

An Interview with Steve Dady

■ by Joe Ferriss

Steve Dady with Hadidi (Norus x Hebet Allah by Morafic) 1990 grey stallion, Canadian Top Ten Stallion, U.S. Egyptian Event Supreme Champion, Italian National Champion, Nations Cup Supreme Champion, World Champion and Reserve World Champion, Egyptian Event Europe Reserve Champion. Actually owned by Az. Agricola Dionisi (Italy). Stuart Vesty photo.



Steve Dady is one of those special individuals who had a childhood dream and followed through with it. He had the good fortune to grow up with Arabians under the guidance of his father Richard Dady, an accomplished trainer and judge. Steve has achieved his dream with Omni

Arabians his own facility, and becoming an internationally acclaimed trainer and showman. For several decades he has successfully trained and shown Arabians of a wide variety of bloodlines. He has garnered wins at the U.S. and Canadian National level and internationally at the

An Interview with Steve Dady

Paris World Championships, as well as throughout Europe, South America and the Middle East. He is a very familiar face in the Egyptian Arabian horse community. Steve will forever be synonymous with the legendary Imperial Imdal, his partner in a world wide journey of championships which continued through Imdal's get, grand get and beyond. Always enthusiastic and energetic, Steve Dady has also been known to mentor and assist newcomers involved with other breeds of horses as well. His focus, energy and enthusiasm as well as his precise skills as a trainer and showman have guaranteed that he is much in demand. I recently had the opportunity to catch up with him in a casual moment on a Saturday morning to ask a few questions.

J.F.: *Nearly everyone who is involved with Arabian horses over a long period of time begins with an epiphany of sorts. Relate your first exposure to the Arabian*

horse and indicate why you were compelled to get involved with them.

Steve: *For me there was no great epiphany. Growing up, my father was a trainer and judge. In the early 1970s he was a manager/trainer at Al Marah Arabians. I was about 10 or 11 years old and they had about 400 Arabians there at the time. So I grew up surrounded by horses. It wasn't like I was in my mid 20s before I decided that is what I want to do. When I was in Junior High School, I used to sit in class and draw up business plans and barn plans for a future training program. I never really thought about much else. When I was 16 years old I had leased a six-stall barn and took in some outside training horses during my last several years of high school. The day I graduated, I took a training job at a private farm in Delaware.*

J.F.: *What have you learned about the Arabian horse as a trainer; i.e. which*



Imperial Imdal (Ansata Imperial x Dalia by Morafic) 1982 grey stallion.
Legion of Honor, East Cost Champion, twice Egyptian Event U.S. Supreme Champion,
U.S. Reserve National Champion, World Champion Stallion Salon du Cheval, Paris.
Polly Knoll photo.

An Interview with Steve Dady

ones are easiest to train, which are more challenging?

Steve: Early on it occurred to me the difference between a good presentation of a horse in the show ring and a great presentation is the level of enthusiasm that the horse shows for his job. With that in mind, I think most of my goal in training is trying to encourage as much enthusiasm as we can get. Clearly that is made easier with some horses more than others, but this is what we are striving for in our program.

J.F.: What were some of your surprises in working with horses? Give some examples of stallions and mares that were a different experience than what you had anticipated.

Steve: I had an experience with one stallion that came in for training. He had been with a number of other trainers and he had a bit of a reputation of being aggressive and going after other handlers

and I was a little bit unsure about him. But I was younger at the time, with a lot of confidence, and thought I would give it a try. He came in and took to tearing the barn down and had all the grooms scared and I debated whether to give up on this horse. But then I decided to take over doing everything myself with him, grooming, feeding and handling. I decided that he was just afraid of people, having been mistreated. But we began communicating pretty well together. I went back to the basics and he started learning, with little baby steps at first. He was a horse that went from having no willingness to do anything to probably having one of the best show mentalities that I ever experienced. I think he spent his life making mistakes and having no confidence in people and being over corrected. We went back to the beginning doing the simple things first with a lot of praise and he learned well. In the end turned out to be one of the best show horses



Steve Dady with Imperial Barrez (PVA Kariim x BB Ora Kallilah by Orashan) 1996 grey stallion, East Coast and Regional Champion, Halter and Performance, U.S. Egyptian Event Supreme Champion, Citta di Castello Champion, 2 times All Nations Cup Reserve Champion, Reserve Champion Elran Cup, World Reserve Champion Salon du Cheval, Paris.
Actually owned by El Farida Stud (Egypt).
Javan photo.

An Interview with Steve Dady

I had. With this particular horse it was key that he be in a one-person one-horse relationship to show. It took about 3 or 4 months before we made any progress but after that it came quickly.

J.F.: *In today's show ring with keen competition and a lot of beautiful horses vying for the supreme championship, what do you feel is that "4th dimension" which separates the one individual above all others in its class?*

Steve: *Obviously the basic correct conformation has to be there. Balance and correctness certainly play a key role. When it comes down to separating the good ones from the great ones, it is always the presence and attitude that stands out. With that presence and attitude, it is the horse that appears to really enjoy what it is doing that makes a real difference. I think if you go back over time, what can be considered the great performances in any kind of category*

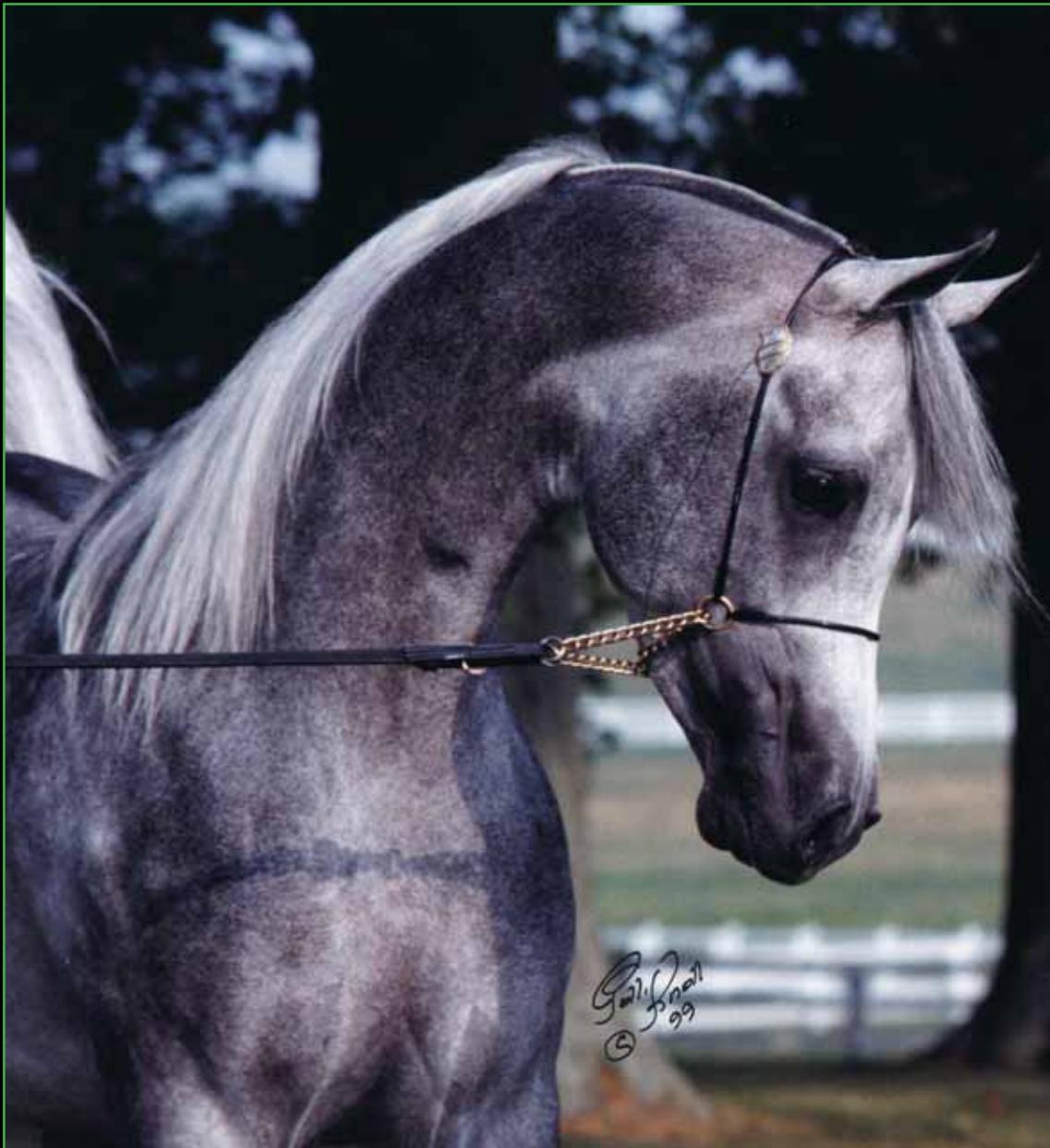
of horse showing, the most memorable ones are those with a great connection between the horse and the handler and the horse is clearly enjoying what it is doing.

J.F.: *Do you also feel in that environment the horse clearly enjoys the audience response?*

Steve: *Yes, that completely plays right into a great performance. They are basically elevated by the crowd, not intimidated by it. Some horses are intimidated and it affects the performance.*

J.F.: *Now let's talk about some specific horses. Let's start with stallions.*

Steve: *Well it would be impossible to mention them all but let's start with a few. Imperial Imdal (Ansata Imperial x Dalia by Morafic) will always be a first in my mind. With his Paris World Champion win and his Reserve U.S. National Champion win, he clearly did a lot for me and he*



Imperial Kamill (Imperial Al Kamar x Imperial Mistill by Jamill) 1994 grey stallion,
East Cost Champion, Regional Champion, Halter and English Pleasure, Merrist Wood International Champion,
U.K. International Senior Champion, Top Ten World Champion, Salon du Cheval, Paris.
Polly Knoll photo.

An Interview with Steve Dady

was truly a fantastic horse, a memorable performer. It is hard to name each horse. There is a long list of performers I have enjoyed showing, certainly 7 or 8 were major champions at the Egyptian Events and other major shows. Hadidi (Norus x Hebet Allah by Morafic) comes to mind. He was one of those great horses who just completely stepped up and he had his best show in Paris. Hadaya El Tareef (Imperial Imdal x Hadaya Nmerytaten) was another great competitor. Imperial Baarez (PVA Kariim x BB Ora Kalilah) is a beautiful and incredibly intelligent horse. Like some of the Imdal line he knows how to relax, so he can also be pretty laid back. Another great show horse is Moroc (Imperial Imdal x Najiba, a full sister to Saïda, dam of Bint Saïda El Nasser). He won U.S. Top Ten Futurity colt and then did very well internationally as World Reserve Junior Champion and Mediterranean Champion. He was an interesting story. His dam was the first

Egyptian mare imported here [U.S.] from Morocco. A group had imported her and I got them to breed to Imperial Imdal and Moroc was the first result. Of Imdal's get, Moroc was probably the one with the most energy that I have dealt with. Imdal's get are very smart horses and good performers but tend to be a little bit more laid back compared to Moroc. Another memorable show horse is Canadian National Champion Star Ghazal (Gazal Al Shaqab x C Starlite Bey). He was also Region 15 and 16 Champion and U.S. Top Ten Futurity Colt. Imperial Kamilll (Imperial Al Kamar x Imperial Mistilll) went on to become quite an international success. Now his half brother Imperial Mistaar (Imperial Baarez x Imperial Mistilll) hails as our future super star and we are making plans for a major show career.

J.F.: How about mares, any show mares come to mind?



Imperial Mistaar (Imperial Baarez x Imperial MistIII by JamIII) 2002 bay stallion,
U.S. Regional Champion.
Javan photo.

An Interview with Steve Dady

Steve: It's funny but mares are not as often brought in for show training compared to the stallions. There was an Egyptian-related mare sired by Moroc, her name was GWB Ptara (Moroc x Ptina by Ptersk). We had her Russian bred mother here so "Tara" was foaled here. She was an exceptional show filly. I think she may have been the only one to win back-to-back Egyptian-Related Junior Champion two years in a row. She went on to produce a National Champion. "Tara" was one of those special show mares. Another mare that comes to mind is MBF Georgia (Magnum Psyche x BHF Shabs Lullaby). This striking black young mare was both Region 15 and 16 champion and is ready to take it to the next level because she is a great show mare. She is one of my favorites.

J.F.: Tell us a little about your feelings on the global aspect of the Arabian horse market now and how has it enriched your

experience.

Steve: Interest around the world for the top Arabian horses has never been stronger. It is exciting to see Arabian horses appreciated by such a diverse audience. The world demand for high quality horses is at the highest it has ever been. For me personally it has been good from a business standpoint and it has taken me to about 18 different countries. Over time Omni Arabians has sold about 250 horses worldwide.

J.F.: What are your hopes for the future of the Arabian horse?

Steve: Overall the global situation with Arabian horses will continue to flourish. It brings people together. There is more competitive desire now than in previous years. Competition keeps quality high and it impacts all breeding across the board and encourages breeders to strive for the best they can produce. □