud of Judith Forbis. She is in her eighties now and I feel that I am painting at a significant point in the history of the breed. What Mrs. Forbis has done follows on from the work of Egyptians themselves. She is a visionary who has succeeded in recording knowledge that was fast disappearing, as well as re-establishing the worldwide reputation of the breed.

I was able to visit both the Bait al Arab and Ajmal Arabian Studs, where Ansata Stud lines are particularly evident. I discovered that Ansata Hejazi is an especially potent line, and it was this among other factors which inspired me to re-create the true Arabian character in my work.



Arabian scratching foot - 'The Itch'



The trip to Kuwait was a tremendously uplifting experience. The Arabian horse lit a firework underneath me! I came back feeling absolutely inspired, and the Arabian horse became the source and the heart of the exhibition.

As I put the exhibition together, my studies gave me a great insight into the shared genetic history of Arabians and Thoroughbreds. In historic paintings of early British Thoroughbreds, their Arabian breeding can clearly be seen in the way they hold their head, their tail, the bone structures of their leg, their attitude, and the size of the eye. Following from this, I believe Thoroughbred owners can learn a huge amount from Arabian breeders. The Arabian is brought up so very differently from most Thoroughbreds.

The result is that Arabian horses have proud, self-aware body language and a happy, confident demeanour. Even so, there is something even more remarkable about the Arabian horse, something which is hard to describe. As an artist I am determined to use my work to challenge the preconception of Arabian horses as being unmanageable. I want to depict the Arabian properly. I want to describe the Arabian horse as the free moving, energetic, disciplined and courageous animal that its owners know it to be.

*In the next issue James Gillick describes how he worked closely with horse people and patrons to achieve his goal of painting the Arabian horse as a true emblem of Arab culture and tradition.* 🐾

Photos by James Gillick



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TO THE DELIGHT OF PLAYERS AND ATTENDEES AS WELL – NOT TO MENTION THE PONIES - HOT WEATHER IN EARLY MAY CEDED THREE SUNNY, MILD AND PLEASANT DAYS FOR THE RUNNING OF THE 5TH ANNUAL SALAH FODA CUP ON THE FIELDS OF THE GRACIOUS ABU SIR FARM, BELONGING TO FAROUK YOUNES, THE ESTEEMED PRESIDENT OF THE EGYPTIAN POLO FEDERATION. THIS IMPORTANT 9-GOAL FIXTURE ON THE EGYPTIAN POLO CALENDAR IS PLAYED IN HONOUR OF SALAH FODA, ONE OF EGYPT'S PREMIERE POLO PLAYERS FROM THE PAST.

As Karim Loza, Board Member of the Egyptian Polo Federation and Council Member of the Federation of International Polo, described in Horse Times in 2008 by way of background, said:

“Polo was introduced in Egypt in the 13th century by the Abbassid empire who were very strongly influenced by the Persian polo; it was then called Chaugan. The Mamluks picked it up as a form of cavalry exercise during periods of lull when not fighting and it was played at the foot of the Cairo Citadel with the other cavalry exercises. Salah el Din was a keen polo player as well as Sultan Beibars and others.

When the Gezira Sporting Club was founded in 1882, it was the first polo club in Africa and the tenth polo club in the world. Our top player was Sifallah Yusri Pacha who reached an 8 handicap in 1920 followed by Victor Smeika and Salah Foda from the 30's through the 50's with a 4 handicap.”

“The Salah Foda Cup is held to honour a great Egyptian horseman and polo player of the 1940's through the 1950's”, explains Farouk Younes. “He was an accomplished rider. He excelled in jumping and dressage, but polo was his forte. He was the pillar of the Golden Falcons which was at the time the top team in Egypt, captained by Wahid Pasha Yousry, which won many tournaments including King Fouad Golden Cup many times. He also played internationally in Italy and was considered at that time the best player in the Middle East. In his later years he bred horses for racing and continued riding and training horses with great knowledge until the last moment.”

Before an enthusiastic crowd of family, friends, and esteemed members of the diplomatic and business spheres, three teams participated in the Cup: Kings, Abu Sir, and Monte. After the tussle of the qualifying matches two teams emerged to battle for the Cup on the day of reckoning, Kings and Monte. The first period saw Monte power its way to a commanding position ending the chukka 4 goals to Kings 1, but Kings with a half-goal handicap difference fought back in the second and third chukkas narrowing the spread to 6 goals to 3. The final chukka was a battle royal seeing Kings pick up 4 goals to Monte's 2, but that 11th hour effort was simply not enough and the match ended 8 goals to 7.5 and Monte captured the Cup.

This year marked the first time in the tournament's history to feature not one, but two, lady polo players, Jeanine Hugo and Zeina Hosny on the teams. Perhaps at next year's Salah Foda Cup up-and-coming junior lady player Hana Hazem will join this exclusive club.

This is the fifth year that 6 handicap Argentine polo professionals Eduardo and Francisco Menendez have graced the Abu Sir fields for the Salah Foda Cup tournament which really drives up the excitement and level of play at these events. And the excitement was tangible for the spectators, but especially for the players who represented all five polo clubs in Egypt.

Photos by Ashraf El Mahrouky

#### Salah Foda Cup Teams

##### Kings:

- Mohannad Mostafa (0)
- Marwan Mostafa (2)
- Mohamed El Sewedy (2)
- Silvester Fanelli (4)

##### Abu Sir:

- Ibrahim Awadalla (0)
- Mohy El Kateb (0)
- Karim Loza (0)
- Mohamed Bassiouni (2)
- Frankie Menendez (6)

##### Monte:

- Zeina Hosny (-1)
- Omar El Sewedy (0)
- Jeanine Hugo (1)
- Aly Kashef (2)
- Edu Menendez (6)

## THE SALAH FODA CUP 2016

# HONOURING ONE OF EGYPT'S POLO LEGENDS

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

# CHINESE EQUESTRIANISM A LEAP FORWARD!

By Mr. Luc Schelstraete and Mr. Piotr Wawrzyniak

MR. LUC SCHELSTRAETE AND MR. PIOTR WAWRZYNIAK OF EUROPEAN-US ASIAN EQUINE LAWYERS ATTENDED THE FIRST SINO-EUROPEAN EXCHANGE SEMINAR ON EQUINE INDUSTRY THAT WAS ORGANIZED ON 28 APRIL 2016 IN SHANGHAI, CHINA AND IN OUR CONTINUING SERIES ON EQUINE LEGAL TOPICS THEY REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THIS SEMINAR AND THE STATE OF EQUESTRIAN SPORT IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

The first Sino-European Exchange Seminar on equine industry was organized parallel to and under the auspices of the Longines Global Champions Tour. The seminar aimed to introduce top-level experts and experience in the equestrian industry from Europe through international equestrian events so as to establish a platform of exchange and interaction. The seminar gathered many interesting speakers and was titled "Leaping Forward", a title that is very applicable to what China has manifested in various fields in recent decades. The Chinese wish to learn from the experiences of the well-established equine nations in Europe, such as the Dutch and the Germans, among others. The seminar was organized by Cross China New Media (Beijing) Co. Ltd and hosted by Shanghai Juss Event Management Co. Ltd known for organizing the Formula 1 UBS Chinese Grand Prix and the Global Champions Tour in Shanghai, among other events.

The seminar showed the growing interest of the Chinese in the equine business and sport. Equestrianism has been developing very fast in the recent years in China. China reported recently a growth of 30 percent in importing sport horses into China and this growth aims to continue. Jockey clubs are being established in many cities across the mainland China. This growing interest in horse sport is illustrated by the immense popularity and publicity that was given to the Global Champions Tour in Shanghai. Literally, the whole city of Shanghai was exposed to the event prior to

the weekend on which the GCT event took place through the media. The GCT event was held at the beautiful venue of China Art Museum, one of the landmarks of Shanghai, and was attended by many visitors from all over China. Equestrianism is associated with luxury lifestyle in China which explains why one of the co-sponsors of the Longines Global Champions Tour in Shanghai was Noblesse, the leading luxury lifestyle magazine in China.

The seminar began with an explanation of the Chinese entry and exit policies and the quarantine of sport horses in China that was given by Mr. Liu Jinlong, deputy director of animal and plant quarantine division of the General Administration of Quality, Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China. In this respect it should be noted that the GCT event is very unique for China. The cooperation between the Chinese authorities and the GCT led to creating a special quarantine zone in Shanghai where the horses competing in the GCT were stalled and where any risks related to contacts with the local horse population were prevented.

This measure allowed the horses to enter mainland China prior to the GCT event and to leave directly after the competition so that they could travel onwards to other GCT events held in other places all over the world.

Summarizing the presentations of Mr. Yao Congbin, the official veterinarian of the GCT event in Shanghai, and Mr. Sin Bin, Deputy

Director of Shanghai Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Office, it can be fairly stated that the cooperation between the organization of the event and the Chinese authorities is one of the key factors in the success of the GCT event in Shanghai. Later in the programme, Mr. Martin Atock of Peden Bloodstock explained the complicated logistic process behind the organization of the GCT events around the world and various factors (such as, time zones, veterinary rules and schedules, etc.) that must be taken into account to ensure that the horses are delivered to the venues of the GCT timely and in top condition in order to compete.

In his speech Mr. Jan Tops, the founding father of the GCT, inspired the conference attendees with his presentation about the basis of the equestrian sport in Europe. Mr. Tops in his speech underlined the importance of a good infrastructure and starting development from the very basics. According to Mr. Tops the importance of the local pony clubs and riding schools (as known in continental Europe, more specifically in the Netherlands and Germany) should not be underestimated. Developing the interest for the sport among children, letting them enjoy themselves and have fun while riding horses is crucial to achieve later success in the sport. Hard work, dedication and discipline are important factors for a later equestrian career. Mr. Tops also underlined the gender equality of the equine sport. Indeed, equestrian sport is one of the few that lets men and women directly compete in the same classes.

In our presentation we set out the risk management of doing equine business in Europe discussing trade-related issues such as pre-purchase examination, commission, the position of the trainer, disclosure of the seller and the conclusion of the purchase agreement. It must be noted in this respect that due to cultural and legal differences it may be sometimes quite difficult for the Chinese to understand the equine business as practiced in Europe. At the moment as far as sport horses are concerned, Europe remains the main exporter of them to China. Additionally, the Chinese veterinary regulations make it, in many cases, – according to the Chinese attendees of the seminar – very difficult, if not impossible, upon the sale of a horse from Europe to return horses back to Europe in the event of any defect or non-conformity of the horse in question. Mr. Luc Schelstraete pointed out in his presentation that a possible solution for such a legal and factual problem could be, for instance, a claim aiming for the reduction of the purchase price or claiming damages, in addition to the annulment of the purchase agreement. These remedies are also available for a buyer under the European continental laws. Furthermore, Mr. Luc Schelstraete pointed out in his presentation that it might be worth considering for the Chinese owners and investors to incorporate a company in Europe in order not

only to mitigate the reported problems but also to have the horses bred, stabled, trained and competed in Europe. In this respect also the incorporation process of a legal entity and the VAT related issues were discussed.

Mr. Huang Zuping, the former coach of the national team and a competitor in the 2008 Olympic Games together Mr. Chang Wei, former Secretary General of the Chinese Equestrian Association, explained the current standing of equestrian sport in China and underlined the need for creating a solid basis for the further development of the sport in China in order to allow Chinese riders to compete successfully at the very top level in international events. In this respect China needs to sustain the growth, to invest in riding schools and clubs, and to attract know-how by, for instance, increasing the number of European trainers and/or by sending Chinese riders for education in Europe.

The seminar ended with a Q&A session in which Mr. Fred van Lierop, the GCT event director, Mr. Chang Wei, Mr. Huang Zuping and Mr. Luc Schelstraete answered various questions of the attendees and discussed their experiences in the business.

In conclusion, China is making a leap forward in the equestrian business and sport. With new jockey clubs, new venues and equestrian events across the country it is only a matter of time before China will belong in the top tier of the equestrian nations worldwide. The seminar is to be followed by the second edition next year during the GCT event and we are looking forward to learning how much progress China will have made this next year. 🇨🇳



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## TRAINING TIPS

# HAPPY HORSE, HAPPY COURSE!

By Khaled Assem

TRAINING COMES WITH THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE HORSE. EVERYTHING YOU DO AFFECTS YOUR HORSE, AND THOUGH WE DISCUSS CONCEPTS INDEPENDENTLY TO AMPLIFY PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING, YET EVERYTHING IS INTERRELATED.

In this article we will discuss developing some of the constants that greatly help to develop the performance of the horse.

### CALMNESS

A calm environment is the basis of a secure beneficial training, regularity in training and adequate feeding. Sometimes lunging is useful due to its repetitive nature. Also turning out, frequent rest periods. The rider has to have a general understanding of how his horse feels because that affects his receptiveness to training.

### ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance starts from the ground, how you handle your horse in the stable, leading him and lunging him. Mutual respect leads to good communication and understanding. Horses quite often take after their riders in how they handle various situations, so a calm confident rider will deliver the same qualities to his

horse who will respond in a similar manner. The engagement between the rider and the horse in the simple things of asking the horse to change direction in a kind way creates acceptance.

### FORWARDNESS

Bertalan de Némethy, one of the four fathers of contemporary riding, was asked about the most difficult thing to achieve, he answered: "Moving a horse forward willingly into a straight line balanced on his four feet." This statement shows that as simple as how forwardness and straightness might sound, achieving them is a long term goal that will require knowledge of various training techniques, continuity and acceptance that time is an element that is crucial in the success of this task.

### STRAIGHTNESS

The rider has to realise that straightness is achieved primarily

by developing both sides of your horse, i.e., his muscles, controlling his forehead while keeping his hind quarters underneath. The more engaged your horse is, the more he can move forward, straight and balanced.

To succeed in developing your constants, you need to have a training programme that is comprehensive and versatile as having a plan generally guides the rider into a channel of focusing and higher achievement. 🐾

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#### About the author:

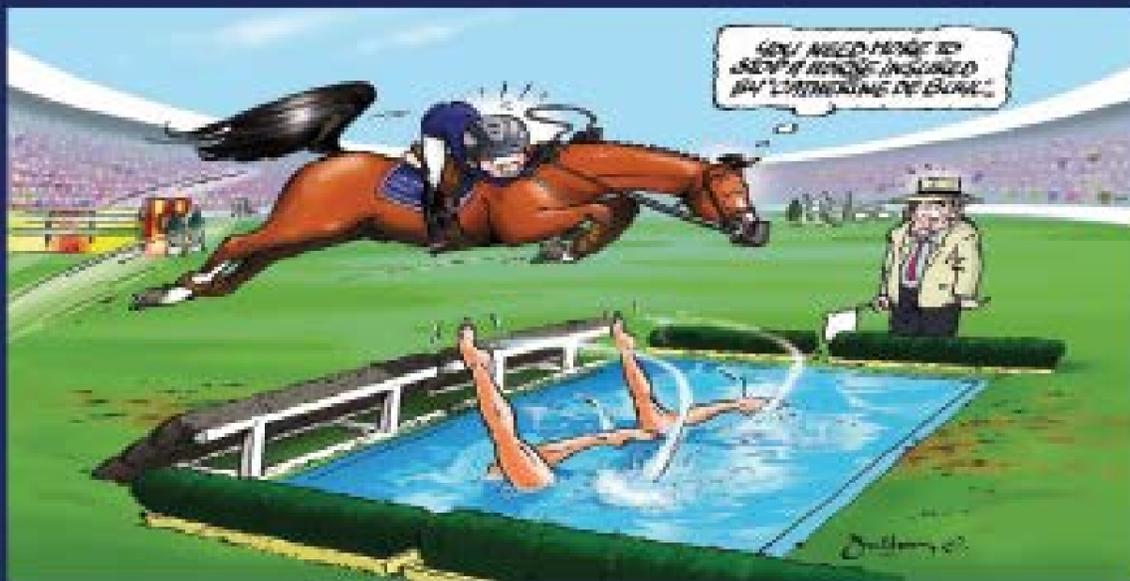
Eng. Khaled Assem is a certified Level 3 FEI trainer. He has been training for over 20 years, competing internationally for 10 years and locally for 25 years.

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## ZAMAN: PART TWO

# A LOOK BACK AT MY LIFE WITH HORSES

By Omar Mamdouh Ismail

I am also grateful to Dr. Mohamed Abd El Motalib, the head master of my school, who always allowed me to leave school a little early to go riding. The fighting spirit was reflected in our horses, as they were properly schooled and helped to maintain a very good psychological state and a well-balanced nutritional programme to help keep them healthy during training. This included additional nutritional elements such as boiled linseed, oats and vegetable leaves, and even leavings from my mother's kitchen, like apple and orange skins and egg shells, offered fresh everyday to help as a supplement, very simple but highly effective.

From a very early age I was getting left-over trouper horses that were hard to ride for most riders. However, from the start I realised the problem is not the horses; it is the lack of horsemanship and horsemastership, and the situation is the same today as most riders are in a hurry to jump and neglect dressage for jumping. Simply, horses are not born jumpers by nature and they hate it in many cases. I received horses with average conformation, full of bad habits and the worst of these was refusing to jump or pass over a pole on the ground. This required patience, determination, and a lot of time to restart schooling from the beginning.

Among the training programmes my coach used was to take the horses to the desert to build more muscles in the national Club Al Ahli and Abbas Akkad area. The sand hills in the area helped develop muscle power. My coach was not a rider, but, amazingly, he taught me how to make myself and my horse do what we do instinctively. This required plenty of proper schooling, repetition till we reached a stage where everything is done smoothly, like flying changes and pirouettes; fear of big fences

AT AN EARLY STAGE IN MY RIDING CAREER MY MOTHER AND FATHER ACCOMPANIED ME TO EVERY SHOW AND AT THE END OF EVERY COMPETITION WE DISCUSSED HOW I PERFORMED AND HOW THE HORSE BEHAVED. FOR THE DAILY TRAINING MY DAD WAS THERE, NEVER LEFT ME, AND AMAZINGLY GUIDED ME THROUGH THE TECHNICAL DETAILS AND TAILORED FITNESS PROGRAMMES FOR BOTH THE HORSE AND MYSELF. WHEN MY DAD WAS NOT WITH ME I USED MY SHADOW ON THE GROUND OR AT TIMES HAD MY WONDERFUL FRIEND HISHAM ABD EL NABI WHO NEVER HESITATED TO RECORD VIDEOS AND OTHER TIMES MY DEAR FRIEND HUSSEIN KHAIRY STOOD WITH ME.

was not in my dictionary. In addition we did plenty of cavaletti, but I could not jump very often, as the officers in charge kept fences away, and I used to have no light in the evening after school so had to ride in dusk time or in the dark.

In the late seventies and up to the early nineties there wasn't any balanced horse food or supplements. Vets were so unskilled in equine science; an unlucky horse in need of a vet is 90% a dead horse just due to colic. A lame horse or injured would come out of the veterinary hospital a dangerous beast that bites and kicks just from the failure of the vet to have done a professional and proper job.

Farriers were not so different from vets, very unskilled. Every month horses suffered from shoeing, either fitting a small shoe on a big hoof and making the hoof smaller to fit, or nails are placed in the sensitive area making the horse lame for a few days until it was corrected. I had to stand next to the farrier and tell them where to put the nails which was hard and time-consuming. The grooms were also similar to vets and farriers or even worse, a very few had a good conscious so keeping a horse sound and healthy for many years required dedication. I had to intervene in every detail of the well-being of my mount, including educating the groom to do everything for the horse gently, firmly, and properly. This meant being at the stable almost all the time, sometimes before sunrise or late at night doing the job of the groom, vet, and black smith. Besides all of my responsibilities I had to school and educate the horse to jump international classes.

This sport appears to be an individual sport but in reality it is a team sport; behind the scenes the team consists of the horse, rider, trainer, groom, vet, and black smith.

The failure of one makes it hard or hopeless to improve. By the mid-eighties horse shows became very hard; fences bigger and wider, our Equestrian Federation that was inclined to listen to the riders' needs helped make a great team in 1987, and most importantly lifted the equine influenza travel ban on Egyptian horses so they were able to travel abroad. The atmosphere of competitions was so positive then; I was competing with great riders like Khaled Mohamed Aly with Ayub, Khaled Assem and King Tut, Husam Ragab, Mohamed El Sherbini, and our team was awarded the gold medal in the 1987 Mediterranean Games. We reached a point in 1988 when we were about to go to the Olympics in Seoul, but unfortunately we did not because good results were hard to achieve with the horses we had at the time.

Finally, when I look back at how we achieved great results in a short time and how we maintained a high level for a long time, we had a great share in improving this sport in Egypt and brought it up to international level, made it more popular locally, and helped sincerely all who wanted to learn and improve.

Today, unlike forty years ago, you will find hundreds of riders very well equipped, with fantastic horses, professional trainers available and fantastic riding centres. In addition, there are a lot of horse sales both local and imported. Many horse equipment shops selling everything a rider and horse needs including food supplements, and a world known magazine Horse Times. It makes me so proud and pleased to see the younger generations ride and compete abroad. If it weren't for the support and help of my mother and father, we would have never have seen this new generation jump so well. 🐾

## ORIENTALISM AND THE ARABIAN HORSE: PART 2

# HORACE VERNET

By Judith Wich-Wenning

IN THE SECOND OF OUR THREE-PART SERIES ON THE ARABIAN HORSE IN ORIENTALIST ART, THE VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE JUDITH WICH-WENNING INTRODUCES THE HT COMMUNITY TO ANOTHER IMPORTANT EQUINE ARTIST OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD, HORACE VERNET.

© Judith Wich-Wenning



"Halte de Cavaliers Arabes", 19th century lithograph typical for Fromentin, owned by Judith Wich-Wenning

Horace Vernet, the son of the renowned Arabian horse artist Carle Vernet, was the last of the influential "Vernet dynasty". Horace developed into the most popular of the famous Vernets. He was born in the Palais du Louvre in 1789 – the year of the French Revolution. Horace Vernet learned how to paint horses from his father Carle, yet developed his own, unique style. He gained fame and fortune at an early age. Horace already won a first class medal at 22, and became a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour at 25.

A few years later, he was named director of the Académie de France in Rome. Its seat was – and still is – the Villa Medici, where his father Carle had already spent an important time many years before. In 1833, Horace decided to resign from this position in order to make the first of his many journeys to Algeria. This travel with all its first-hand impressions inspired Vernet on a large scale. It even brought about a change in his style.

Before this journey, the Romantic Movement, showing vibrant colours and lots of passion and exuberance, influenced his paintings. Afterwards, his work excelled through sharp precision and the love of great ethnographical detail. Travelling to the East was dangerous and often uncomfortable at Horace Vernet's time. High expenses, unreliable itineraries and the risk of disease overshadowed such endeavours. However, Horace Vernet was

certainly both a gifted artist as well as an adventurer.

His numerous, extensive journeys led him to Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Turkey and the Crimea. During these travels, he was not afraid of strains and efforts. He took any means of transport available, be it horse, camel or mule and often camped in the open air if necessary.

While the Vernets were traditionally royalist, Horace had an exceptional ability to adapt to the changing regimes of his time. His career developed steadily, no matter who reigned over France. Horace Vernet became famous for his battle scenes for which he received many important commissions. His fighting sceneries are imposing, first of all through their motifs, but often also because of their large dimensions, being painted on vast panoramic canvases. In many of his artworks, he depicted Napoleon and his impressive Arabian riding stallions. Spectators who had the privilege to watch him working always marvelled at the incredible speed with which he painted.

The revolution of 1830 brought King Louis-Philippe to the throne. He was a close friend and protector of Horace Vernet. This of course pushed Horace's career even more. When King Louis-Philippe decided to create a museum of military history in Versailles, Vernet was commissioned to decorate one of the principal galleries there. For this work Horace Vernet

Painted scenes from Algeria in huge dimensions. Up to then, the traditional way to paint focused on a central hero in the picture. Horace Vernet however created giant compositions, which seemed to tell a whole novel. All little incidents were of equal value.

One of Horace Vernet's most well-known pictures is certainly "The Lion Hunt", an oil painting dated 1836. This work is full of action and dynamic. While the Wallace Collection in London owns the original, lithographs of this motif are popular collector's items.

Horace Vernet became professor at the Paris School of Fine Arts and developed enormous influence on the artistic organizations of his time. Horace Vernet left a large production with some 500 paintings and around 200 lithographs. Especially through his lithographs, Horace Vernet reached a wider audience. This earned him immense public renown. He died in his hometown of Paris at the age of 74. Horace Vernet's grave can still be visited today at the cemetery of Montmartre, not far from where his father Carle was buried. 

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*For inquiries regarding the Arabian horse in art please contact:*

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# THE WALK

Compiled by Emmad Eldin Zaghloul

**WALK DEFINED.** A CLEAR "FOUR-BEAT" GAIT WITH FOOTFALLS FOLLOWING ONE ANOTHER. THIS GAIT HAS A CLEAR, EVEN RHYTHM AS THE FEET LAND AND TAKE OFF. THERE ARE 4 VARIATIONS OF THE WALK - THE COLLECTED WALK, THE MEDIUM WALK, THE EXTENDED WALK AND THE FREE WALK.

**How to Execute the Walk.** Start at a halt, tighten abdominals and deepen the seat. Keep upper body straight, close both calves on the horse's side, maintain rein contact, but yield slightly, relax seat and calves and follow the movement at the walk.

If the rider imposes too much in the walk by restricting with the hands or trying to force overstepping, the horse will lose the purity of his gait. This can be detrimental given that the walk is the only movement that consistently holds a co-efficient of 2 from the training level through the Grand Prix in dressage tests.

When the horse is walking, the rider's hands to move with the horse by maintaining elasticity in the elbows. As the horse's head moves forward and down, the elbows should open. When the horse's head comes back up the elbows should close. This allows for a consistent, soft contact with the horse's mouth. Thus resulting in a fluid, pure walk where the horse is swinging through the back.

**Purpose of the Walk.** To relax the horse after exertion. To provide a slower rate of speed when learning new movements.

**Common Errors in Execution.** The horse jigs or prance. The horse walks laterally (both feet on the same side moving instead of opposing sides). The rider restricts the horse's movement with a rigid hand. The rider tries to force overstepping. The horse lacks energy and drags his toes.

**Medium walk.** A clear, regular and unconstrained walk of moderate lengthening. The horse, remaining "on the bit", walks energetically but relaxed with even and determined steps, the hind feet touching the ground in front of the hoof prints of the fore feet. The rider maintains a light, soft and steady contact with the mouth, allowing the natural movement of the horse's head and neck.

**Collected walk.** The horse, remains "on the bit", moves resolutely forward, with its neck raised and arched and showing a clear self-carriage. The head approaches the vertical position and a light contact is maintained with the mouth. The hind legs are engaged with good hock action. The pace should remain marching and vigorous, the feet

being placed in regular sequence. The steps cover less ground and are higher than at the medium walk, because all the joints bend more markedly. The Collected walk is shorter than the Medium walk, although showing greater activity.

**Extended walk.** The horse covers as much ground as possible, without haste and without losing the regularity of the steps. The hind feet touch the ground clearly in front of the hoof prints of the fore feet. The rider allows the horse to stretch out the head and neck (forward and downwards) without losing contact with the mouth and control of the poll. The nose must be clearly in front of the vertical.

**Free Walk.** The free walk is a pace of relaxation in which the horse is allowed complete freedom to lower and stretch out his head and neck. The degree of ground cover and length of strides, with hind feet stepping clearly in front of the footprints of the front feet, are essential to the quality of the free walk. The walk is a pace in four (4)-beat rhythm with eight (8) phases (numbers in circles indicate the beat).

**Stretching on a long rein.** This exercise gives a clear impression of the "throughness" of the horse and proves its balance, suppleness, obedience and relaxation. In order to execute the exercise "stretching on a long rein" correctly, the rider must lengthen the reins as the horse stretches gradually forward and downward. As the neck stretches forwards and downwards, the mouth should reach more or less to the horizontal line corresponding with the point of the shoulder. An elastic and consistent contact with the rider's hands must be maintained. The pace must maintain its rhythm, and the horse should remain light in the shoulders with the hind-legs well engaged. During the retake of the reins the horse must accept the contact without resistance in the mouth or poll. 

*Source of the article*  
- Dressage Academy  
- FEI Dressage Rules

## THE FRENCH CONNEXION

# MINOSTRANDE BRUNEAU

By Abdel Rahman Moslem

THE BOND BETWEEN EGYPT AND FRANCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN STRONG. UNIC (UNION NATIONALE INTERPROFESSIONNELLE DU CHEVAL), THE INTER-PROFESSIONAL NATIONAL UNION OF THE HORSE INDUSTRY, WAS CREATED IN 1949 AS A NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION WHOSE GOAL IS TO ENSURE THE PROMOTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRENCH EQUESTRIAN INDUSTRY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. IT HAS A CONTINUOUS LINK WITH THE EQUESTRIAN SPORT IN EGYPT, SENDING TRAINERS, PRODUCTS, AND SERVICES TO EGYPT. MINOSTRANDE BRUNEAU WAS SENT TO EGYPT THROUGH UNIC DEVELOPING THAT BOND FURTHER.

### Can you tell us a little bit about your history in training?

Originally I come from France. I have been teaching and training horseback riding for nearly 20 years with my husband in a horse riding school in France. We have taught altogether more than a thousand riders, both children and adults.

### Can you tell us about your project? And what is the idea behind it?

My project now is to teach people how to teach. I decided that my husband and I would go to other countries and apply the French system there. I am doing that because I want to discover new things in new countries. It would not be that hard to teach how to teach because we have 20 years of experience and we have taught a lot of children and adults. Also the system we organized has proved its success.

### What is your strategy in training?

I think that all around the world the strategy can be done the same way. First from my personal view I have chosen two points which are the main aim of how I give my lessons. The first point is control of the horse. The second point is the good position of the rider. Good position because if the rider is not in a good position or in a good movement they will not succeed in any horse riding school. I base and organise my lessons on these two major points: "control"

and "good position". When the rider achieves the level in which he/she has no problem with the position and the control, then we can add speed. The main problem I see in a lot of places is that the rider's, the coach's and the parents' main focus is speed. That is wrong because they only focus on speed and they forget every other concept of good riding. I prefer to concentrate my job on the position and the good movement.

### What do you think of Equicare Riding Center – Platinum Club?

You have everything necessary to work with my two points. What we must take care of to help the children, parents and all the riders to improve is to perhaps adapt the place with more safety equipment especially in the arena. Other than this point I think you have good horses. The main consideration we have to think of in such a place is to have good horses for the beginners, where the horse has to be very calm, very nice, and not too tall. The main difference between this sport and any other sport around the world is that people can get afraid from this sport easily. With fear it would be very hard for the person to improve and progress. That is why it is better to start with small horses for beginner riders.

### What are your plans for the future?

For my future I want to discover other countries especially Arabic countries because I really love your culture and I know a lot of horse lovers in Arabic countries. I think my love comes from the story of Arabian horses and the desert. I also think the horse is in the heart of a lot of people and especially in Arabs and Arabic countries.

In the long term - I mean in one or two years - I see that this place (Equicare Riding Center – Platinum Club) will have more good riders. I think that everyone must have the opportunity to have very good horses. I don't necessarily mean by good horses, horses that jump in high levels but I mean horses that are careful and have the skills and ability to help a rider learn. We call these horses in France "Schoolmasters". I think we need more Schoolmasters in the place to achieve with the rider a higher level, for example, in Dressage and in Jumping. We need these horses because parents and friends want to see the rider improving and learning and that must be achieved with a very well educated horse, a Schoolmaster. They must have a good style, they must be generous and they must not have any problem with finishing the curve.

What I plan and imagine for this place is to have very nice horses to start the competitions for Dressage and especially for Show Jumping. So perhaps we could organize some partnership to send new horses. But now we have enough good horses to start with. I am talking about the future where I think the club will need good horses. 🐾



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