

HORSE TIMES



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Spring 2012

THE MOST RENOWNED EQUESTRIAN MAGAZINE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



BERNARDO ALVES BRAZILIAN WITH BURNING AMBITION

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VIEW POINT

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Readers,

In this first issue of HORSE TIMES for 2012, we celebrate our 15th anniversary and we kick off our content with a great start; the very solid Brazilian talent Bernardo Alves speaking of his priorities, his passions and strengths.

CSI***-W Sharjah, as always, gaining mileage and glamour for organisation and success; HH Sheikh Abdullah Al Qassimi spares no effort and no expense to support the sport in the UAE with an impeccable team of organisers being the engine behind the Sharjah International Show Jumping Championships.

We then continue with two celebrities in their own right; HRH Princess Alia bint Al Hussein who overwhelms the world with her gestures of kindness towards horses in particular and animals in general – and eventing star Mark Todd who is simply said, a legend in his field.

A spectacular read about Cheval Passion and equitation in the French tradition newly recognised by UNESCO as an outstanding example of intangible heritage in Avignon, France, is brought to you by Bridget McArdle McKinney who also presented another piece about Al Sharbatly Stud Farm.

Photography by Irish talent Gerard Keenan, Dressage For Jumping Dr. Mohamed Elsherbini, a brief perspective regarding understanding distances in show jumping, Dressage History by Dr. Soha Elibyari, as well as Egypt's Grooms, will give you good expert tips on flair and training, a glimpse at how dressage has evolved from the old to the new, and the "unknown" soldiers of Egypt's horse world, who genuinely care for the horses of every discipline, in both senses of the word.

Last but not least, the HORSE TIMES family is proud to announce that as of February 2012, our website www.horsetimesegypt.com broadcasts LIVE FEI events through our cooperation with FEI TV; please look at the back cover where you can visit the link mentioned and watch all your favourite international events.

I hope you read on and enjoy, and I leave you with my favourite motto, "Small achievements put together make a big achievement."

Sincerely,
Khale Assem

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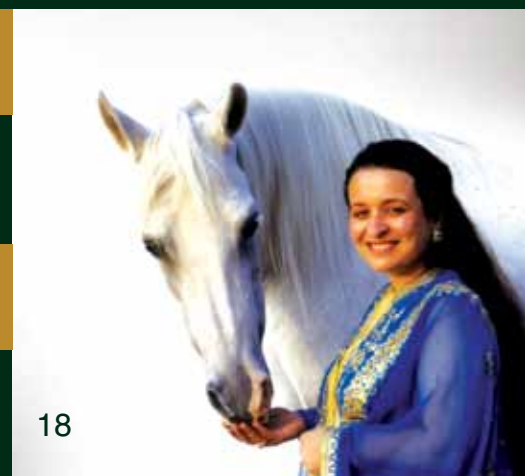
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BERNARDO ALVES
BRAZILIAN
WITH BURNING AMBITION

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

COUNTRY: BRAZIL
DATE OF BIRTH: NOVEMBER 20 1974
STAR SIGN: SCORPIO

WHEN IT COMES TO COMPETITION BRAZILIAN SHOW JUMPING CHAMPION BERNARDO ALVES IS THE PERFECT IMAGE OF THREE: "CALM, CALCULATED AND CONTENT". AND THESE QUALITIES ARE ALWAYS ON DISPLAY IN THE ARENA WHERE IT APPEARS THAT RIDING COMES SO EASY FOR HIM, WHERE STRENGTH, HARMONY AND GRACE SEEM TO COMBINE EFFORTLESSLY TO PRODUCE SUCCESS. SEEING THIS, IT MAKES YOU WONDER, HOW DOES HE DO IT? HOW DOES HE COMBINE THE RIGHT HORSE, RIGHT CONTEST AND RIGHT TRAINING? WHAT'S THE SECRET? THE ANSWERS HERE FROM THE BRAZILIAN WITH BURNING AMBITION CAN ONLY MAKE YOU GUESS THAT BERNARDO HAS GENUINELY SORTED OUT HIS PRIORITIES WHERE LOVE OF HIS SPORT, HIS HORSES AND HIS FAMILY KEEPS HIS CAREER PATH FOCUSED AND IN TUNE WITH HIS LIFE.



It all started...

When I was eight years old. My parents always liked horses and ever since I was very young, we all rode together at our farm. So, most of the weekends, on our way to the farm, we would stop at the riding club and watch everyone riding. It was fascinating to me to see the horses jump.

The trainers...

My first trainer was a Brazilian rider Vitor Teixeira. When I moved to Europe, I rode for quite some time at the stables of Nelson Pessoa; he trained me and was followed by his son Rodrigo. A few years ago, I moved to Ludger Beerbaum's stables and I was also trained by him for a while.

Influential trainers.....

It's hard to pick just one, but all of them had a lot of influence on my riding career. They're my idols.

Current horses and Bridgit the amazing horse...

Brigit is the best horse that I have ever ridden in my entire career. She has great respect for fences and has got a huge heart. She's also a very fast mare; truly, she is amazing. Kingly du Reverdy is my speed class horse. Despite that not being his greatest feature, he is full of surprises at big classes. He's a true warrior inside the ring.

Training programme...

Firstly, I decide which shows I am going to participate in and then I

▲ Bernardo & Brigitt, winners of the GCT in Monaco, 2010

decide what the ideal training is for each horse at each show. When I train, I neither like raising the fences high nor using trick distances. I want my training courses to be easy and I try to work at the horse's pace. Accordingly, at competitions, I can have good control of the horse in short and long distances.

Managing time...

During the week (from Monday to Wednesday) I ride six to seven horses a day and I train some riders. To end the day, with the help of my wife, we do stable management.

Favourite events...

Aachen. To ride in Aachen is a dream come true for any rider in the world, at least to me. It's magical. Clearing a round there, it doesn't matter if it's during a small class or the Grand Prix, it's incredible. It's like riding in a sanctuary. I can't describe the feeling...

The Global Champions Tour...

I've been riding at the GCT since

the very beginning. It's the best equestrian's circuit to be involved in regularly with its points and the highest prize money in the sport. It is where all the best riders are. I have already won two legs: Hamburg and Monaco.

Rankings...

I am currently ranked at 52 in the Rolex Rankings and I was in the top eight already. In my opinion, in order to reach the top ten, I think one would need at least two to three Grand Prix horses, a good speed horse, and the will to go to shows EVERY weekend.

Picking horses...

I look for scope, good technique in the front legs, and "solid" behaviour in a horse.

Sponsors...


I've been riding for Mr. Jorge Johannpeter, owner of Haras Joter for the last 18 years! He's the one that provides me with the entire infrastructure that has made it possible for me to live and work in

Europe. He's a horse owner that knows and understands all aspects of this sport. For him, the health and the well-being of the horse comes first, not the prize money. I'm also sponsored by a feeding supplement company, EQUI 4S, that helps me a lot to preserve my horse's health.

Brazil and the 2012 Olympics...

We're still in the middle of the Olympic trials. Since I've been getting consistent results, some of which were winning two medals (Team silver and Individual bronze) with Bridgit at the Pan American Games in 2011, I think I have a good chance to compete in London! My goal is not to overuse Brigit and select shows very carefully. When it is time for the Games, she will be fresh and, of course, at her best condition.

Family...

I've been married to Carolina for ten years and we have a wonderful three year old daughter, Julia. We all love horses; Carolina rode for ten years and Julia is completely in love with those creatures. 



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CSI***-W SHARJAH 2012

AN EMIRATI LED THE WAY

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem



STARTING ON A SUPERB JANUARY 26TH BENEATH THE SUNNY SKIES OF THE UAE, THE WORLD CUP QUALIFIER CSI***-W OF SHARJAH DEMONSTRATED MAGNIFICENT QUALITY COMPETITIONS BY MORE THAN 500 INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS. TO MANY ARAB SHOW JUMPING RIDERS, THE SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL SHOW JUMPING CHAMPIONSHIP AND THE SHARJAH EQUESTRIAN & RACING CLUB (SERC) ARE CERTAINLY A VERY SPECIAL EVENT AND VENUE, RESPECTIVELY, AMONGST ARAB LEAGUE COMPETITIONS AND VENUES, CONTINUING SUCCESSFULLY FOR THE 12TH YEAR THUS FAR. WITH IMPECCABLE ANNUAL EFFORTS DEMONSTRATING PERFECT ATTENTION TO ORGANISATIONAL DETAIL, THE SHOW HAS CREATED A TRADITION OF EFFICIENCY THAT INSPIRES THE RIDERS AS WELL AS THE ENTIRE NETWORK OF PEOPLE AT THE SHOW.

DAY ONE:

Longines as a sponsor kicked off day one of the competitions with the 'Longines Welcome Class', one round against the clock, 120 cm, 46 starts, 15,000 dirhams in prize money, which was eventually won by Lebanon's Toni Assaf on Ashley. The second class, the 'National Contracting 7 Transport Accumulator', 130 cm and 20,000 dirhams in prize money, saw a Qatari winner, Hamad Al Qadi on Gysmo 26.

The final class of the day, the 'Sharjah Tourism Challenge', qualifier for the Grand Prix, 140-160 cm and prize money of 120,000 dirhams, Table A with 71 seconds allowed, displayed some serious competition between 63 starts. Germany's Werner Deeg worked his magic inside the stellar indoor arena and designed a very technical course that afforded very few clears. Although some riders had jumped with two horses, out of the 35 who qualified for the Grand Prix, only seven really grabbed the spectators' attention with their speed to clear the round without faults. Out of the seven, Saudi's Khalid Al Eid cleared the jump-off on Vanhoeve in 61.13 seconds and seemed comfortable to win the class. To beat that time, Ireland's Marion Hugues rode her speedy Crispian and cleared in 60.97 seconds. No comfort for Marion as still, the "show stopper", Saudi's Abdullah Al Sharbatly, was last to go and indeed, he cleared in a breath-taking 55.30 second round on a horse that loves nothing but a "need-for-speed" challenge, Lobster 43.

DAY TWO:

Day two of the championships saw the start of 82 horses in the 'Pioneer Auctions Jump-Off' with 20,000 dirhams in prize money, won by Qatar's Abdullah Braikh Al Marri on Lucas 149. In riders, Qatar and the UAE outnumbered any other country at this year's show. The second class, the 'Longines Challenge' speed class with 30,000 dirhams in prize money, presented three winners who were



▲ Toni Assaf with Mr. Sultan Al Yahyae & Patrick Aoun

▼ Abdullah Al Sharbatly





so close in time. Placed third was the UAE's Abdullah Marri on Randor K in 51.96 seconds, second was Saudi's Fahad Al Eid on Maureen in 51.49 seconds, and first was Qatar's Sheikh Ali Al Thani on that chestnut mare that jumped tremendously well during the three-day show, Dukhan (Amon).

The final class of day two was the 'Sharjah Record' Puissance sponsored by the Sharjah Islamic Bank with 80,000 dirhams in prize money. The spectators prepare themselves well for this exciting class; a true thrill for any show jumping fan. In 2011, the UAE's Mohamed Al Kumaiti set the record at 205 cm and started this year with a different horse.

With ten riders only to start, including Qatar's Ali Al Rumahi on Maradonna, Kuwait's Ali Al Khorafi on Troongraaf, Abdullah Al Sharbatly on Larkhill Cruiser, Egypt's Diah Beshir on Altaeer, and Al Kumaiti on

▲ *Sheikh Ali Al Thani*

▼ *Ali Al Rumahi*



Campanero 15 - only seven from the ten cleared 170 cm. When the fence was raised to 182cm, only six from the seven cleared, while five from the six cleared the next 197 cm upped fence. The fence was finally upped to 210 cm and there were only five riders to go.

Beshir and Altaeer, a likely favourite to clear, decided to withdraw. A personal bet was set on the warmblood Maradonna, a mare with plenty of scope and a lot of jump, and the crowd's bet was set on Larkhill Cruiser, a horse made for speed but who doesn't necessarily have that kind of scope. None of the five cleared 210 cm and were tied at 197 cm, and left to hold the 2011 205 cm record was Al Kumaiti, who on Campanero 15 only cleared 170 cm.

DAY THREE:

Day three of the event was the Grand Prix, a World Cup Qualifier. Leading



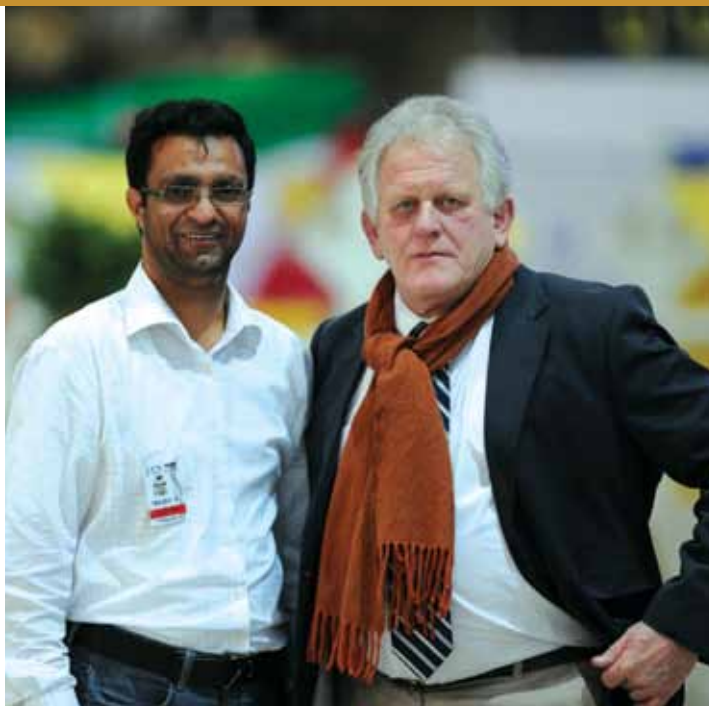
▲ Sheikh Ali Al Qassimi

▼ Khaled Al Eid

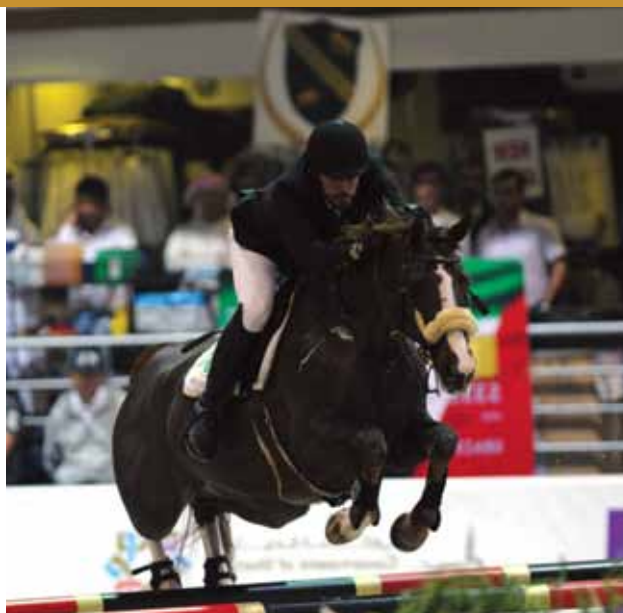




▲ Ferenc Szertirmai
▼ Jorg Naeve



▲ Yousef Al Mahmoudy & Werner Deeg
▼ Mohamed Al Owais



the Arab League standings is Khalid Al Eid with 85 points followed by Al Sharbatly with 71. Al Eid together with Vanhovee didn't have many fences down during the event, and both he and Al Sharbatly were the crowd's favourite to win the 250,000 dirhams.


The two phase 'Sharjah General Contracting' small Grand Prix was won by the UAE's Abdulla Al Marri on Alaska. The 'Sharjah Tourism

Cup' medium Grand Prix was won by Ireland's Lucy Buchanan on Kofi Anan. Left to end the Championships was the Longines Grand Prix, with two different rounds, 140 cm to 160 cm, and 32 starts.

Werner Deeg designed a very technical course with many twists and turns; very tricky and intimidating to any who wished to win that generous 250,000 dirhams. Out of 32 riders, only ten made it through

to round two.

Khalid Al Eid and Vanhovee were the first to start; they cleared only round two and were placed fifth, with 17,500 dirhams in prize money. The Ukraine's Ferenc Szertirmai on Corenso was placed fourth with 27,500 dirhams in prize money. Many felt that Germany's Jorg Naeve on his careful horse Calado 2 would win the class after clearing the first round, but they ended up with faults in the second and came in third place, with 37,500 dirhams in prize money. The "show stopper" Al Sharbatly on Lobster 43, winners of CSI***-W Dubai just two weeks before Sharjah, came in second place and won 55,000 dirhams.

No one would have guessed that an Emirati would win the Grand Prix as Saudi horses have been stealing the limelight for quite some time, but Mohamed Al Owais and Tolita cleared round one in 73.18 seconds and rode a fantastic second round to clear in 64.10 seconds. They were the surprises of the final, with no bets set on them. They were the Emirati crowd's favourites, the Emirati crowd's pleasers, and the winners of 250,000 dirhams. 



▲ Mohamed Al Owais
▼ HH Sheikh Abdullah Al Qassimi

The SERC was established in 1982 as the first equestrian club in the UAE. It was built at the initiation of HH Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah. The continuous support and guidance of HH has led the SERC to its present state as the leading UAE equestrian centre whose riders have achieved distinctive results both locally and internationally. The comprehensive establishment covers an area of four square kilometres, contains one of the largest indoor riding facilities in the Middle East, and has been at the forefront of encouraging equestrian sport within the UAE. The Sharjah racetrack was the first track constructed according to global specifications and has many memories of early horseracing in the country. Periodic races are organised at state level, the show jumping arena has witnessed numerous championships, and many UAE and international riders are alumni of these shows.



All photos by Hossein Nedaeenia

HRH PRINCESS ALIA BINT AL HUSSEIN

A ROYAL ADVOCATE FOR PURITY IN BREED & CARE OF ARABIAN HORSES

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

WE ARE HONOURED THAT HRH PRINCESS ALIA BINT AL HUSSEIN, DAUGHTER OF THE LATE KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN, HAS AGREED TO SHARE HER THOUGHTS ON HER LOVE OF HORSES, HER “GROWING TOGETHER” PROJECT, HER NEW BOOK, AND JUST WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE ARABIAN HORSE SHOW SCENE AT THE MOMENT. WITH HER MANY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND INTERESTS IN THE HORSE WORLD, INCLUDING ACTING AS PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL JORDANIAN EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION, DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL JORDANIAN STUD, GOVERNOR OF THE BRITISH ARAB HORSE SOCIETY MEMBER OF THE HONORARY COMMITTEE OF THE SPANISH RIDING SCHOOL, AND PATRON OF THE BROOKE HOSPITAL FOR ANIMALS, AND ADVOCATE, OWNER, AND BREEDER OF ARABIAN HORSES, SHE ALSO FINDS TIME FOR PHILATELY, ART, AND TAE KWONDO, - AND TO SPEAK TO HT.



BACKGROUND:

Your Royal Highness, when did your love of horses begin?

It began when my father gave me a Shetland pony when I was little and I have loved horses ever since.

Although you are so very concerned with the welfare of horses, your care and concern extends beyond horses to the welfare of all God's creatures, indeed, the motto of the Princess Alia Foundation is "Respect and Compassion toward Creation". Please tell us about your foundation and its "Growing Together" project.

The aim of the Princess Alia

Foundation (PAF) is to promote the balance, harmony and respect of all Creation, using a holistic approach and bringing all stakeholders together to work as a united front. The Foundation approaches all projects using a holistic approach, in order to create sustainable change at the grass roots level, whilst advocating for change at the policy level. Through creating positive partnerships and mobilising resources PAF aims to reduce duplication ensuring that efforts are directed where they are most needed.

One part of the PAF, an important and exciting one, is the "Growing Together" project which offers children in need the opportunity for equine therapy. It is heart-warming

to see the achievements and hear the stories of the children aided by this project. I would truly encourage you to see the results of this project and the stories of the children on <http://princessaliafoundation.blogspot.com/>.

'ROYAL HERITAGE':

Your interest in Arabian breeding and purity is well-known, as an Arabian horse owner, breeder, and judge, director of the Royal Stables of Jordan for the Preservation of the Arabian Horse, founder of the annual festival of the 'Arabian Horse at Home' and organiser of the Middle East Championships for Purebred Horses. You add to these designations another -



‘Arabian horse historian’ - with the publication of your new book “Royal Heritage”, a history of the Arabian horse in Jordan. It’s been called ‘a story of legend, romance and war’! Can you tell us about your new book?

I have been interested in the recognition and preservation of the Arab horses in Jordan for quite some time. In 1987 we organised the first Arab horse show titled ‘The Arab Horse at Home’. I wrote the book together with Peter Upton in order to tell the story of the Arab horse in Jordan from early days to the present time. In fact, it traces the history of Jordan itself from the early 20th Century.

From the time of the Arab Revolt in

1916 which drove out the Ottomans some of those early Arab mares used in the campaigns became foundation stock for the Royal Stud of Jordan. The Stud suffered tragic events over the course of history, which are detailed in the book. Yet, the Stud survives.

I included several stories and personal memories in the book, about people, horses, and events I encountered, and Peter included detailed information regarding the history, conformation and lines of these beautiful Jordanian Arabs.

BREEDING, TRAINING, AND SHOWING ABUSE:

Your keynote address at last November’s World Arabian

Horse Organization (WAHO) conference in Qatar is a lucid and comprehensive perspective on the past, present and future of the relationship between horses and humans, particularly in the Arab horse world; the past characterised by a natural respectful interaction of need based on moral guidelines, the future pointing toward gentler methods and trust, and a present of many instances of abusive breeding, training and showing practices which you challenge. HT applauds you on your bold stance in this regard. What can be done to alter the course of these abusive practices?

As I mentioned in my keynote address, there is at last a large,





loud, and I think serious outcry about show abuse. The present outcry, if sustained, may help us to bring about change, by waking up the owners to reality of the suffering of their horses, by empowering officials, from judges to DCs to ring stewards to be far more effective, and helping push us into far more practical action and decisions.

As for the trainers, I also believe that many are as desensitised to what they are doing, as are children playing violent video games to real

war footage. I know from myself that the more I think about and really become acquainted with the feelings and senses of others, the more I become aware of HOW desensitised I WAS, often not perceiving things which are in fact truly distressing. So instead of just criticising the trainers I do think that we need to actually TRY (at least) to get them to understand what the effects are of what they do.

Some may find the comments in your WAHO speech about 'Natural Horsemanship' somewhat controversial. What is it you find harmful in some of the Natural Horsemanship methods?

I do feel this is important to understand - some of the "Natural Horsemanship" methods - most notably those involving chasing away the horse in a round pen - can be quite as damaging as physical abuse - perhaps more - as they strip the creature of its will - FAST and what is left is an apathetic shell. True there was no outward cruelty and CERTAINLY the intention is good, but it is based upon incomplete or partial truths. True, wild horses keep newcomers outside the group until they have assessed how (if at all) they will fit into the complex herd system. If accepted - both newcomer and herd having had up to three days sometimes, in which to observe and figure things out - then there is usually a smooth blending - no fighting and injury-risking, nor damage to the valuable grass around by churning it up in the process. If NOT accepted, the newcomer has the option of finding

other company - it is not hemmed in, being chased away but with nowhere to GO, and only total submission and loss of identity as the alternative. That way is a form of domination - and we all know that broken minds and wills can be far harder to heal than broken bodies.

The comments in your speech regarding the healing role of horses which you describe in almost mystical terms were very touching. Can you provide further explanation of this healing faculty?

We all know that horses are not just enchanting, a healthy pastime for teenagers, ego-boosters, work companions or facilitators, entertainers - but they are also healers. Arab tradition tells us that they bear good fortune, that they ensure Divine assistance to their owners in caring for them, that they are comets combating negative forces. I believe that they really do filter away negative energies, but they do more than that.

We thank HRH Princess Alia bint Al Hussein very much for her time and thoughtful answers, but most of all for her devotion to the cause of horse welfare in sport and in show. 🇧🇪

For the full text of HRH Princess Alia's WAHO speech, please go to: <http://www.waho.org/Images/Waho2011/HRH-Princess-Alia-WAHO2011.pdf> and for more information about the Princess Alia Foundation, go to: <http://sites.google.com/site/princessaliafoundation/>

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Since 2001 the airline has supported its corporate customers through a special bonus programme – PartnerPlusBenefit – which in few countries also operates under the name of Star Alliance Company Plus. Currently PartnerPlusBenefit/Star Alliance Company Plus is available in over 100

countries and more than 80.000 companies have benefited from being enrolled in the programme.

Participation is free of charge, companies simply have to register. On international flights, operated by Lufthansa and partner airlines, points can be collected in First, Business and Economy Class. These are then credited to a company account that is managed online. Only participating companies can access their credit balance, which can then be redeemed for attractive awards, such as free flights or upgrades.

The varied range of awards available has been optimized to companies' needs. Participation in the corporate bonus programme can also be combined with Miles & More miles. In this way, employees can earn both types of points on their

flights: miles for their personal Miles & More account and benefit points for the company's account.

Registering for PartnerPlusBenefit is very easy and can be done via www.partnerplusbenefit.com

Information on all the awards and the partners participating in the programme can be found on the relevant country's home page. There you can also find out how to redeem points, check your current points balance and read all the latest news about Lufthansa's corporate bonus programme. Now is the perfect time for you to take a closer look at the programme and all that it offers.

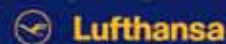
Participation in PartnerPlusBenefit definitely pays – without exception.

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www.partnerplusbenefit.com

PartnerPlusBenefit



60 SECONDS WITH

MARK TODD



© Lulu Kyriacou

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COUNTRY: ENGLAND

DATE OF BIRTH: 1ST

MARCH 1956

STAR SIGN: PISCES

PROFESSION: FULL TIME

EVENT RIDER

What is your best achievement?

Professionally, two Olympic gold medals and winning Badminton in 2011, 30 years after my first win. But personally, my two children Lauren and James.

Who is your favourite athlete (rider or other sports person)?

Roger Federder.

Do you keep any pets?

Not at the moment, sadly I don't have time.

What is your favourite movie?

I don't get much time to go to the movies sadly – any good comedy?

Who is your ideal celebrity (female or male)?

Anyone who has actually achieved something and not someone who is famous for being famous.

What is your favourite gadget?

My IPAD.

What is your favourite music record?

All sorts.

What is your second favourite sport?

Skiing.

Do you like to cook?

Yes, I love to when I have the time.

What is your strength and what is your weakness?

I am pretty laid back and I guess that

is both.

What makes you happy and what makes you sad?

I am pretty happy most of the time. Cruelty makes me sad

To your close friends & family, you are known to be?

I don't have an answer to that!

If you had the power to change something, what would you change?

The level of prize money in Eventing!

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

Where do I start? To be more punctual?

Do you support any charitable organisations?

Yes I support 'The CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Trust'. It was founded in 2005 by Catriona Williams, formerly one of New Zealand's leading international equestrian riders. Following a riding accident in 2002, she is now C6/C7 tetraplegic and confined to a wheelchair. I also support riding for the disabled.

Do you think there is any other question we should have asked but did not?

Yes you have actually. I have recently written my second autobiography – and it will be out in April 2012, 'Second Chance by Mark Todd' is published by Orion Books on 19th April, www.orionbooks.co.uk.

Mark is sponsored by New Zealand Bloodstock. For more info., visit www.marktoddeventing.com



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AND MINE ALONE WHEN I
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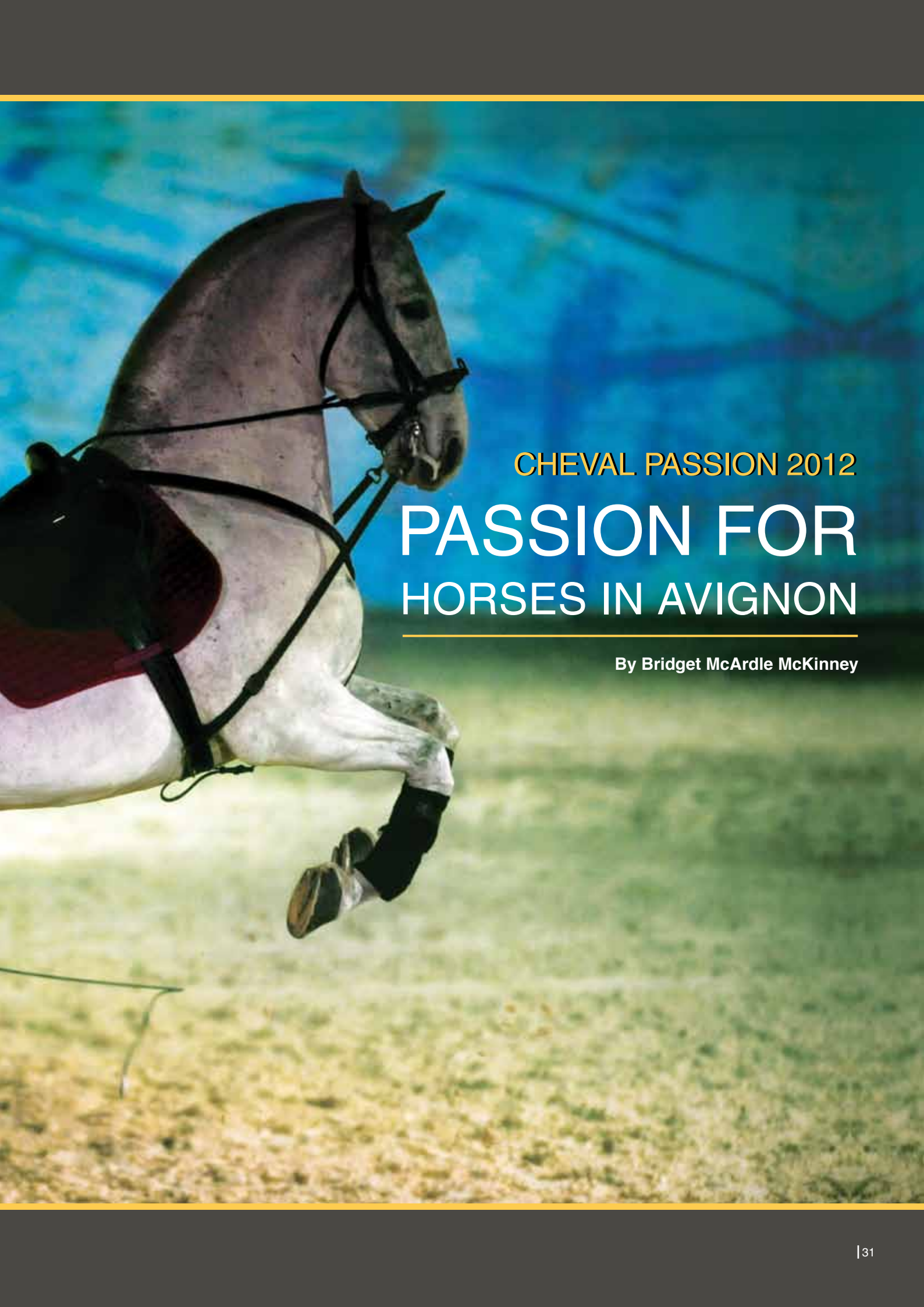
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Selyne & Jeremy Gonzales



CHEVAL PASSION 2012

PASSION FOR HORSES IN AVIGNON

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

AN ANNUAL EVENT FOR US IS TO MAKE THE JOURNEY UP FROM OUR LITTLE FISHING VILLAGE ON THE MEDITERRANEAN TO AVIGNON IN JANUARY TO ATTEND WHAT THE ORGANISERS CALL 'UN RENDEZVOUS EQUESTRE ECLECTIQUE ET CONVIVIAL'; AND THERE IS REALLY NO OTHER WAY TO DESCRIBE THE EVENT. FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS CHEVAL PASSION, A HORSE EXTRAVAGANZA AND EXHIBITION WHICH PAYS TRIBUTE TO 'L'EQUITATION DE TRADITION FRANCAISE', OR EQUITATION IN THE FRENCH TRADITION, HAS BEEN HELD IN AVIGNON. THE EVENT CATERS TO THE DELIGHT OF YOUNG AND OLD, WESTERN AND CLASSICAL, PERFORMERS AND AUDIENCE, SPECIALTY BREEDERS AND BUYERS, AND EXHIBITORS.



▲ *Horses from the Maremma*

Cowboys and 'cavaliers du grand prix', horse whisperers and Iberian dressage masters, carriage drivers and barrel racers work and perform side-by-side for four days. Breeds such as Appaloosa, Arab, Moroccan Barb, Camargue, American White/Crème, Spanish, Lipazzan, Lusitanian, Merens from the Pyrenees, Quarter horse, Shagya from Hungary, and Trakehener, as well as the specialty French breeds, including the Breton, Cob Normand, and

L'Ardennaise, among others, were all on display and many available for purchase.

The event compound is large, but very well organised, accommodating over 250 exhibitors, 1,500 horses, and 100,000 visitors and always a performance, a competition, or an exhibition or two taking place somewhere on the grounds.

One of the highlights for us is the

luncheon 'spectacle' in an enclosed arena where one can order a full Camargoise meal or assortment of cheeses and saucisson, sitting at long country trestle tables while watching a truly amazing and magical cabaret of equine movement, artistry, and the trusting interaction of human trainers and horses unbridled and free, but attuned to their trainers' every nuance.

Horse sport is not forgotten; the game of 'horse-ball' is something

that must be seen to be believed. A basketball-sized ball with a handle is tossed from rider to rider with the aim of throwing the ball through a hoop on the other team's side. Easy enough, until the ball falls to the ground, in which case one must reach all the way down at a gallop and snatch it from the ground to put it back in play – some feat!

This was a very special year for Cheval Passion - in its November meeting last year in Bali the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) added "Equitation in the French tradition" to its list of outstanding examples of intangible heritage. The list was selected from a pool of 107 nominations by a committee made up of 24 members from different nations which aims to identify and protect unique cultural traditions.

Equitation in the French tradition refers to a style of riding characterised by a sympathetic understanding between horse and rider born of mutual trust and genuine warmth resulting in a teamwork display of intricate movements with beauty and precision. This style originated in the 18th Century in the French cavalry's equestrian school at Versailles created by King Louis XV. By the early 19th Century the reputed Saumur Royal Cavalry School was opened carrying on the training methodologies and philosophies of the original academy. The trainers at Saumur are called the "Cadre Noir" for the black bicorne hats they wear.

The last great trainer in the French traditional academic style is widely thought to be riding master Nuno Oliveira (1925 – 1989) who is credited with the fusion of these traditional academic styles. He is quoted as saying, "Equestrian art is the perfect understanding and harmony between horse and rider."

The UNESCO nomination for Equitation in the French tradition stated:



▲ Camargue horses with La Montagnette



▲ Horse Tango with Magali Delgado and Frederic Pignon

"Equitation in the French tradition is a school of horseback riding that emphasises harmonious relations between humans and horses. The fundamental horse-training principles and processes are guided by non-violence and lack of constraint, blending human demands with respect for the horse's body and mood. Knowledge of the animal itself (physiology, psychology, anatomy) and human nature (emotions and the body), are complemented by a horseman's state of mind that combines skill and respect for the horse. Fluidity of movements and flexibility of joints

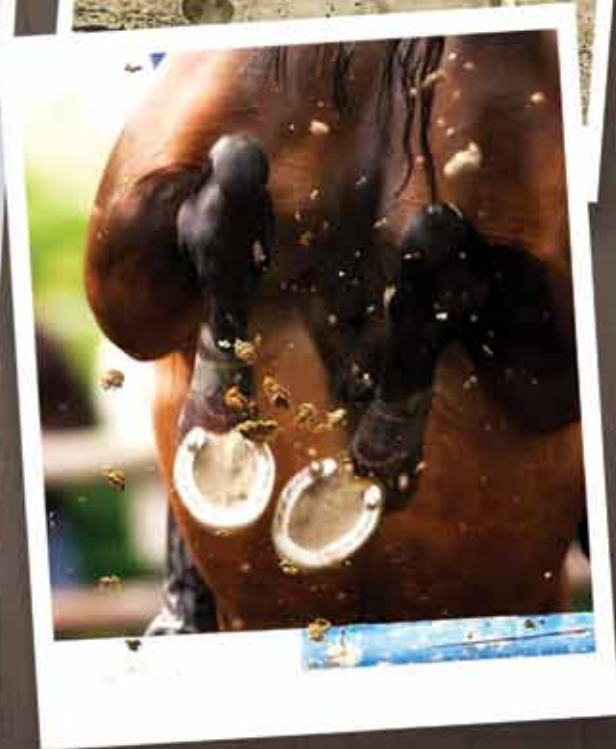
ensure that the horse participates in the exercises without coercion."

The organisers and their partners are justifiably proud of Cheval Passion and their continuing support of Equitation in the French Tradition. It is truly an eclectic and welcoming event, as promised. 🍷

For a demonstration of Equitation in the French Tradition, you are encouraged to go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmUZGDcDQPg>.

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GERARD KEENAN

GERARD KEENAN IS AN AWARD WINNING PHOTOGRAPHER FROM GALWAY, IRELAND, CURRENTLY LIVING IN LONDON.

He became interested in photography at 19 years of age having always had an interest in art. Being interested in music, he began to admire the photography on various album covers - particularly work from the record label 4AD, Minimalist art, Art Deco, The Bauhaus, various television commercials, film, indie and ambient music which also made an impression. The farm he grew up on with its wide open spaces also influenced him greatly.

His work is bought and collected worldwide, including a number of celebrity buyers.

His equestrian images are photographed in Ireland where he grew up; he likes to include only the bare minimum in his works and strives for a High contrast minimalistic feel.

Keenan has been honoured with awards from the World Photographic Arts Spider, black and white awards, and B&W Magazine USA, and has had honorary mentions with the IPA awards. His work has also been published worldwide in numerous Photography/Art magazines. 📷

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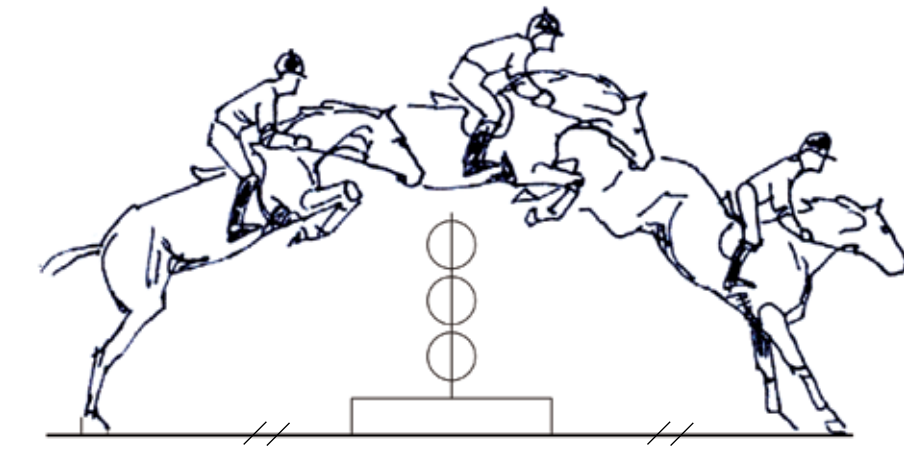
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JAYSBERG

UNDERSTANDING DISTANCES IN BRIEF

By Khaled Assem

TO KEEP THAT HARMONY IN COMPETITION, A RIDER MUST UNDERSTAND SOME BASIC FACTS IN ORDER TO BETTER ANALYSE "THE JUMP", AND ACCORDINGLY THE RELATION BETWEEN ONE JUMP AND ANOTHER.

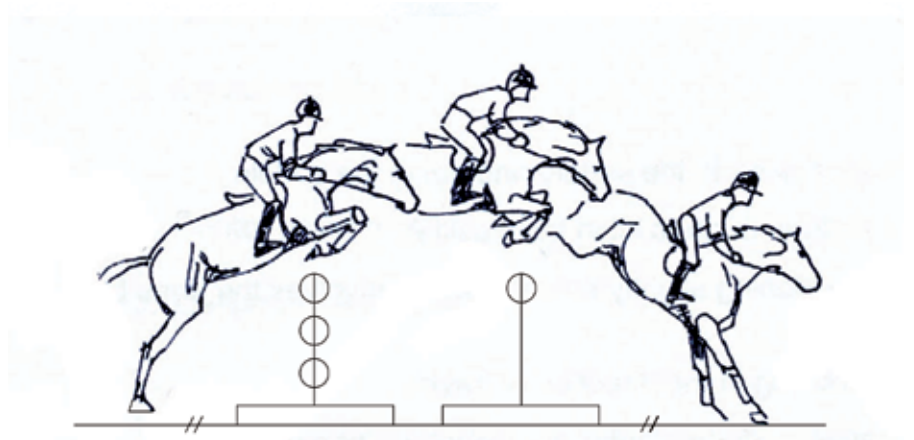


Vertical

As they say, at any competitive level, the class is won in between fences because rythem, turns and the correct take-off point are the main elements of success.

VERTICAL:

The take-off point is further from a vertical than an oxer with the highest point of the trajectory in the middle of the fence.



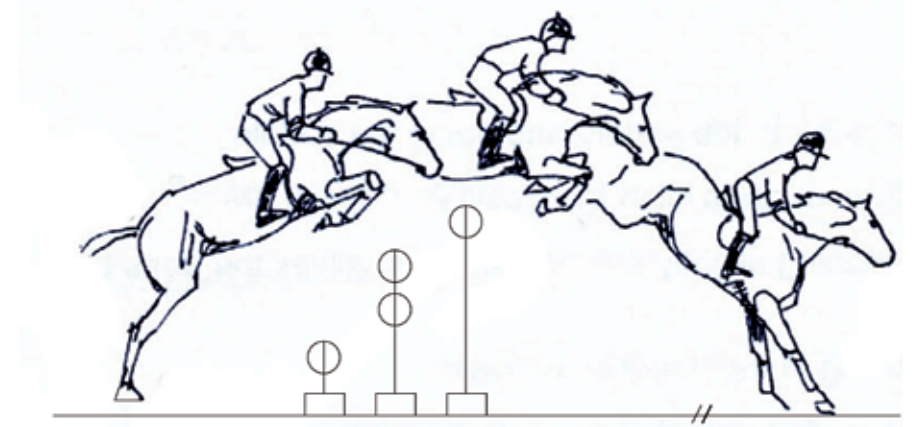
Oxer

OXER:

The take-off point is closer to an oxer as the trajectory has to cover a particular width and still the highest point of the trajectory in the middle of the fence.

TRIPLE BAR:

The take-off point is closest to a triple bar as the highest point of the trajectory would be above the last and highest element of the triple bar.



Triple Bar

With this understanding in mind, you will realise that if we look at the vertical and the oxer in the

pictures on the right, you can see that the take-off point is closer to the oxer than that to the vertical.

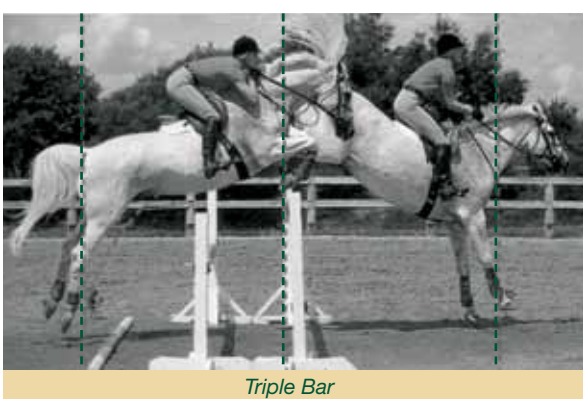
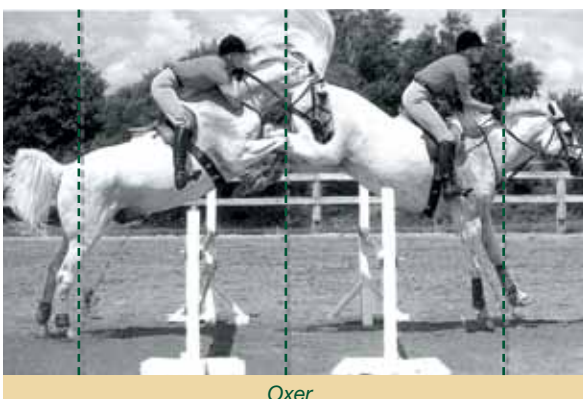
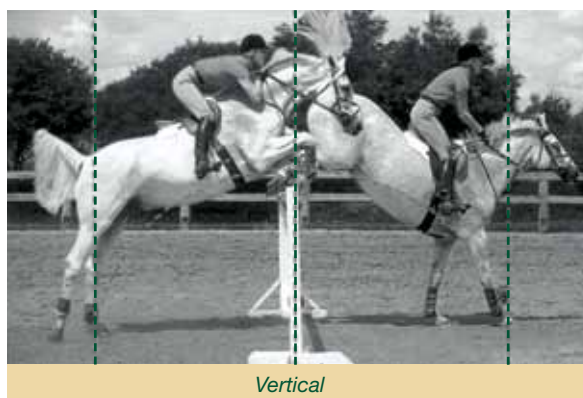
The distance between the take-off point before the fence would be equivalent to that of the landing.

The landing point is the furthest from the triple bar which has the closest take-off point.

It does seem useful to train your horse to cope with a closer take off-point to increase the angle of ascent than normal, yet taking-off closer and slower in competition will also increase the angle of descent, in turn increasing the distance of landing after the fence and affecting the related distance to the next related fence by shortening it.

It is significantly useful to ride verticals positively and keep consistent at the canter. 🐾

Compare the distance between fence to fence in the charts below to realise how it is affected by the type of the fence.



FIRST FENCE	SECOND FENCE	DISTANCE
Vertical	Vertical	7.9 m
Vertical	Oxer	7.6 m
Vertical	Ascending	7.45 m
Oxer	Vertical	7.75 m
Oxer	Oxer	7.45 m
Oxer	Ascending Oxer	7.3 m
Ascending Oxer	Vertical	7.9 m
Ascending Oxer	Ascending Oxer	7.45 m
Triple Bar	Vertical	8.05 m
Triple Bar	Oxer	7.75 m
Triple Bar	Ascending Oxer	7.6 m

No. of strides	Trot to cross pole to a distance (straight) meters.	Trot to cross pole to a distance (bending) meters.	Canter pole to a distance (straight) meters.	Canter pole to a distance (bending) meters.	Fence to fence distance (straight) meters	Fence to fence distance (bending) meters.
1	5.5 - 6.16 M	5.5 - 6.16 M	6.66 M	5.66 - 6.66 M	7.30 M	6.30 - 7.30 M
2	9.82 M	8.82 M	10.32 M	9.32 M	10.98 M	9.98 M
3	13.48 M	12.48 M	13.98 M	12.98 M	14.64 M	13.64 M
4	17.14 M	16.14 M	17.64 M	16.64 M	18.30 M	17.30 M
5	20.80 M	19.8 M	21.30 M	20.30 M	21.96 M	20.96 M
6	24.46 M	23.46 M	24.96 M	23.96 M	25.62 M	24.62 M
7	28.12 M	27.12 M	28.62 M	27.62 M	29.28 M	28.28 M
8	31.78 M	30.78 M	32.28 M	31.28 M	32.94 M	31.94 M
9	35.44 M	34.44 M	35.94 M	34.94 M	36.60 M	35.60 M
10	39.10 M	38.10 M	39.6 M	38.6 M	40.26 M	39.26 M
11	42.76 M	41.76 M	43.76 M	42.26 M	43.92 M	42.92 M

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AT A GLANCE

By Soha N. Elibyari

“DRESSAGE, AN ART THAT IS NEBULOUS TO THOSE WHO DO NOT PRACTICE IT, A CHALLENGE TO THOSE WHO DO AND AN ECSTASY TO THOSE WHO MASTER IT.”

WITH ALL THE FRENCH TERMINOLOGY USED IN DRESSAGE, DID THE FRENCH INVENT IT? NO, ACTUALLY THE HORSES DID. THE MOVEMENTS OF DRESSAGE ARE NATURAL TO THE HORSE AND ARE SEEN PERFORMED BY WILD HORSES IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT. THE CHALLENGE IN DRESSAGE IS TO HAVE THE HORSE WILLINGLY PERFORM THESE MOVEMENTS UNDER THE RIDER'S WEIGHT AND ON COMMAND.



The Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) rules for dressage events states, “The object of dressage is the harmonious development of the physique and ability of the horse. As a result it makes the horse calm, supple, loose and flexible, but also confident, attentive and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with his rider.”

However, this concept is not new, for as far back as 2,300 years ago, the Greek Xenophon, friend and follower of Socrates, stated in his book ‘The Art of Horsemanship’ that, “what the horse does under compulsion,

is done without understanding, and there is no beauty in it either, any more than if one should whip and spur a dancer. There would be a great deal more un-gracefulness than beauty in either a horse or a man that was so treated. No, he should show off all his finest and most brilliant performances willingly and at a mere sign”. Xenophon also set rules for choosing, caring and riding horses. He stressed the importance of teaching the groom the proper way to treat the horse. Xenophon’s teachings remain valid to this day. His philosophy of “the art of riding is based on rewards and punishments” is still strictly followed

by most classical riders while keeping in mind that punishment can just be a cessation of reward and should not be through means of inflicting pain upon the horse.

This humanitarian approach to horsemanship was also reflected in the relation between Alexander the Great of Macedonia (356-323 BC) and his fiery stallion Bucephalus. For eighteen years, Bucephalus was Alexander’s constant companion. When Bucephalus died, Alexander founded in his honour the city of Alexandria Bucephalia (East of the Indus River in India).

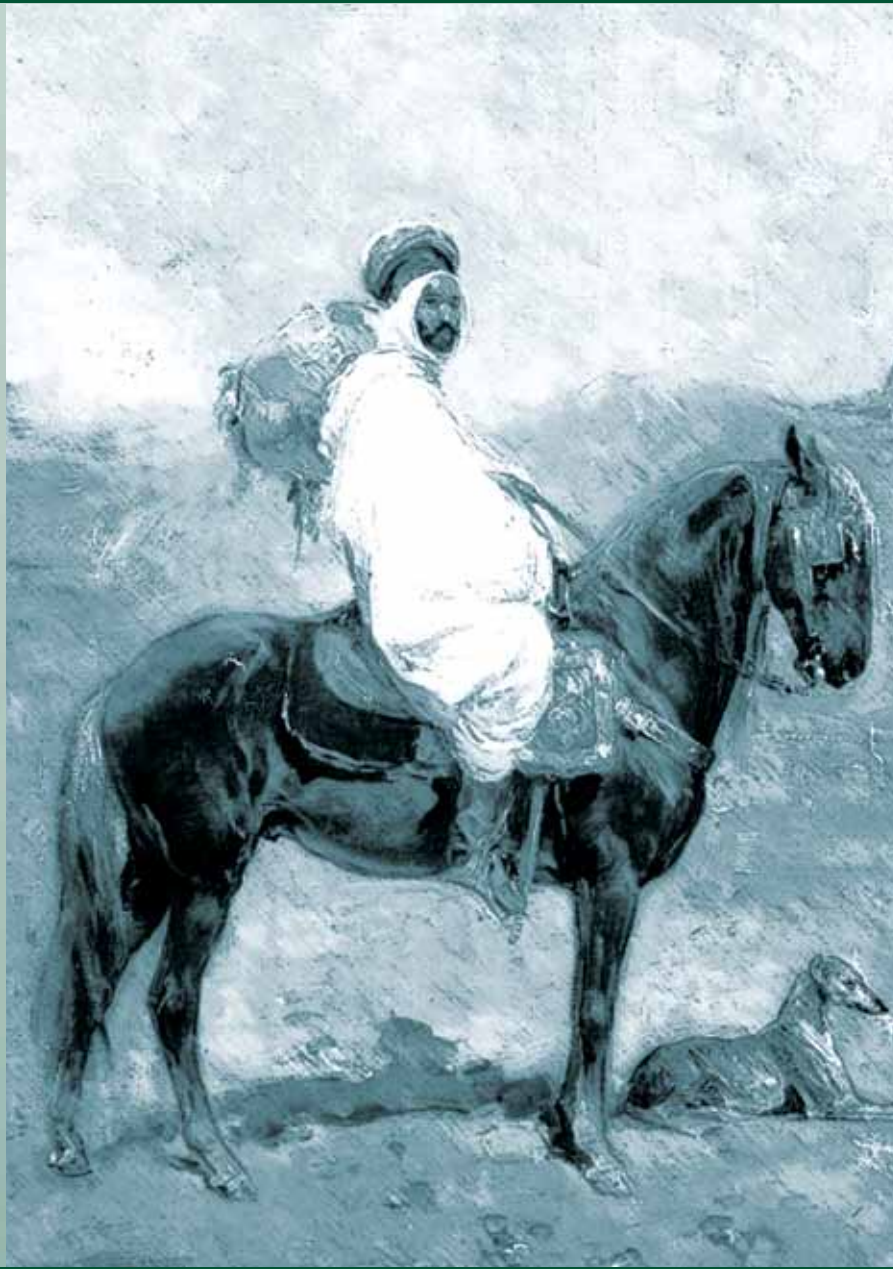
In North Africa and in the Arabian Peninsula, tribes and Arabs (who were extremely talented natural horsemen) trained their horses with lots of compassion and love as they were their pride and their loyal companions. They rode their horses without bridles using small switches (thin, flexible sticks). They bred their horses carefully, keeping the breed pure and enhancing

the main features of the Arabian horse namely: speed, stamina, endurance, flexibility, intelligence, loyalty and beauty.

On the other side of the globe, in America, from the seventeenth century on, Native Americans were able to catch wild mustangs, using leather lassos and a great deal of skill. They showed extraordinary

talent in breaking in these mustangs, right after capture, and often within an hour they were able to lead the animals quietly away, submissive and obedient. They rode securely either bareback or on a blanket which was firmly tied on. They preferred coloured horses and chose to breed the ones with definite spotted patterns, while not neglecting the horse's hardiness,





▲ *The Berber horse of North Africa*

speed, stamina, beauty and character which are characteristics of the Appaloosa breed.

Throughout history, horses have been used in war and peace. The ancients mostly used chariots pulled by one, two or three horses. The chariot of the sun and the chariot of Ramses II are two well known examples. At that time, the horse tack was composed of a rug that did not give the rider a secure seat in combat on horseback. In addition to that, the simple snaffle or the rope around the neck of the horse did not allow good contact and submission. It was only under

the reign of Charlemagne (King of France and Emperor of the West 742 - 814 AD) that the saddle and stirrups, were imported from China through the Arabs. Moreover, using mouthpieces with long cheek and curb chains, and the iron shoe with nails (studs) gave the rider both better control and a more secure seat which allowed him better manoeuvrability in war.

In Europe, the Middle Ages witnessed the breeding of light draft horses that were able to carry the rider (knight) and his heavy armoured outfit weighing as much as 180 Kilograms.

The invention of gun powder, rifles and hand guns changed the tactics of war and rendered the armoured outfits obsolete. As a result light draft horses were no longer bred to be used in combat and the need for lighter, more manageable mounts arose.

During the Italian Renaissance (mid XIV, XV and XVI century), Federico Grisone started the first equitation academy which attracted noblemen from all Europe. He introduced trot exercises into his training programs. However, his teaching aids were so brutal and violent they drove away many followers. On the other hand, in France, Antoine de Pluvinel employed a much more humane approach and never advocated the use of force. During training de Pluvinel preferred working the horses thoroughly by hand, often while they were tied between two posts, known as “the pillars”, the use of which was his own invention. He also included in his lessons “airs above the ground” which are still performed today at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna.

Following the Pluvinel, was Francois Robichon de la Gueriniere (1687-1751). He wrote two books “Ecole de Cavalerie” in 1735 and “Elements de Cavalerie” in 1740. The first book was translated into German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. It laid the path to the true classical school. No wonder Robichon de la Gueriniere is considered a milestone on the path to modern dressage riding and to a large degree the modern sport is based on his teachings.

Classical dressage flourished amid the splendour of the Baroque age (1580 – 1750). Performers dressed in elaborate costumes, rode superbly collected horses. This type of horse was bred in Andalusia using Berber horses as a basis then cross-bred with ancient Spanish and Arab breeds. Although compact and strong this breed still managed to look very elegant. Its body was rounded, its head long and striking and the profile of its nose slightly convex. It carried its

strong neck high, had a broad chest and a rounded powerful croup, rather short but strong, well defined legs and small hooves.

Classical dressage movements, like many other equestrian sports had their origins in military exercises. Figure riding (circles etc.) was a part of military training which taught riders how to manoeuvre and how to move as a group in an orderly fashion. The routine contained a brief outline of all the formations and movements which the cavalry would have to use in the field and in battle, so that cavalymen gained confidence and obtained a feeling for tempo, intervals and distances; they learnt how to wheel about and to stay together and how to maintain spacing and distance between each rider. With little room to spare in the arena, the rider must be able to estimate distance and tempo correctly, training for both instinct and eyesight. All these advantages have been retained in figure riding to the present day.

Classical dressage is still honoured in the two best known schools of dressage today, namely the School of Cavalry in Saumur (France) and the Spanish Riding School in Vienna (Austria). The late Franz Mairinger (1915 - 1978), a former Bereiter of the Spanish Riding School wrote, "If you want to know how a horse should be ridden, see how he moves by himself when free. How he walks, trots and canters. Have a close look and see the beauty, the rhythm and harmony of his movements.... Preserve his natural gaits. Preserve his personality; preserve his instinct to go forward. Do this and you must be successful because you are respecting nature's wisdom. Give him back his natural balance, with your additional weight on his back. That is the essence of schooling, training or dressage....."

Dressage was first included in an Olympic programme in the Stockholm games in 1912. The rider was to enter at the gallop, show collection and extension in all 3 gaits (walk, trot and canter), rein-

back, turn on the hocks, perform four flying changes on a straight line and finally jump five obstacles (ranging from 5 cm to 110 cms) the last of which was a barrel being rolled towards the horse. The object was to test courage, calmness and obedience of the cavalry horse. It encouraged general purpose riding on a general purpose horse.

The Olympic Games were interrupted from their initially six, later four, years cycle by the war and only much later in 1932 when the venue was Los Angeles were the Piaffe and Passage introduced to Grand Prix Dressage (instead of the jumps). By 1936 Olympics, staged in pre-war Germany, all the movements of the Grand Prix known today were included.

With evolution of technology in anatomy, photography and motion analysis better understanding of the horse muscles and their motion was achieved. Some movement aids and training techniques have been altered accordingly. Breeding horses especially suited for dressage took the sport to a new height. And so did the evolution of veterinary medicine.

So what is Dressage? In French it means to train a horse. Also the verb "dresser" (from which dressage is derived) means "to make something stand up". Rising of the head and neck of the horse cannot take place naturally until the horse is trained to collection which is the essence of dressage.

Mueseler, a brilliant all-round rider and teacher, director of the Beerman Riding Institute in Berlin explained, "The classical art of riding can best be defined as the method that aims at obtaining perfect harmony between rider and horse in a natural way and in full consideration of the psychology of the horse..." and THAT says it all. 🍷

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AL SHARBATLY STUD

A LABOUR OF LOVE

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

OFF THE ALEXANDRIA DESERT ROAD, AWAY FROM THE NOISE AND COMMOTION, AL SHARBATLY STUD IS AN OASIS OF CALM AND BEAUTY. ENTERING THE GATES AND DRIVING DOWN A TUNNEL OF SHADE TREES, YOU SEE THE HUGE STRAW BEDDED PADDOCKS FILLED WITH FOALS AND MARES. BIG HAPPY DOGS WAG UP TO GREET. WE STARTED WANDERING AROUND. AT THE FENCE WE STOP AND WAIT WHILE A GROUP OF HORSES SLOWLY MAKES ITS WAY OVER TO US, NOT FEARFUL, NOT PARTICULARLY CURIOUS, JUST FRIENDLY AND USED TO FRIENDLINESS.



Nasr al Sharbatly (Simeon Sharav x Zizi)

Established in 1998 Sultan Al Sharbatly and partner Nicki Knoth realised a dream of preserving what is called Straight Egyptian Arabian horses. According to The Pyramid Society, one of the most highly-regarded Arabian horse breeders' organisations in the world, in order to be considered 'Straight Egyptian' a horse must trace in every line of its pedigree to purebred Arabian horses born in the Arabian Peninsula. Sultan and Nicki have developed a stud which represents and preserves the purity and beauty of this breed. Proving the success of their dedication and effort, they have won several national and international titles.

Their breeding philosophy is to breed a well balanced horse that can win in a beauty show but still remain a functional horse with good fundamentals, strong bodies, refined movement and, last but not least, strong showy attitude, which is one of their main focal points. The stallions are exceptionally friendly and, as we are told, are not just used for stud, but are ridden.

In the Arabian breed, family line is traced from the mare and at Al Sharbatly Stud the mares are descended from three of the elite

strains: Dahman, Obayan and Saqklawi, and each of them has created a dynasty of her own.

The foundation mares were Straight Egyptian Arabians mainly imported from Germany. In the past the stud used outside stallions, carefully choosing the right pick for each mare. The first significant stallion in the stud was imported from Germany, Sheikh Mahboub (Sheikh el Araby x Bint Mahboub) who sired all the mares over two years in the stud. From this breeding came the new star of the stud, Salman Al Sharbatly (Sheikh Mahboub x Djidani el Dahab), a young very promising stallion who just proved himself in his first breeding season. Of Salman, a pleased and proud Sultan says, "He exceeded our expectations and you will be hearing a lot about him and his offspring."

The second significant stallion was home-grown, Nasr Al Sharbatly (Simeon Sharav x Zizi) who has already proven himself in the show ring by taking National Champion Colt of Egypt, not once, but twice. And even his offspring have already won several of titles.

The third stallion of Al Sharbatly Stud is Hafid Ali el Dahab (MA Alisha x

KEN Alia). He is a well-known winner of several championships in Egypt and Europe. For the past two years he has been shown and has been standing at a stud in Europe.

Al Sharbatly Stud is all about breeding the best of the lines and that involves showing and winning in breeders' championships, but as Nicki says, "The success in the beauty shows is great fun but it is not only about winning in the shows, it's about seeing the success of your distinctive breeding programme in producing beauty and purity in the breed."

Sultan and Nicki are passionate about their dream and passionate about Egyptian Arabians. And it's obvious why they like Egypt so well. "Egypt is the mother country of the straight Egyptian horses", says Nicki. Sultan adds, "Egypt is a perfect country for breeding Arabian horses due to good weather conditions plus people here love and respect the Arabian breed as this is one of the treasures of Egypt." 🇪🇬

You can learn more about Al Sharbatly Stud by visiting their website: www.alsharbatlystud.com





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EGYPT'S GROOMS

THE FORGOTTEN SOLDIERS (Part 1)

By Karim Mekawi



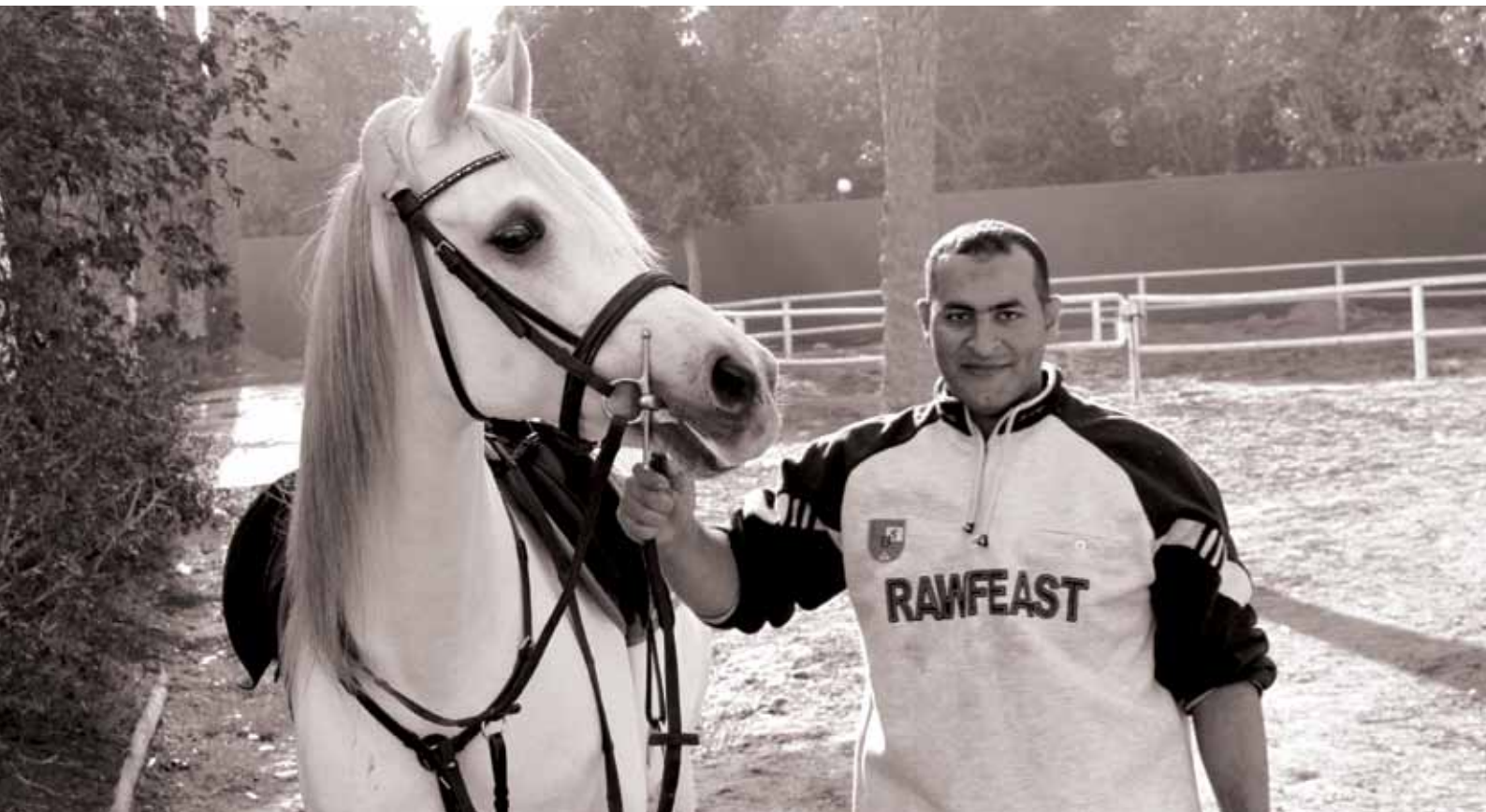


AIMING THE SPOTLIGHT
ON OUR EQUESTRIAN
SUPERSTARS
DURING THEIR PRIZE
CEREMONY, WE SEE
ALL THOSE LEGENDARY
RIDERS ABOARD THEIR
TRIUMPHANT HORSES
AWAITING THE GLORY
OF A GRAND TITLE OR
AN EXCITING CHEQUE
OF MONEY BUT THEN
WE SEE THE LOYAL
GROOM STANDING
BY THE ARENA RAILS
WATCHING, AWAY
FROM THE LIME LIGHT,
HARVESTING THE
FRUIT OF HIS HARD
WORK AND WEARING A
PRICELESS SMILE FULL
OF MEANING, EMOTION
AND PRIDE.

These hard-working employees are the reason this all happens and are very much behind the scenes making sure the horse is in top form for the next event, giving all that they have in order to prepare their equine partner for what the rider really wants.

A profession such as this in Egypt does not require a college degree or a certification to work with horses. There is much more than that, it entails patience, accuracy, acquired experience and best of all – love and will to provide for those four-legged creatures.

Upon interviewing some of the grooms in Egypt, one can discern loyalty to the horses they work with, as well as a special relationship that one cannot immediately comprehend. It is indeed “more than just a horse” – which is a quote that I heard very often. Although some of them may not have completed their education, or even get paid less than they would wish for, nevertheless they are still determined to continue their job as grooms and serve the



▲ Omer Ebeid & Sary

one creature they say was “A gift from God.”

Grooms in Egypt are indeed a special story that can be very curious for some and interesting for others but which cannot be summed up in a single article, therefore to do them justice a series of chronicles would be necessary. They are indeed the recollection of experiences, memories, destiny, hardship, triumph and loss all in one blend. “It is not a job that I took a diploma for, it is a hobby and a craft that my father and grandfather taught me”, says Shaaban Ebeid at the Sakkara Country Club who has been a groom for 20 years now. “I quit middle school and went to work with horses at Mrs. Wigdan El Barbary’s Stud farm, went to Siwa for a year, came back and then settled here with more horses.” He also gets a bit political and speaks about the situation of grooms in Egypt and how the majority are not given sufficient appreciation regarding fixed working hours, improved stable facilities as well as better pay. “Grooms in Europe, for example, get paid a lot and some riders there can’t even afford to hire one because grooming there is

considered expensive labour.”

Shaaban can be seen daily walking around the stable yard, grooming his horses, feeding them, shifting bales of wood shaving to his horses’ boxes to make them most comfortable. “I have a five year old Arabian mare here, called Basbousa – owned by a German girl. She’s very special with a lot of character...I really spoil her”, says Shaaban about the one mare that takes up plenty of his time and who he treats as his daughter. He also goes on to tell me an interesting story regarding a horse called ‘Voltaire’ who had all the qualities of a decent show jumper, but was terrorised by the trailer and hardly went to shows due to that complex that he had. “I used to lure that monster to go inside and I stayed with him till we arrived to the show grounds, but I realised that he genuinely started to get comfortable when I kept him company in the trailer.” It is an unexplained fact and he doesn’t even know how it happened.

Shaaban and his brothers all work in the horse industry and have been doing so for the last two decades, however one younger

brother who looks after four horses, does it with an unsound hip after a serious accident years ago with one aggressive stallion that resulted in surgery and a work break for six months. “I couldn’t work for months, and I was depressed due to financial issues, as well as the fact that I didn’t see horses on a daily basis”, says Omar about his arduous experience with doctors, unemployment, finance, and most of all the horses he dealt with. On the subject of general appreciation towards grooms, Omar considers that only 20% of grooms in Egypt properly receive sufficient gratitude whether tangible or intangible. Nevertheless, he still does it and gives his horses he works with a great deal of time, effort and dedication even with a hip that does not aid him.

Truly, one can easily say that there is so much surrounding grooms as individuals that one can be touched by, especially the stories of adversity and difficulty that most of us are not aware of.

The connection between a horse and his groom is very unique, and once a groom gets attached to one it becomes very difficult to let go.

Even with the younger generation of grooms who are in their twenties, they find it to be a great challenge when thinking of another living. “I don’t think I can imagine myself working as anything else, I finished university, but horses are in my blood, believe it or not”, says Amin from Ferosia Club who saddles for Ibrahim El Bastawisy.

However, one otherwise unremarkable groom catches my attention due to his intriguing past with riders abroad and with the enthusiasm that keeps him going on a daily basis. “I like working with winners [horses], they keep me motivated” says Ahmed Abdel Halim who served a few years with Egyptian Show jumper Daa Beshir as well as the former Chef d’equipe of the Egyptian National Team – Eng. Samir Abdelfatah, for their horses in Saudi Arabia. “I worked for an average pay, but I still did it because Al Mandoub and Daa kept winning and that kept me going”, explains Ahmed about the horse and rider combination that influenced his life the most. Ahmed also talks to me about his experience in Europe and how the grooms there pushed him to improve his work and perfect it. Not only that, but he realised that grooms abroad have fixed working hours with an incomparable pay to grooms in Egypt, and also have better facilities and equipment to help them.

Ahmed also elaborates on how high the competition is in Europe and how easily one can be replaced, even as a groom. “In Europe, your work has to be perfect, if you do the same mistake twice, your employer will ask you to leave on the spot and invest the 2,000 Euros in someone worthwhile.”

His experience abroad narrates itself as he talks about his journey in Saudi Arabia, and his impressions about Arab riders like Khaled Al Eid, HRH Prince Abdullah bin Miteb, Ramzy Al Duhami and at Saudi business tycoon Dr. Khaled Al Jeraisy’s stables where he saw all those riders going in and out. “I saw a lot that is behind the scenes, I really saw what equipment these grooms are given, what tack they use and most of all the groom accommodation which

I never saw here in Egypt”. Ahmed thinks that not all grooms in Egypt are given full appreciation and that it all goes down to one equation; who you work for, what standard of work you are doing and for how many horses you work in accordance to your pay.

When watching the Arab league show jumping qualifications for the World Cup on television, Ahmed points out several of the riders that he got to meet through the shows he went to, the horses that lodged in the stalls next to his and how the experience of living with European and Arab grooms was very educational for him.

But then again, not only the grooms who travel abroad learn new experiences from people, but grooms also learn from local circumstances. “Surely people that we previously worked for taught us something, whether professionally or personally” says Mahmoud Mohamed who’s been around horses for 23 years now, with no consideration to make another living. Together, his five horses and four children form the number “9” which is very dear to him. Former groom for a lot of people including Abdullah Faisal Al Sabbah,

Osman Abou El Gheit, Mohsen Tantawy and Egyptian International show jumping rider Ibrahim Sami, he set a major goal that he tries everyday to achieve – “Make the horse happy.”

It is an objective that most grooms try to reach, but the question is – are they really happy? Looking at the very feisty and hot tempered 30-something year old mare ‘Alia’ that Mahmoud looks after, she really does give the word “happiness” a different meaning. “She is easily 30 now, and she is still very careful about what you give her, which makes it more difficult to look after her.” But here she is; an ancient and happy four-legged creature, with 30 years on her girth, and a couple of more years of life to give.

In the end, I can easily say that my personal perceptions were raised a notch when sitting with just a handful of the numerous horse grooms in Egypt and taking notes while they recited their personal, side-by-side, stories with horses that altered their careers as well as their views on the appreciation of grooms in Egypt, how they think grooms abroad are being treated and the horses they cannot part with. 🇪🇬

▼ Ahmed Abdelhalim & Easyjet



DRESSAGE FOR JUMPING (PART 8)

By Dr. Mohamed Elsherbini

THE MAIN AIM OF LATERAL MOVEMENTS – EXCEPT LEG-YIELDING – IS TO DEVELOP AND INCREASE THE ENGAGEMENT OF THE HINDQUARTERS AND THEREBY ALSO THE **COLLECTION** WHILE THEY ALL SHARE THE BENEFIT OF SUPPLENESS AND LATERAL RESPONSIVENESS OF THE HORSE.



ITEMS IN COMMON:

In all lateral movements – shoulder-in, travers, renvers, and half-pass, the horse is slightly bent and moves on different tracks. The bend or flexion must never be exaggerated so that it does not impair the rhythm, balance, and fluency of the movement.

In lateral movements, the pace should remain free and regular in order to maintain **constant impulsion**, yet it must be supple and balanced. The impulsion is always lost because of the rider's preoccupation with bending the horse and pushing it sideways. It's advisable to ride the horse **forward** and **straight** after each lateral movement so as to prevent the horse from turning sour.

SHOULDER-IN:

When the horse is able to perform shoulder-out and leg-yielding movements it can be ready for shoulder-in. In shoulder-in the horse is ridden with a slight bend around the inside leg of the rider maintaining engagement and a constant angle of approx. 30 degrees. The horse

is **bent away** from the direction in which it is moving. The horse's inside foreleg crosses in front of the outside one, and the inside hind leg steps forward under the horse's weight following the track of the outside foreleg.

Using the corner could help in performing the movement. When riding on the left hand rein, for example, the horse is prepared with a half-halt aid after leaving the corner. Shift your weight to the horse's inner hind leg, while maintaining the **same** contact of both reins; lead the horse with the right hand which is moved sideways out from the neck, supported by the left rein pushing

against the neck. Apply the left leg strongly **on** the girth to maintain impulsion and the right one **behind** the girth to preserve bending.

The advantage of **impulsion** which is created by engaging the inner hind leg is used to send the horse energetically straight after shoulder-in. Stop immediately when the horse becomes tense, irregular in pace and heavy in hand. These are signs that the horse is not ready for the movement and one should go back to **shoulder-out** for a while then try again after few lessons.

TRAVERS:

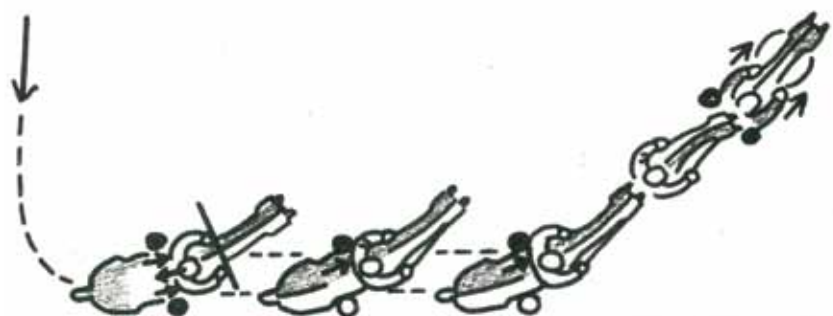


Fig 1 SHOULDER-IN

In travers, the horse is more bent around the inside leg of the rider than in shoulder-in with an angle of 35 degrees. The foreleg of the horse remains on the track and the quarters are moved inwards. The horse's outside legs pass and cross in front of the inside legs. The horse is bent in the direction in which it is moving.

A slight cut in the corner could help in starting travers. The rider should put more weight on the left seat bone if going to the left. The rider's inside leg, (left one in this case), is on the girth for impulsion and bending around it, and the outside leg is behind the girth to maintain bending and keep the horse's quarters away from the track. The left hand of the rider (inside) should be away from the horse's neck to guide the horse and obtain slight neck flexion while the other hand is supportive by pushing the right rein against the horse's neck with **equal** contact. The rider should not exceed a few strides with good **balance** and should never lose **impulsion**.

RENVERS:

It is the inverse movement of travers. The hindquarters remain on the track while the foreleg is moved inward. In theory, there's no difference in the horse's shape and movement

between travers and renvers but in travers the horse's foreleg is on track and in renvers the hindquarters are on track. If moving to the right (left rein leading) when performing renvers, the left lateral pair of legs pass and cross in front of the right lateral ones.

The rider should shift his weight towards the direction where the horse is going. The rider's right leg creates pressure on the girth while the left is kept behind the girth to keep bending and to keep the quarters on the track. The rider should apply the same **contact** of both reins with the right rein away from the horse's neck and the left one pushing against the neck.

In travers and renvers horse and rider look towards the direction in which they are going, with the horse bent **towards** this direction.

HALF PASS:

It is a variation of travers, executed on the diagonal instead of along the wall (sides) of the arena. The horse should be bent around the inside leg of the rider and in the direction it is moving with the shoulders of the horse leading, and **not** the hindquarters.

The rider can start this movement out of a circle as shown in figure 4. The rider puts more weight on his inner seat bone with pressure from his inside leg, (the left one in this example), on the girth keeping the horse bent around and also keeping the **impulsion**.

The right leg of the rider, (outside one), is positioned behind the girth to move the horse sideways. The left hand of the rider is kept away from the horse's neck to lead the direction and the right one is pushing the right rein against the neck keeping the **same** contact of both reins.

It is a **mistake** if the impulsion is lost in this movement and also if the hind leg of the horse touches the track before the foreleg (**too much angle**).

For show jumpers, always remember that lateral work is not applied to perform a dressage test but to give the horse suppleness, balance, engagement and impulsion. The rider should not be preoccupied with the sideways movement and the angle of the horse more than **forwardness** and **impulsion**.

Reference: Training Show Jumpers By Anthony Paalman



Fig 2 TRAVERS



Fig 3 RENVERS

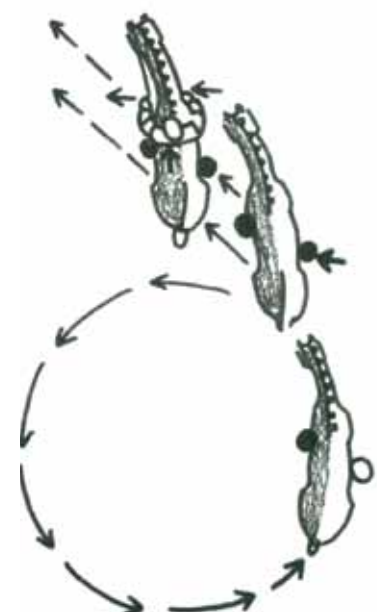



Fig 4 HALF PASS



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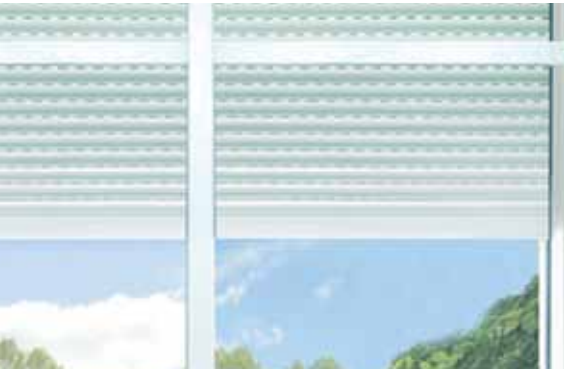
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