

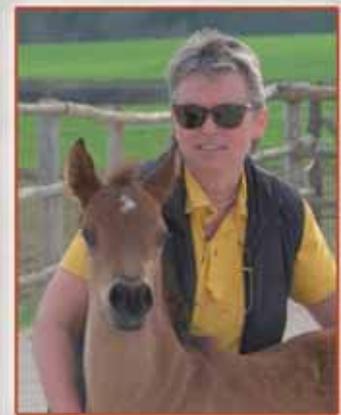
Straight Egyptian Breeding Concepts:

The Tre Balzane Stud

in Italy

by **Simone Leo**
photos by **Monika Savier**

“What are the horses our authors are breeding?” this was the question we asked ourselves, so we decided to embark on a Desert Heritage series on the breeding concepts of our contributors. First to come is Monika Savier, a German social scientist who moved to Italy for professional reasons 20 years ago and founded Tre Balzane stud there. She has been writing for us since the magazine was started, with her particular contribution being her “Desert Breeding” series in which she researches the history of the Arabian horse in his own countries of origin. I visited her in her stud in the green hills of Umbria, about 100 km north of Rome, where she told me her story.



Monika Savier with TB Zaby

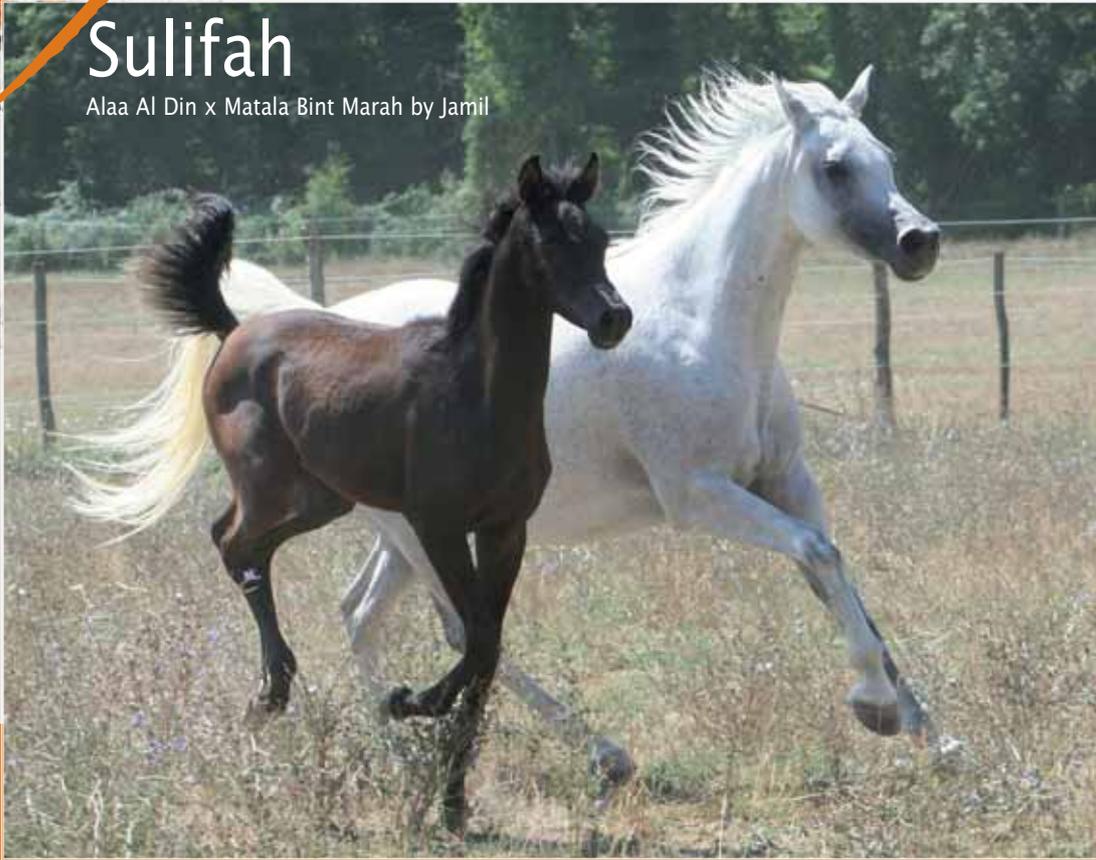
Where did your love of horses originate?

I am from the area around Aachen, a German town situated on the borders to Belgium and the Netherlands, and almost everything is centered on horse breeding and riding there. After school, we girls would go and groom and ride horses, and the boys would go and play soccer. When I went to West Berlin for university studies and later for working there, that was 15 years of seeing horses only on TV for me, as we had a wall around the town and there was almost no space for horses to live in. From 1985 on, I worked in Italy and decided to make rural living and having horses and dogs my hobby, in addition to my professional work. During

the first years, I bred Anglo Arabians and would use purebred Arabian stallions now and again, for improvement. What convinced me was the character of the purebreds, their intelligence and sensitivity. It was so easy to create a very personal relationship with them – even if it’s certainly just as easy to destroy this with keeping and treating them wrongly. I decided to switch over to breeding purebred Arabians. In order to breed successfully, it was my opinion that the behaviour of mares and stallions should be analysed exactly, their life in the stud should be as close to nature as possible, and they should have the freedom of roaming meadows and pastures in small herds during

Sulifah

Alaa Al Din x Matala Bint Marah by Jamil



Tb Yasir

Salaa El Dine x Sulifah



the day so they could establish their order of rank and develop their independence. I know you cannot start bringing Arabians in from pasture in a rush when visitors are already in the yard, especially after the horses have taken a roll in the mud after a rain. That's why many Arabians are, tragically, kept in box stalls, to be ready for visitors at any time. But it's possible to make compromises instead of keeping the horses stabled all the time. In my stud, the horses are stabled, well-groomed, on Sundays,

while during the week, they are outdoors and may look any way they want. I just won't accept visitors then.

What is the key to success in breeding for you?

Stable and pasture management, feeding, social behaviour, all of these are crucial factors for successful breeding. They are often dismissed when people go and want to buy an Arabian. They are impressed by the pictures of beauty they see in TUTTO ARABI and they think, these horses belong

Tb Shadiya

Bayfyrre x Shalimar
by Khaled El Assuad



into a plush stable complete with chandeliers. They only start to doubt when the mares fail to conceive or the stallions start to bite or weave, and it's often too late then. In my experience, it is much easier to heal an exterior injury in a horse than an internal one, one which has a traumatic origin. What we do here is experiment on different ways of giving the horses as much freedom as possible so they will develop not only beauty and health, but also mental power which enables them to cope with the stress of showing or

sports performance without any problems. This will also have a positive effect on fertility. This year, we had almost 30 (outside) mares to be served by my 3 stallions, and we had a conception rate of 100%. Close observation of the behaviour of both stallion and mare will serve to replace ultrasound tests in many cases and helps the vet to find out the why of any problems. Our stallions have their stalls inside the mares' stable, which serves to create a naturally sexualised atmosphere, guaranteeing quick conception with the

Ramses

Adnan x Ansata Rebecca
by Ansata Abu Sudan



Ibn El Nil Rhm

Montasir x Nile Allure
by Ansata halim Shah

mares and high fertility with the stallions.

And of course, there are genetics. Breeding straight Egyptians, I had to study the genepool present in order to reach my breeding goals.

Is it the good horse that makes a pedigree into a good pedigree? Or is it the good pedigree that makes a horse valuable?

Both are true. All of us want an Arabian to our liking. I agree with that old proverb agricultural breeders have: “where there isn’t anything, you won’t get anything”.

Meaning that the mare needs to be good in herself and by using a noble stallion, one that fits genetically, you can hope for an even better foal. Horses who have a good pedigree and nothing else will usually not live up to expectations. Genetics are a broad field; they give some landmarks and the hope that we have influenced reproduction in a creative and positive way. However, all of us know that in spite of the quite limited gene pool we have for straight Egyptians, not even full siblings are really likely to be similar.



Tb Zaby

Ramses x Tb Hasna
by Ken Mahbub

Tb Hasna

Ken Mahbub x Sulifah



Did you have models to go after when you started breeding?

Of course, and I am highly grateful to them. They had substantial influence on my breeding business, at least at the start. Breeding horses is a long-term matter, you have to wait for years to see your success, and getting glimpses of the “witches’ kitchens” of great breeders such as Dr. Nagel’s Katharinenhof stud, Ansata Stud,

or Katr El Nada of the Eberhard family helped me to shorten the period of waiting for good breeding results. There were some things I did not at once register as being important for breeding. To name one, I had leased the small but typey stallion Melek (Ibrahim x Moheba II), a Ghazal grandson, from the stud of Peter Groß in 1990. His noble lineage was not apparent to me then, and I hardly used him with straight Egyptian mares then. Today, if he were still alive, his genetic value would be great indeed. It was also in 1990 that I visited Katharinenhof Stud for the first time. Salaa El Dine presented himself, a young stallion full of the joy of living, but I was mostly impressed with those

beautiful mares. Hanan, Lotfeia, Ghazalla, Ameera, Marah ... Type, movements, and harmony, and no end to them all. Dr. Nagel demonstrated his breeding concept by showing us examples, how to improve croup, neck, or type in increments, or how to bring in more noblesse by using stallions who are noble themselves, that was really exciting. I decided to bring in as much of Ansata Halim Shah blood as possible, there was his sire Ibn Halima, one of the best inheritors of type, while he was a Bint Bukra grandson himself. So this was the noble lineage of Arabians from the Southern part of the Nejd on the Arabian Peninsula. It meant using Halim Shah's offspring mainly, Salaa El Dine and Maysoun. At the same

Kamal MM

Authentic Shamani x Ken Bint Amal
by Salaa El Dine



Mia Belkies

Salaa El Dine x Suruji Mayet
by Hadaya El Tareef

Ayiba Guasimo

Salaa El Dine x Ghaida
by Maysoun

time, I put hopes into the Jamil (Jamill) tail line, as he is not only out of legendary Hanan, but also tails back directly to Bukra via his sire, Madkour I. Bukra's daughter, Bint Bukra, was imported to the US by Judith Forbis, becoming the foundation mare of Ansata Stud there. Her full sibling Ghazal (Nazeer x Bukra), who came to Germany, represented the typey Dahman Shahwan tail line from the Nejd in Europe. He in his turn was the sire of Ghazalla, one of his few Egyptian offspring. And



Authentica

Authentic Shamani x Aisa B
by Emiratus B



Ghazalla's offspring Adnan, in his turn, is the sire of my stallion Ramses (Adnan x Ansata Rebecca) who also tails back to Bint Bukra via his dam and is an interesting Dahman Shawan representative here in Italy.

In 1994, I bought a Salaa El Dine daughter bred by Nagel/Eberhard, Ken Bint Amal, who has exclusively produced female offspring so far, and also Dalia (Mourad x Yosra), a Yosreia granddaughter bred in Hamdan Stables in Cairo. She brought me TB Amir El Arab, who went on to become Junior European Champion for endurance riding with his rider and won several international 100 mile rides. However, what's a ridden European Championship worth with other horses winning showing classes and beauty being raised into the position of the only scale to measure quality with?

Ten years ago, I found my foundation mare. I

bought the filly SULIFAH, bred by the German Manz family. She is a daughter of Matala Bint Marah (Jamil x Marah). Marah was imported from Egypt by Dr. Nagel. She was one of the stock mares of the Abbayan Om Juray strain, with other representatives of that strain being Hanan, Bint Magidaa and other important mares of the last century. Sulifah's sire, Alaa Al Din, is a Salaa El Dine son and a Hanan grandson and tails back to the Babson stallion Mohafez. Sulifah has produced nothing but particularly good foals so far like her outstanding black colt TB Yasir, sired by Salaa El Dine. Daughters of Sulifah now live in France and Egypt. Her oldest daughter TB Hasna (Ken Mahbub x Sulifah) also went on to become a foundation mare of the stud. There is her amazing grandson TB Zaby already.

What is your breeding goal as far as the beauty of the Arabian horse is concerned?

The direction of the market is towards showing Arabians. However, breeding towards "showing qualities" only is a great risk. We will have to improve Arabians as a whole, as a breed. A nervous and stressed showing Arabian is, naturally, no longer a cool partner for riding. Quite apart from a good character, which is of course positive for the beauty and charm of a horse as well, what I look for in my horses are big, black, round eyes without any white in their eyes, and overall I don't care for dominant white markings. I want black skin under the coat. Pigmentation problems with a genetic cause are crucial problems. Basically, horses displaying them should receive lower scores on shows, as they could be avoided with strategic breeding, just as other faults can be avoided. At any rate, Arabians with this kind of fault are no longer suitable for the desert, meaning they are not model representatives of their breed. Flea-bitten greys are my favourite colour. Of course, my horses should have chiselled small heads with a broad forehead and a fine muzzle, all of which will result in a dish just without any effort.

I heard you have an interesting new stallion available for service?

For this year, I have IBN EL NIL at the Tre Balzane Stud in leasing. He is owned by the Egyptian breeders Taref Farag Omar, Khattab & Tahany Stud in Cairo. He is an extremely typey, fine and charming

stallion. When he came he was stressed from the Cairo racetrack and from getting several shows in Europe under his belt. This was not good for him. But now, he is back to being a true Arabian stallion who will whinny after the mares and play with the grooms. His pedigree is outstanding, his dam is one of the most beautiful daughters of Ansata Halim Shah, from the Ansata Nile tail line. His sire is also known as a type inheritor. I am very much looking forward to his offspring.

In addition to him, we have Ramses servicing this year, and young Shah Monis Al Qusar out of Bint Mohssen. He was bred by my friends, Robert Schlereth and Volker Wettengel at the Al QUSAR stud in Germany. His sister Maida Bint Bint Mohssen is now on stud in Qatar, Al Rayyan stud. The globalization of our horses is going on. All three of the stallions tail from the Dahman Shawan line.

What is your present assessment of the market for Egyptian Arabians?

All in all there is an upward trend. Purchases from the Middle East have resulted in more significance being granted to our own Italian studs. Still, there are only a few buyers for breeding horses. Most of them would like to get to a show with their horse, quickly, and be handed a Cup, the whole scene well illuminated with photographers' flashes. More often than not, the horse in himself is just the means to this end. The new buyers from the Orient, on the other hand, have a different concept, wishing to re-purchase the heritage of the desert ancestors who have survived in Europe in a kind of "political asylum", in order to continue breeding in their country of origin. And why not? That's a nice motivation, after all.

For more information: www.tre-balzane.net

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