



■ by **Judith Wich**  
photos by Judith Forbis, Judith Wich,  
Sparagowski, Polly Knoll

YEARS

ANSATA  
ARABIAN  
*Stud*

The year 2008 marks the 50th jubilee  
of Ansata Arabian Stud,  
world famous breeding program  
of Judith and Don Forbis.  
Being interviewed by Judith Wich,  
Judith Forbis shares with us her thoughts  
regarding past, present and future.



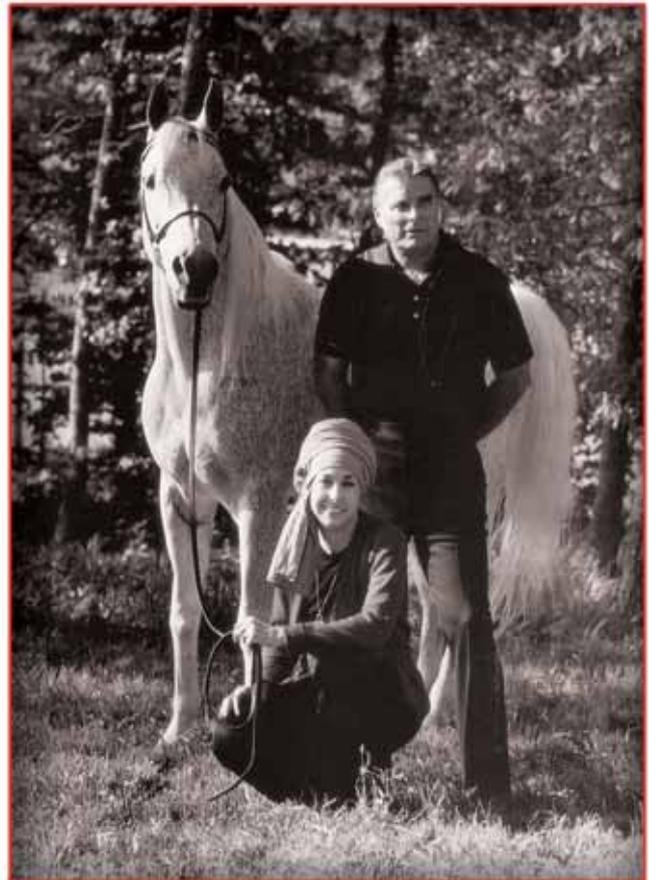
# the anniversary

## interview

**Judith Wich:** *Mrs. Forbis, in 2008 Ansata celebrates its 50th anniversary. What are your personal feelings and emotions concerning this special event?*

**Judith Forbis:** *The 50th! A golden anniversary – and countless golden memories. It seems only yesterday that we bought our first three yearlings (Ansata Ibn Halima, Ansata Bint Mabrouka and Ansata Bint Zaafarana), in Egypt. When we became entranced with the Arabian horse, and then the Egyptian Arabian horse, our goal was to breed the finest Arabians possible. Although horses were our primary focus, we soon realized that “there is no success as a breeder without successors”. This led to involvement with wonderful people and associations who were dedicated to the preservation of this breed throughout the world. In retrospect, comparing where we began, and how far the breed has evolved since we bought our first horses in 1959, times have indeed changed, especially considering the renaissance of Arabian horses in the Arab world. Now, wherever we travel, we find Ansata bloodlines and an appreciation of the Egyptian Arabian horse.*

Don and Judi  
with Ansata Ibn Halima  
in Lufkin, Texas.  
Photo by Sparagowski.





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**Judith Wich:** *How do you celebrate this unusual anniversary?*

**Judith Forbis:** *So far we have celebrated our 50th with close associates. The year began with the Region 9 Breeders presenting us with a Lifetime Breeders Achievement Award in January at their annual meeting in Conroe, Texas. To receive this prestigious award from our peers in Region 9, where Ansata has always been located, was especially meaningful.*

*Other special events were held overseas the following month. Don and Ansata's long-time breeding manager, Yvette Van Natta, and I flew to Kuwait where we were guests of HH Sheikha Sarah Al Sabah, Chairperson of the Arabian Horse Center. We had a delightful time visiting the friends and farms once again and seeing the results of Ansata bloodlines in their breeding programs. We also saw the plans for expanding the*

Don and Judi with Ansata Halim Shah at the 1988 Egyptian Event.  
Photo by Polly Knoll.

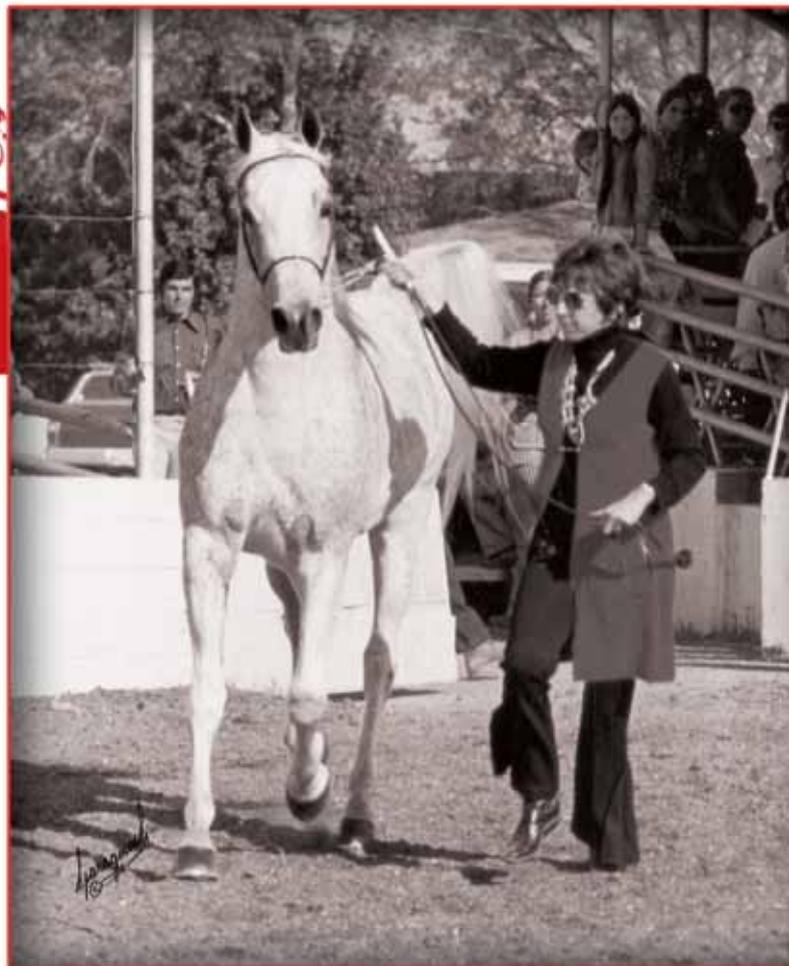




*Arabian Horse Center (now known as Bait Al Arab) as well as the exciting new foals there. We helped the Center recover after the Gulf War by assisting them in buying new bloodstock. Now the Center is developing a solid straight-Egyptian breeding program. It was rewarding to see Sheikha Sarah's program, and to renew acquaintance with Ansata Hejazi and his get at Mohammed Al Marzouk's beautiful stud farm, again a primary source of Ansata bloodlines in the Gulf. The progress of the Kuwaiti breeders and their enthusiasm for the Egyptian Arabian horse there knows no bounds.*

*We then flew to Qatar to enjoy the Qatar International Show. The competition this year was truly remarkable. After the show Al Rayyan Farm, owned by Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bin Khaled Al Thani, held a special 50th anniversary celebration for us and an evening presentation of horses primarily relating to Ansata breeding, the foundation bloodstock of the farm. Visitors were overwhelmed by the consistency and incredible beauty of the horses – most of them grey, with a sprinkling of bays and chestnuts. It was heart warming to see the incredible strides Sheikh Abdul Aziz has made in his breeding program, and a source of great pride to us that he has taken our program to such a high level over the past 18 years since he bought his first Ansata-bred horses, Ansata Majesta and Ansata Splendor in 1990. During the dinner that followed, Bart van Buggenhout, Al Rayyan's enthusiastic manager, presented to us, on behalf of Al Rayyan, two large black and white pencil drawings by artist Heidi Frank; one with three of our favorite mares (Ansata Bint Mabrouka, Ansata Bint Bukra and Ansata Samantha), one with three of our favorite stallions (Ansata Ibn Halima, Ansata Ibn Sudan and Ansata Halim Shah). Bart also read a very touching 50th anniversary congratulations message that he had thoughtfully composed. Then the Kuwaiti breeders, who were also in attendance, presented us with a lovely pastel of Selma Al Rayyan, a daughter of Ansata Hejazi.*

*A special surprise came when we were unanimously voted by the Arabian Horse Breeders Alliance Board of Directors to receive the Lifetime Breeders Achievement Award at their successful new Las Vegas Show. Last year's award went to Wayne Newton. It was delightful to see so many of my friends at the show and also to meet Wayne again. We first met him in Amarillo, Texas in the early 70's, when Ansata Ibn Sudan*



Judi and Ansata Ibn Halima during a presentation at the Stallion Spectacular, Houston, Texas, 1973. The three famous Nazeer sons: Ansata Ibn Halima, Morafic and Talal were exhibited together for the first time in history. Photo by Sparagowski.

*was Champion Stallion at the Tri-States Fair. Wayne was the featured entertainer at the Fair, and was asked to present the trophies. Afterwards we all went out to dinner. Some years later, when Arabian type was "going out the window" in America, Wayne's advertisements and Ansata's both stressed the importance of maintaining classic Arabian type! Several mares bred by Wayne, along with his extremely typey grey stallion, Star of Antigua, are now part of the Al Shaqab breeding program in Qatar.*

*As I write this, the Pyramid Society is planning a 50th anniversary celebration for us at the Egyptian Event in June. A unique offering at the annual art auction will feature as a special 50th anniversary tribute,*



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*two head studies in bronze of Ansata Ibn Halima and Ansata Halim Shah sculpted by our dear friend, Karen Kasper. These will make a wonderful complement to the bronze she crafted of Morafic, in remembrance of Tom McNair. It was Ansata Ibn Halima and Morafic who were the "golden cross" that ushered in the renaissance of Egyptian Arabian horse breeding, not only in America, but worldwide. And Ansata Halim Shah – who was unquestionably the most dominant and influential stallion thereafter, combined the bloodlines of both stallions. This is only the first half of the 50th anniversary year – the rest remains to be seen.*

**Judith Wich:** *Please share with us some memories of special moments during Ansata's history.*

**Judith Forbis:** *There are so many special moments over a period of 50 years, it is difficult to list just a few. A fond recollection was our visit to Egypt in 1959 when we first saw the horses at El Zahraa and chose our first three yearlings. We had been living in Turkey and travelling through the Arab*

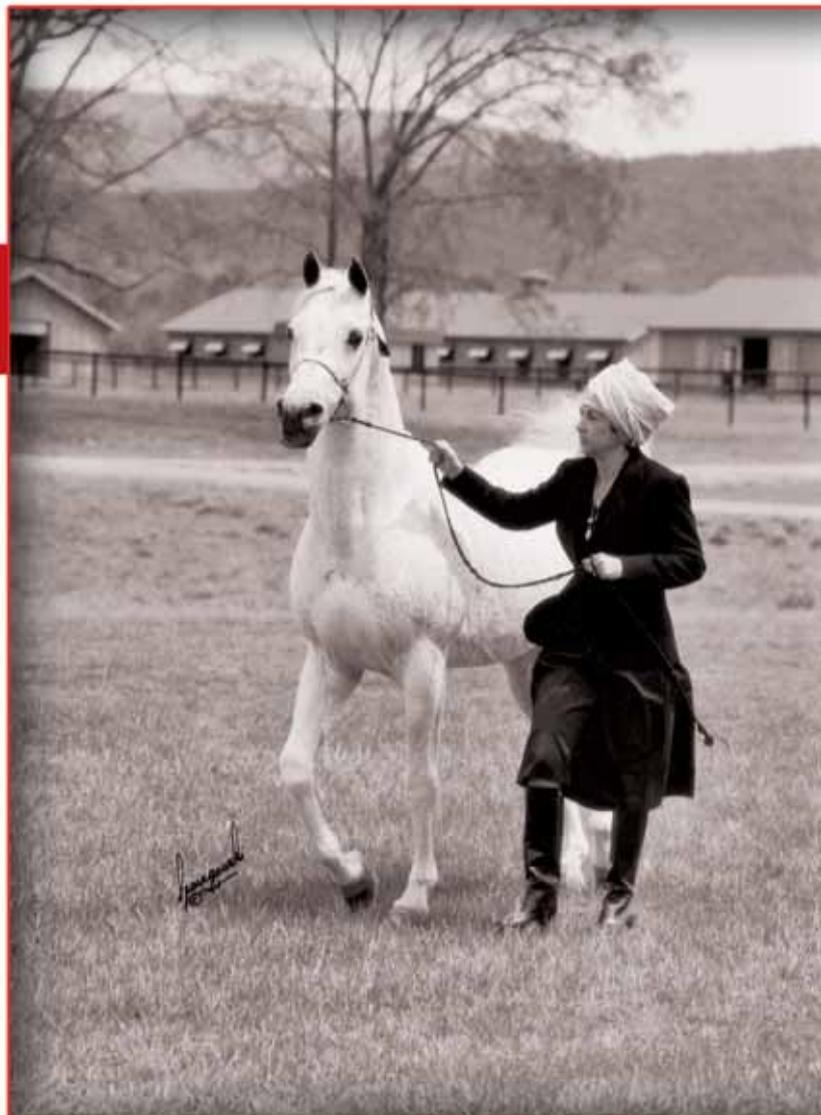
Don and Ansata Ibn Halima in Lufkin, Texas.  
Photo by Judith Forbis.



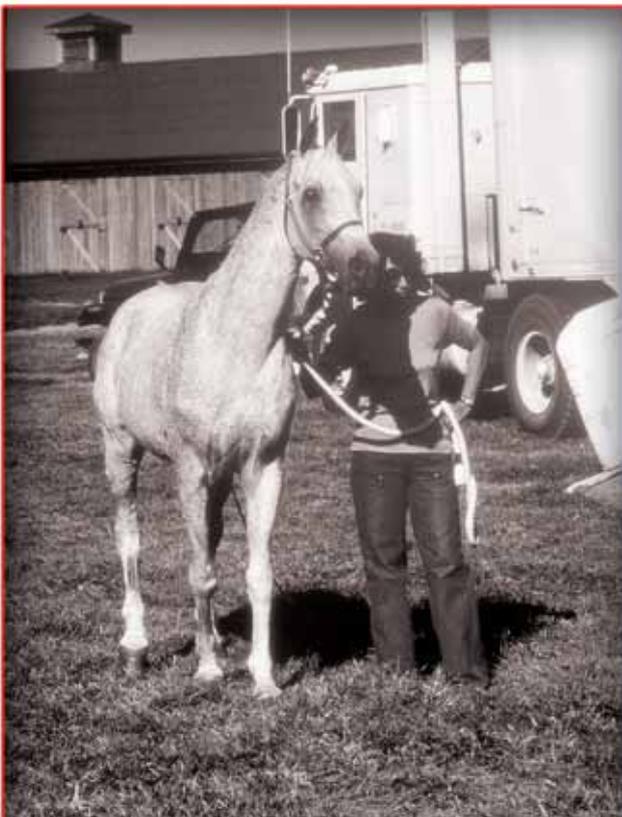


*countries, but we never saw Arabian horses that we envisioned in our minds' eye until we arrived at the Egyptian Agricultural Organization's El Zahraa Stud in Egypt. We were touched by the fragile beauty of Nazeer, then 25 years of age, the dramatic head of his son, Morafic, and the exquisite refinement of the mares such as Bukra, Moniet El Nefous, Ghazalah, and others. I fell in love with the yearling filly, Bint Mabrouka, and she with me. When all the fillies were called for noontime feeding in the barn, Bint Mabrouka stayed with me until I walked away from the fence. Then she went into the barn. Of course we were immediately attracted to Ibn Halima because of his beautiful head, big dark eyes and wonderful balance. We both chose him; and for a third choice, Don was partial to the lovely Bint Zaafarana. When EAO Director, Dr. Afifi and Dr. Marsafi, then El Zahraa's stud manager, agreed to let us buy these three, it changed our lives, and we were committed to the Egyptian Arabian from then on! This touching story is chronicled in my book, Ansata*

Judi with Ansata Ibn Halima at his arrival in Mena, Arkansas.



Judi and Ansata Ibn Sudan in front of the show barn, Mena, Arkansas.  
Photo by Sparagowski.



*Ibn Halima – The Gift.*

*Meeting Doug and Margaret Marshall, and the McNairs in Egypt in the early 1960's was an event, that resulted in a lifelong association. Later Doug and I worked together to launch the Pyramid Society along with other dedicated breeders. Those formative years were dynamic and exciting as the Egyptian horse evolved into a world renowned entity, much to the credit of the Society's purpose as a breeder's organization and the development of its showcase Egyptian Event. Egyptian Events are now held in other countries and I am very proud of this achievement.*

*Another memorable moment was when Ansata Ibn Sudan went US National Champion in 1971. The people who had leased him that year also had a National's contender. We had a very unpleasant situation arise in getting Sudan returned. When he arrived home he was totally out of condition. Luckily the Nationals was postponed for a month because of the VEE*



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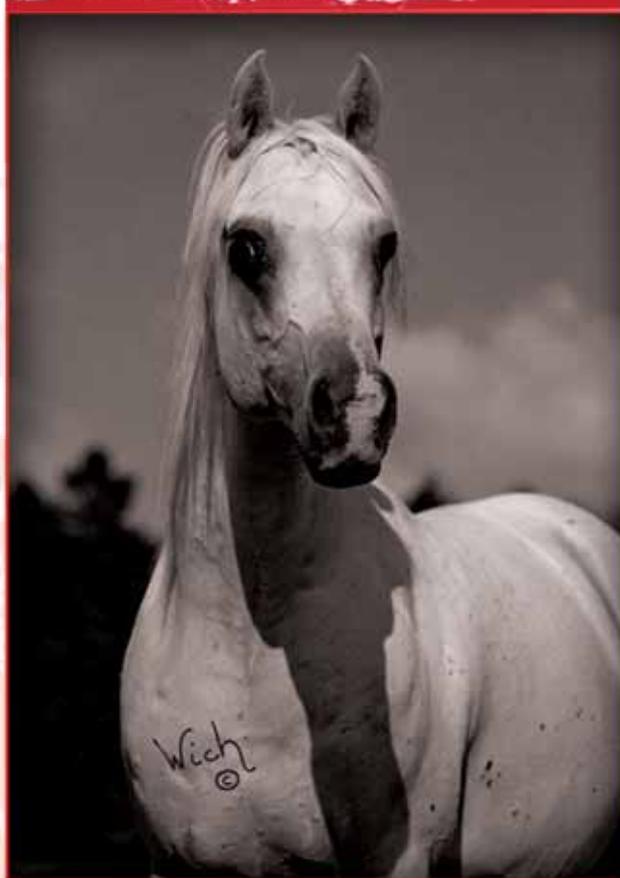


*outbreak, and our manager and I gradually got Sudan into shape. In the meantime Hansi Heck sent us Serenity Sonbolah to take care of prior to the show, thus the two eventual 1971 US National Champions were under our care. The classes that year were huge - 83 champion stallions were presented in A, B, and C divisions. When Sudan pranced into the arena, he electrified the crowd with his commanding presence. He knew it was his day, and anyone who saw him win will never forget him. And neither will I.  
Another precious moment*



*Ansata Mital*

The exotic stallion Ansata Mital  
(Ansata Iemhotep x Ansata Majesty)  
of Orienta Arabians, Germany.  
Photo by Judith Wich.





was when Ansata Bint Bukra arrived at our farm in 1965. We saw her in 1960 as a yearling (then named Hosnia) and wanted to buy her. However, due to African Horse Sickness, horses from Egypt were restricted for import to USA. A few years later the embargo was lifted. Dr. Marsafi said we could buy her, but they would not guarantee she could get pregnant due to her crippled pelvis. He offered her sister instead, but we declined. So they bred Hosnia, whom we renamed Ansata Bint Bukra, to Sameh, put her on a States Marine Isthmian cargo ship in a crate all by herself, although she was pampered by the sailors. After the long trip on the high seas she was then transported half way across America to Oklahoma by van. She

proved to be in foal and produced a superb bay filly that we named Ansata Bint Misr (daughter of Egypt). And the crippled beauty, Ansata Bint Bukra became the foundation mare of Ansata. Today her descendants are avidly sought around the world.

Other special moments were meeting Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bin Khaled Al Thani of Qatar when he first visited our farm in Arkansas some 18 years ago. He was quite young and had never been out of his country. He arrived with an entourage and no baggage! Uncomplaining, the group went to Walmart and got sufficient items until their luggage showed up the next day. That was the year he bought Ansata Majesta and Ansata Splendor, and our Qatar experience has continued ever since.

Various celebrities have been to the farm. Mike Nichols and Patrick Swayze are life-long friends. Paolo Gucci was a charming personality and associate. Oddly enough, significant horses from his herd ended up at Al Shaqab when his stud was disbanded in 1994, and they made an outstanding contribution to the breeding program (e.g. Kajora, dam of Gazal Al Shaqab). President Bill Clinton came to the farm while he was Governor of Arkansas and meeting him was an unforgettable experience. He loved Ansata Ibn Sudan and Ibn Galal I-7, almost as much as he enjoyed eating our apple pie



## Ansata Selket

Type and elegance - Ansata Selket  
(Ansata Halim Shah x Ansata Samarra) of Al Rayyan Farm.  
Photo taken from the new book "Jewels of the Desert"  
by Judith Wich.





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*and discussing business. I'll never forget him looking out over the magnificent Ouachita mountain range from our porch and remarking: "I didn't know there is so beautiful a place in all of Arkansas".*

*Other joys have been writing my books; each a labor of love, but requiring tremendous dedication, time and research. But the end result has been almost as rewarding as breeding the horses because the books have been educational tools for so many breeders.*

*Well I could go on forever...*

**Judith Wich:** *Although the herd at Ansata has been reduced in the past few years, you still own some very interesting individuals. Who are they and what are your current bree-*

*Ansata Azali*



One of the foundation mares of Orienta Arabians, Germany: Ansata Azali (Ansata lemhotep x Bint Faras Azali).  
Photo by Judith Wich.



**ding plans with them?**

**Judith Forbis:** We wanted to retain a few horses after selling the majority of the herd to HH Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar and HH Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi the ruler of Sharjah. We kept Ansata Bint Serqit (Ansata Malik Shah x Ansata Serqit x Ansata Selket) and Sherifa Tamria (Royal Jalliel x Imperial Dae-mah) who has just produced an outstanding colt by Ansata Qasim. Ansata Bint Serqit will also be bred to Qasim and perhaps one of our other stallions from whom we have frozen semen. Gift of the Nile (Ruminaja Bahjat x Ansata Nile Gift) is shared with the Zukowski's and she has produced two excellent stud quality colts by Ansata Iemhotep and a lovely filly by Ansata Sinan. In addition there are several other promising

young stallions of our breeding with the Zukowskis. We also own Ansata Samiha (Prince Fa Moniet x Ansata Samantha) who is living with Mauri and Steve Chase in Aubrey, Texas. This much admired mare recently produced two excellent Ansata Hejazi colts by embryo transfer. Ansata has always been known for producing superior breeding stallions, and we continue striving in this direction. So, as you can see, Ansata is not out of business and we intend to stay involved.

**Judith Wich: What are your personal thoughts regarding Ansata Qasim?**

**Judith Forbis:** Ansata Qasim (Farres x MB Moneena x Talmona) was the result of a carefully planned mating. We bought his grandmother, the exquisite mare Talmona. She traced

# Ansata Nefer Isis and Nadrah Al Rayyan



Ansata Nefer Isis  
(Prince Fa Moniet x Ansata Nefertiti)  
and her filly Nadrah Al Rayyan  
(by Ashhal Al Rayyan) of Al Rayyan Farm  
Photo taken from the new book  
"Jewels of the Desert"  
by Judith Wich.





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to one of our favorite mares, *Bint Mona (Nazeer x Mona x Moniet el Nefous)*, a full sister in blood to *Ansata Bint Mabrouka*. Bred to *Farres* she produced the beautiful show winning filly, *Ansata Mouna*, who was sold to *Al Naif Stud in Qatar*. Breeding *Farres* to *MB Moneena*, *Talmona's* daughter, was a similar cross with some added beneficial traits. *Ansata Qasim* was the result, and he was a smooth, refined and elegant colt from day one. He was shown successfully in the US and in England where he stood at stud to a variety of well-bred mares. When I saw the resulting foals there I was most pleased. Rather than sell him at the end of the lease we brought him back to the States, as good breeding stallions are scarce. His first foals to date this year are praiseworthy, but the majority are yet to arrive out of straight Egyptian mares. *Qasim* under saddle is handsome indeed; he has excellent

## *Ansata Hejazi*

Ansata Hejazi  
(Ansata Halim Shah x Ansata Sudarra),  
owned by Ajmal Stud, Kuwait.  
Photo by Judith Wich.



## Ansata Malaha

movement, and we may show him in performance this year. He will be at the Egyptian Event on the Stallion Avenue presentation.

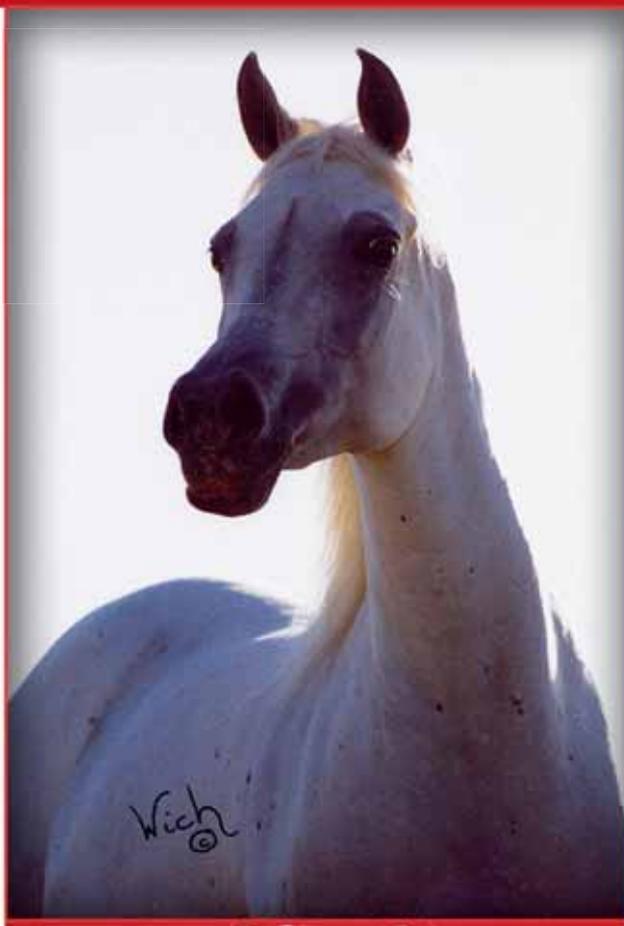
**Judith Wich:** *Ansata bloodstock is represented in important stud farms around the world. How do you evaluate the current worldwide development of Egyptian Arabian horse breeding?*

**Judith Forbis:** *The Egyptian horse is alive and well on most continents. However, we need more alternatives to just "horse shows." Non-competitive activities and "gatherings" worldwide must be organized to provide greater education, knowledge and appreciation of the breed – just as Ansata and Bentwood Farms did in years past through our seminars and social events. We have seen the appreciation of Egyptian bloodlines rise in the Gulf, in Australia, and recently in Egypt itself. Where a few years ago there was only a handful of private breeders in Egypt, now there are over 300! America and Europe need further stimulation. South America one hears little about. I don't think there is the emphasis on "breeding" and studying of strains, families and bloodlines as there was when we first began. People want instant success today without having to do their homework. Yet overall, I believe more interest will develop if sound leadership is forthcoming.*

**Judith Wich:** *Where do think Egyptian Arabian horse breeding in the Arabian Gulf is heading?*

**Judith Forbis:** *The Arabian Gulf has taken a giant step forward in breeding Egyptian horses. They have purchased many of the best bloodstock in Europe and America. It has become a hot contest between princes and sheikhs to own the best of both straight Egyptians and international Arabian bloodlines. Most Arab owners now enjoy horses as part of their tradition and culture. Some are true students of the breed, can recite and know the strains and families by heart. They are not just breeding show winners to show winners; they are breeding for a solid program built on selective breeding principles.*

*HH Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, the ruler*



One of Ansata's ambassadors in Qatar: Ansata Malaha (Ansata Halim Shah x Ansata Malika) of Al Shaqab Stud. Photo by Judith Wich.



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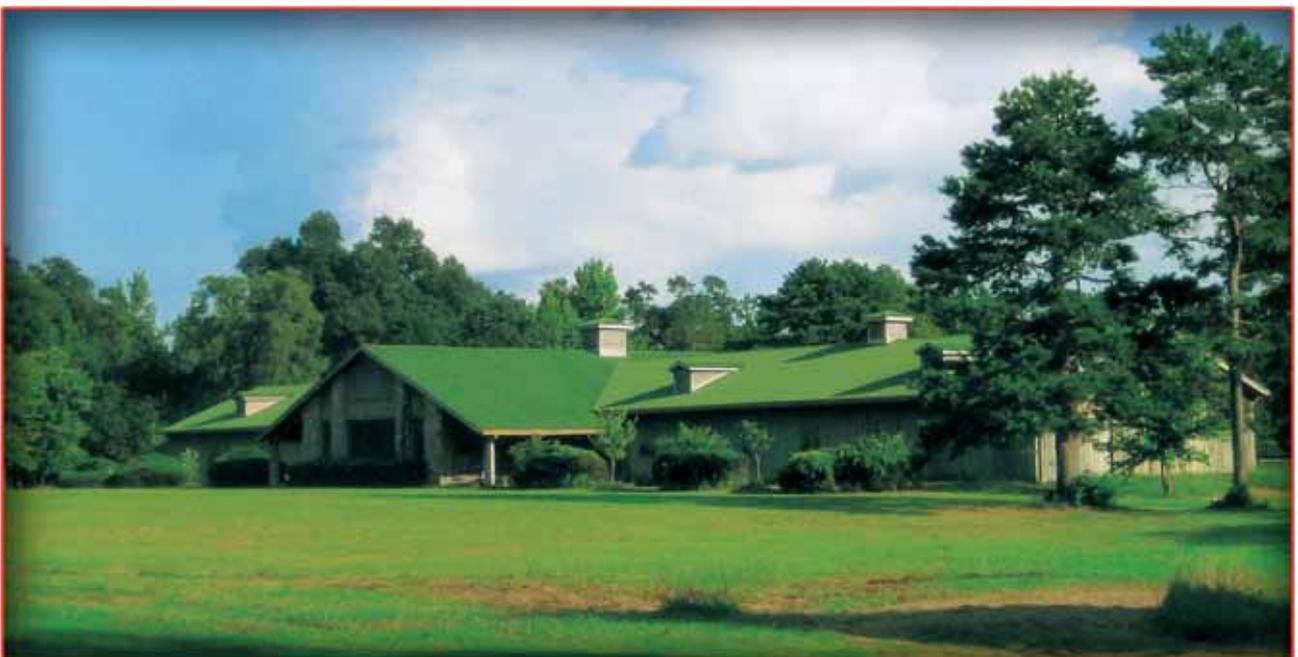
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*of Sharjah, inaugurated the first Egyptian Event in the Gulf. Although it was for Sharjah breeders only, it was enthusiastically attended by other breeders from the Emirates and Qatar, and the camaraderie and fun among the contenders was evident. Hopefully there will be more Egyptian Events take place in the future. Interest has been expressed in holding Egyptian Events here in the Arab world that are not competitive, but rather educational in nature like the early ones in America before the Event became more of a horse show. We are planning in Qatar to host such an event in the near future and also publish a GCC Reference Handbook of Egyptian Arabian horses. The handbooks published by the Pyramid Society in the US, Europe and Egypt, have been valuable tools for breeders around the globe as well as a unifying element for Egyptian breeders.*

**Judith Wich:** *Please tell us more about your work in Qatar!*  
**Judith Forbis:** *At the time we sold the horses, I was asked by HE Sheikhha Mayassa Bint Hamad Al Thani, Chairperson of the Qatar Museums Authority and a member of the board of directors of Al Shaqab, to become involved as a consultant. I currently rotate between Qatar and home. I have an office at*

The Ansata Show Barn - Photo by Judith Forbis.





# Ansata Qasim

(Farres x MB Moneena)  
 owned by Ansata Arabian Stud, USA.  
 Photo by Sparagowki.



*Al Shaqab, one at the Heritage Library, where my collection of photos and books is housed (we sold this to HH The Emir), and I also work out of my suite at the Sheraton overlooking the Gulf. There are so many projects going on here. The new Al Shaqab equine complex is overwhelming in size and scope. When it is completed it will contain the breeding farm and also serve as a primary gathering place for equine activities. Currently my main focus is writing a book, Heritage of Al Shaqab. The Al Thani history reads like something out of A Thousand and One Nights, and in researching the early Al Thani's, I now understand the critical role horses played in the history of this country. Most interesting were the ties between the Al Thani's, Ibn Rashid of Hail, the Al Saud's of Saudi Arabia, and the Al Khalifa's of Bahrain, at the time of Mohammed Ali the Great and Abbas Pasha. One of the first Dahmah mares recorded in the Abbas Pasha Manuscript went from Qatar to Abbas Pasha.*

**Judith Wich:** *Imagine you could travel back in time – is there any historic person relating to Arabian horses you would like to meet? What would you like to ask him/her?*

**Judith Forbis:** *There are several people I'd like to meet: Count Wacław Rzewuski of Poland, Abbas Pasha I, and Ali Pasha Sherif of Egypt and Lady Anne Blunt of England. The Count, because he lived in Arabia in the early 19th century before many of the best desert-bred horses left there as a result*

*of the exodus to Egypt and elsewhere. Abbas Pasha, because I spent years working on his manuscript with Gulsun Sherif. I'd like to know more about his selection and breeding principles, and the same from Ali Pasha Sherif who acquired many of the Abbas Pasha horses. I admired Lady Anne Blunt's courage for traversing parts of Arabia under most challenging conditions and who established Crabbet in England and Sheikh Obeyed Studs in Egypt. (Don and I travelled much of her route almost a hundred years later, and it was difficult at that time, even though we had a car). I would inquire about her meetings with Ali Pasha Sherif and other Egyptian royalty who bred horses at that time.*

**Judith Wich:** *If a mysterious djinn would come and grant you three wishes, what would that be?*

**Judith Forbis:** *Many have already been granted. I'd like to stay active in the Arabian horse world, breed Chihuahuas (hopefully find another one like Rudi Valentino), and also contribute meaningfully to whatever activity I'm involved in. I enjoy my associations in Qatar, and after watching this country emerge at record speed, I do believe in genies granting wishes.*

**Judith Wich:** *Which moments relating to Arabian horses do you enjoy most?*

**Judith Forbis:** *I guess when a new foal is born, especially one from a particular mating that you have high hopes for. Now I am excited about the new foals coming in South Carolina by Ansata Qasim, and also the ones here at Al Shaqab and Al Rayyan. Sheikh Abdul Aziz has Ansata Sokar here and I'll be anxiously awaiting the results of the matings he has selected. I also look forward to seeing the foals by Al Adeed Al Shaqab out of Ansata mares that belong to Al Shaqab. Another special moment is when I see someone new "get the passion" for Egyptian horses – or any Arabian horses – and commit to a breeding program and participation in the Arabian horse community.*

**Judith Wich:** *What are your plans for the future?*

**Judith Forbis:** *At this point in time, I let the future take care of itself. My activities in Qatar are challenging and enjoyable. If the farm in Mena sells we will have many choices to make. So, I believe in letting go and letting God. It is the best course of action. □*