

■ by **Claudia Darius**

photos by Gigi Grasso, Erwin Escher,
Johanna Jonietz, Nicole Sachs, Christina Krumm,
Adallah Alhaddad, Mamoud Al Anzarouti

How did your passion for Arabian horses get its start?

KB: Horses played a major role in my life from an early age on. At ten years old, I started taking riding lessons, the way it's usual in Germany, on warmblood horses for sports. At that time, I was not interested in Arabian horses, as I was into show jumping and eventing.

It was only after I got employed with the German Association of Arabian Horse Breeders (VZAP) as managing director and breeding manager that I started to become interested in Arabian horses.

DH: Did you, at that time, have an inkling of the significance these horses would one day have in your life, and were there goals you set for yourself even then?

KB: Since the time when I started as employee of the VZAP, in 1983, Arabian horses were a pivotal factor in my professional and my private life. In the beginning, I was highly critical of them. For me, they were too small, hardly any use in conventional serious sports, and far too sensitive in their character. I was, however, quick in revising my standpoint.

With my profession I had a lot of opportunity to come to know these horses and their true merits and strengths. They fascinated me ever more. Nevertheless, I am also interested in other horse breeds and am still able to delight in beautiful horses of all breeds. The wish to build up a small Arabian breeding stock of my own – that one grew slowly, and it took me a long time to decide on a certain bloodline or a type I wanted to have. My idea was a stud that was to be small in numbers, but high in the standards of quality I was to set for myself, and I was not going to deviate from my personal breeding goals for trends of fashion or for other influences.

DH: When and above all, why did you fall under the spell of the straight Egyptian Arabian horse?

KB: The decision to purchase purebred Arabians who should

Klaus Beste

interview

be as close as possible in type, refinement and charisma to those horses who had arrived in Egypt from the southern regions of the Arabian peninsula about 200 years ago, becoming known as Arabian horses of Egyptian blood, that was a slow process. It resulted in my decision to buy my first Arabian horse, in 1990. My profession gave me the

two years, I began studying agricultural sciences in Göttingen. I chose the “animal husbandry” branch and specialised in “horse breeding”. My career aspiration was to get a position in one of the German state studs, or with some breeding association – to be frank, I did not have the Association of Arabian Breeders in mind then. My employment there was a bit of a surprise, then, and at first, I saw it as an interim position until I would have the chance to change into one of the sports horse breeding associations. That attitude gradually changed, however, and soon I was so fascinated with Arabian horses that I did not want to switch over to any other breed any more. In 1983, I became managing director with the VZAP, and in 1986, I added breeding manager. From 1984 on, I started acting as a judge, and I was a functionary of ECAHO right after ECAHO was founded, presiding EAHSC for



“Evaluation of the Arabian Horse” organized by the Bait Al Arab Education Center on 28.03.09

opportunity to study, in depth, the differences in bloodlines, origin, breeding goals, type, and charisma of purebred Arabians, enabling me to build up an image of the type I wanted to have in my own stable.

I was also enchanted by purebred Arabians of Russian, Polish, Spanish, or Marbach bloodlines and type, but my special fascination with the refinement, the chiselled features, the elegance, and the special exotic charisma of the so-called Egyptian type increased and so I arrived at the decision to choose that type. My first two mares were, firstly, Mathea-M (by Maysoun), whom I bought as a filly of only a few weeks from Prof. Dr. Siegfried and his wife Ruth Pauffer. Shortly after her, I got Ansata Fay Jamila (by Jamil). She was in foal to Ansata Halim Shah and was purchased during an auction of Ansata Arabians Stud of Judith and Don Forbis.

DH: Would you sketch, for our readers, some important cornerstones of your career so far?

KB: After finishing school with the “Abitur” exams, and after serving with the German Army, the Bundeswehr, for



some time, among others. From 1986 on, I was qualified to judge international shows and riding events. In the course of all those years, I judged in more than 20 countries. In addition, I judged for German horse breeding associations on the occasion of warmblood and riding pony stock shows for mares.

With the VZAP, I worked in different judges’ commissions, such as the approval commission for stallions when they still had to be approved, in stallion evaluation shows (associations’ stock shows for stallions), and in entering mares into studbooks or awarding them premium honours.

In addition, I worked as an author for the association’s magazines, such as “Arabische Pferde”, “Araber Journal”,



Latiefa (Hamasa Khazzan x Hamasa Tarifa by Farag)
Bait Al Arab mare

and "Araber Weltweit", and in a team with the long-term chairman of the VZAP, Dr. Nagel, Mrs Isabella Neven-DuMont and other authors, I compiled the "Almanach Deutsche Araberzucht" on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of VZAP. There was also the booklet "Das Arabische Pferd - Faszination und Vielseitigkeit" (The Arabian Horse - Fascination and Versatility) I compiled for the Association.

Quite often, I was moderator and organiser of national and international shows, title shows as well, in Germany, in other European countries, and in the Middle East.

After my retirement from the tasks with the German Arabian Breeding Association I took over as General Manager of the state stud in Kuwait, which also features an Equestrian Center in 2005. There, I am still busy with my

contributions towards putting ideas, plans, and visions for the future of the state stud, the breeding program and the projects connected with it into reality.

DH: What, in your personal opinion, are your greatest achievements up to now?

KB: I would not want to put particular emphasis on individual things - but I believe I can say that I was able to contribute to the development of the German Association of Arabian Horse Breeders, to the breeding business of Arabian horses, and to the developments in the Equestrian sports sector while I was working with VZAP - and all of that was together with VZAP's long-term chairman Dr. H.J. Nagel, with the staff of the VZAP office, with the commissions such as the managing committee and the bre-



El Thay Kadija (ET Mashour x Kamla II v. Ansata Halim Shah) with filly El Thay Kariba *2006 v. Ansata Selman

eding committee, and with the many volunteers working with VZAP.

In the course of the last four years of dedicated work in Kuwait, together with Mr Mohammed J. Al Marzouk and the other members of the Arabian Horse Committee under their chairman Sheikha Sarah Fahad Al Sabah, and together with the teams of the Bait Al Arab Equestrian Center and the Kuwait State Stud, I am working hard to contribute towards the positive development of the breeding programme and the preparations for putting the plans for Bait Al Arab into reality.

In the area of breeding work, I see my personal achievements in the winning stallion Fay Sabun (Ansata Fay Jamila x Salaa El Dine), who became the reserve junior champion of the stallion evaluation show of the VZAP in Aachen. A mare bred by me, Mahrana Al Sabah, achieved the title of premium mare. However, what means even more to me is the fact that horses bred by me in my small stud of no more than 2 to 3 mares went to studs in Spain, Italy, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria, and to Germany of course, and that these horses are appreciated there and accepted into well known breeding programmes. This is an honour for me. I also take delight in the fact that the colts I judged not suitable for breeding all found good places and are used according to their abilities, such as in endurance riding.



DH: Please outline your breeding goal for us. Which horse is the most perfect impersonation of this breeding goal?

KB: My goal in breeding is a noble, chiselled, and harmonious Arabian horse with a proud carriage, with charme and presence. I pay attention to a refined face with big eyes and to an elegant and well-carried neck with a clean through. Furthermore, I put emphasis on a well-framed, solid conformation, with clean legs that have strenght in relation to the overall frame of the horse. Ground-covering and elastic gaits



El Thay Kareem Al Sabah *2007, colt by Ansata Selman

as well as obedience in riding are important to me. At the same time, I pay attention to a sensitive character and easy handling. I don't see a particular horse in my mind for that. There are several individual horses I am impressed with and who embody what I would like to achieve, but my ideal horse is only present in my inner vision, so to say.

DH: After working in that field for so long, you have an excellent impression of what happens world-wide in breeding. How is your opinion on the development of quality in general and with the Egyptians in particular?

KB: In purebred Arabian breeding, a generally very high level has been reached by now. In performance sports, whether racing or endurance,



we have a high density of performance today, on a national as well as on an international level. And even in other disciplines of Equestrian sports, disciplines which are not actually the domain of purebred Arabians, these horses are on a remarkable level.

In showing today, we find an enormously wide-fanned top group. I see a problem in the fact that we have created an Arabian horse for the shows that is quite uniform in appearance. The heads get ever more extreme with a clearly bulging forehead, the necks are long and refined, for the bodies I would sometimes wish for some more outline. Some are too long in my opinion, at the same time lacking definition. As to their legs, I would like more substance in many show horses. We have produced a uniform type for the shows, this type is the fashion today and people want to see it. Certain fashionable stallions influence the show scene to quite an extreme extent. As to pedigrees, we are presented with a cocktail mixed of many different bloodlines and breeding programmes.

But what if, in the near future, the taste of breeders and/or judges should change? Breeding programmes cannot be changed quickly, and when designing one's own breeding programme, the trends of fashion should not play a role.

It looks as if breeding programmes such as those influenced by the state studs of Spain, Russia, Poland, Weil-Marbach etc., creating an individual type with an appearance and identity of its own, are on the decline, vanishing or losing in importance. With many private studs, management tends to abandon the way of traditional breeding programmes and well-maintained identity.

Those breeders who concern themselves with the breeding program of the Egyptian El Zahraa state stud and the Bedouin tribes of the Arabian region, wishing for a type that approaches that of the horses that were in their days exported to Egypt from the southern regions of the Arabian peninsula, probably feel more bound to tradition, seeing their horses as part of a historic development and of the culture of the Arabian countries.

They have an identity, a type and appearance of their own, and in addition, they are – relative to their comparatively low number – quite successful in all areas. On average, horses from these so-called Egyptian bloodlines or type are of high quality today, too.

DH: Will you be so kind and list us some breeding programmes or individual people who, in your opinion, had crucial influence on the breeding of Straight Egyptian horses?

KB: There are several outstanding horse people

to be mentioned, that much is sure. The names I mention are not a complete list, but they did put their respective stamps on the breed. The following come to my mind first: The stud managers of El Zahraa: Tibor von Pettko Szandner, Dr. Zaher and Dr. Marsafi. The American breeders Douglas and Margret Marshall, Glennloch Farms, Jerell Mc Cracken, Bentwood Farms, Mr. Henry Babson, Judith and Don Forbis, Ansata Arabians. Among the German breeders the Marbach state stud and its breeding managers, as well as Dr. H.J. Nagel, Katharinenhof need to be mentioned. The Hungarian state stud of Babolna also took long-lasting influence on "Egyptian breeding". In the Middle East, there is Sh. Abdul Aziz with his Al Rayyan Farm in Doha in Qatar, a stud that has been in existence for about 25 years by now. Other dedicated breeders from the Middle East, particularly from Kuwait, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, start to put their stamps on the breed.

DH: It would not do to forget that for many years, you were highly successful in maintaining a small but top-quality breeding programme of your own. Which were the horses that built the foundations of your private breeding programme, and what kind of lasting traces did these horses leave behind?

KB: My own small breeding enterprise started in 1990 when I purchased the filly Mathea-M (Maysoun x Messoudah M by Messaoud). She produced 5 fillies and 2 colts for me before I passed her on to the Hain family. Of the fillies, I took the price-winning mares Mahrana Al Sabah (by Ansata El Salaam) and later Mathija Al Sabah (by Adnan) as breeding stock. Mathea-M's daughters Mahlahah (by Salaa El Dine) and Maghadah Al Sabah (by Ansata El Salaam) were sold on as young mares. Both went to owners in Kuwait later on. Another daughter by my home-bred Fay Sabun unfortunately died at an early age. Mathea-M had two colts by Ansata El Salaam and Anaza El Nisr. They were passed on as weanlings. Mahrana Al Sabah have her places on Al Khaled Farm of Sh. Khaled Bagedo, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and her daughter Mirija Al Sabah (by Adnan) have her places to Mr. Fausto Ferrero Fiol, Mallorca.

Maghadah Al Sabah was received by the Hain family, where she produced, among others, two very good daughters before being passed on to Talal Al Mehri, Al Jazira Arabians, Kuwait.

Mathija Al Sabah has produced 4 offspring so far, 2 fillies and 2 colts. A filly by El Thay Mahfouz, called Manaya Al Sabah, was sold to Al Waab Stud in Qatar. Together with her





Fay Sabun (Salaa El Dine x Ansata Fay Jamila v. Jamil)

second enchanting daughter by El Thay Mahfouz, Mathija Al Sabah now has her place in the stud of Mahmoud Al Anzarouti, Syria. Her son Maheer Al Sabah, a promising yearling with lots of potential, is still in my stable.

My second mare was Ansata Fay Jamila (Jamil x Ansata Faye Roufa by Ansata Abbas Pasha). Her daughter Ansata Fay Haliyah is in Italy today. Her son Fay Sabun became a price-winning stallion and multiple show champion. Both of them having their place with Peter and Elke Trost in Baden-Wuerttemberg today. After changing owners, I recommended that Ansata Fay Jamila should be bred to the top stallion Kubinec – that mating was quite successful.

Today, I am co-owner of the mare El Thay Khadija (El Thay Mashour x Kamla II) and her offspring by Ansata Selman, Imperial Pharaj, and El Thay Mahfouz; and of the mare Hamasa Ni-yaba (Maysoun x Hamasa Nafteta by Kaisoon) bred by Dr. W.G. Olms from Hamasa Arabergestuet.

DH: *El Thayeba – the stud of your*

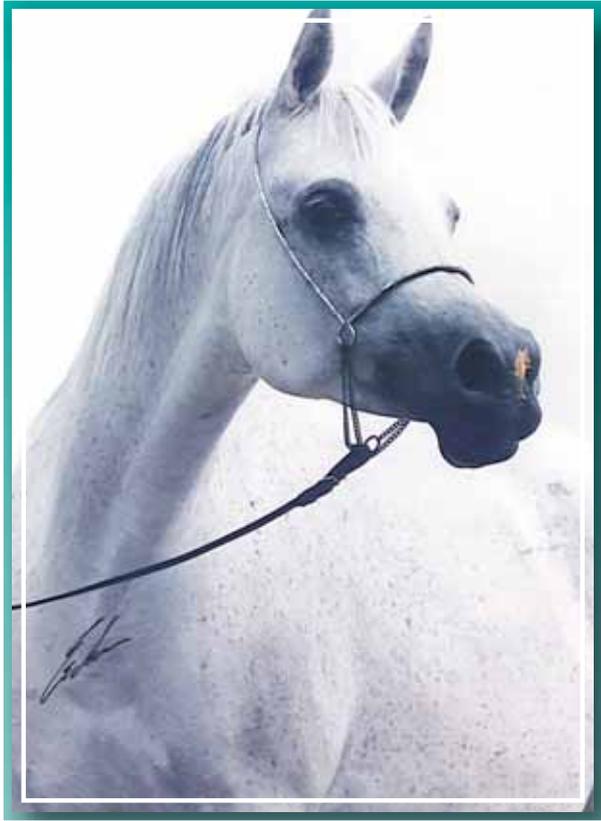
long-time partner in life, Mrs Tauschke – is renowned world-wide and is located in Großenkneten (Germany). What is there in breeding news from El Thayeba?

KB: In El Thayeba Stud, managed by Mrs Cornelia Tauschke, there were lately mainly El Thay Mashour (Madkour I x Kamla II by Ansata Halim Shah) and Ansata Selman (Ansata Hejazi x G Shafaria by Prince Fa Moniet) at service. Today, it's the sons of Ansata Selman, such as El Thay Melek (out of premium mare El Thay Maheera) and El Thay Mahfouz (out of premium mare El Thay Mahfouza), who appear to be the fitting and very successful inheritors mainly for the daughters of El Thay Mashour. Only a few days ago, a beautiful filly by El Thay Mahfouz

was born out of El Thay Malaka (by El Thay Mashour). This filly now has 5 generations of El Thayeba breeding in both parts of her pedigree, maternal as well as paternal. I think this is a remarkable success and a rare find with other private breeders in our times. An indication of long-term,



Maheer Al Sabah (El Thay Mahfouz x Mathija Al Sabah v. Adnan)



Mathea M

well planned breeding!

DH: Right now, you are in charge of the BAIT AL ARAB in Kuwait. Can you tell us what this project is about?

KB: I have been general manger of the state stud of Kuwait since 2005. Management and breeding responsibility have meanwhile been put into private hands by the governmental authorities. The stud and the horses, however, are still state-owned, in order to give a long-term guarantee for the ongoing breeding programme and the existence of the stud. Al Aadeyat Int'l Real Estate Co., the enterprise of dedicated breeder Mohammed Jassim Al Marzouk, Ajmal Arabian Stud, has taken over this responsibility and is counselled by the "Arabian Horse Committee" with their chairman Sha. Sarah Fahad Al Sabah.

The project is named Bait Al Arab – "The House of the Arabian". This project comprises, in addition to the Kuwait State Stud with its breeding programme, an Equine Hospital with a team of highly qualified veterinarians who engage in horse wellbeing all across Kuwait and an Edu-

cation Center. For the future we are planning to establish a museum, an arts gallery, a library, a training center and a riding academy for children and teenagers. For information, promotion, and further education, we use media such as a regularly maintained website (www.baitalarab-kw.com) as well as electronic and print newsletters, clinics, seminars, lectures, and presentations with experts on various subjects.

DH: What are your tasks in your function as the General Manager of the,BAIT AL ARAB Equestrian Center' project?

KB: As General Manager, my scope of tasks is highly varied, with a lot of diversity. In addition to tasks in breeding management, supervision of the daily work with breeding - and youngstock, and counselling for customers for serving and for private breeders, there are the Equine Hospital and the Education Center to be supervised, with events and activities to be organized, and with future projects to be planned, built up, and put into reality. In addition, there are development and implementation of appropriate marketing measures for our website as well as for print and electronic media, there is an electronic newsletter, there are international leaflets and brochures. Soon the first issue of a Print Newsletter "The Arabian Horse Letter" will be published bilingual (English and Arabic). There are domestic guests and guests from abroad to be looked after, with trips to private studs in Kuwait to be planned, and there are events and presentations for national associations and organisations as well as for national and international guests and breeder friends to be organised.

DH: What does a normal workday for you look like?

KB: Basically, my working day is structured by the horses. From 5 am on, I am in the stud, supervising the staff's morning work: feeding and individual horse care. I deal with every single horses of the about 90 horses we have right now. That way, I am well informed on condition, physique, training level, and health. If small injuries need treatment, this is done at once, any first symptoms of a more serious nature are recognised that way and further measures taken. All the horses get exercise regularly and are out in the spacious paddocks daily. According to age, they are also exercised in a walker. After the morning jobs, during the breeding season we tease the mares and decide on matings. I supervise the trainers who are doing basic halter training and who ride the stallions. After that, I drop by in the hospital, examining mares and sometimes treating stud horses who are patients, and afterwards meeting with

the clinic management for daily matters and for planning future steps. The next meeting is with administration management and accounting, dealing with present tasks and with planning necessary measures and upcoming activities. After that, I tackle emails and other correspondence. After a noon break during the worst heat (in the summer months, temperatures reach up to 55 degrees celsius), the afternoon work starts with another trip through the barns, monitoring the horses and supervising the grooms. Then, it's another round of office and administration work. At around 7 pm, I take my last round through the premises, maybe taking notes on tasks that need talking over with the staff members responsible for them. My working day ends at around 8 pm if there is no emergency as noted by the night watch in the barn. In that case, it's night duty for me.

DH: It appears there is a big contrast between Germany and Kuwait. Are there great differences you have noted, and what do you particularly appreciate about any of the two countries? Which of the countries do you consider your home?

KB: The most notable differences are, of course, the climate, but also the political situation and the religion. The climate in Kuwait is very dry and hot. In the summer months, temperatures reach more than 50 degrees centigrade. That's a strain for the people who live there, but also for the horses. In the area of politics, Kuwait is different from the rest of the GCC states. For one thing, Kuwait is an emirate, but they also have a democratic structure with a parliament and a government. The religion – Islam – plays a great role, putting its stamp on everyday life and dealings between people. Kuwait emphasises free practice of religion, respecting all religious communities. It is a free and safe country where Kuwait citizens and the many expatriates living there live together in a wonderful manner. In Germany, many things are more closely regulated and ordered, and there are rules for

everything. The Germans may be somewhat more consistent and systematic in many areas. The German climate is, of course, much less extreme, making it more pleasant for the horses. Vast green pastures are something I miss in Kuwait.

Particularly in the area of Arabian horse breeding, the excellent and friendly co-operation between the private breeders and their positive relationships with the state stud need to be mentioned. Most of the breeders founded their studs at almost the same time, inspiring and advising and supporting each other, and that's still the way it is. Apart from very few exceptions, the stallions are at any breeder's disposal. They meet often, talking freely, counselling new breeders without any reservations, not thinking about competition and marketing. That's something I miss in Germany and in other countries.

I feel decidedly good in this atmosphere. I was taken in with all the signs of friendship, and I get support and help without any questions asked. The cooperation with the private breeders and with the Arabian Horse Committee which counsels the state stud and the Bait Al Arab Equestrian Center with all the projects con-

connected to it – it could hardly be any better. My home, of course, will always be Germany, where I grew up and where my roots are. However, I feel at home in Großenkneten with my family as well as in Kuwait, where I live and work for the longer part of the year.

DH: Were there problems you found yourself confronted with when taking up your functions, and what are the benefits of breeding purebred Arabians in an oriental country?

KB: I can't say there were problems since I took up work here in Kuwait. As I mentioned, I was received very cordially and was always given the feeling that I belong to the group of Arabian horse breeders. My work is respected, and in ad-



Mathea-M
with her daughter Mahrana Al Sabah (v. Ansata El Salaam)





Mathija Al Sabah and Cornelia Tauschke

dition to my job, I try to help and support private breeders wherever I can.

A new challenge for me is the fact that I work with a team whose members are from 10 different nations. They have different characters, partly speaking different native languages, and coming from different political, religious, and social backgrounds. All of that needs to be taken into account and respected. Still all employees have to work as a team to work for the benefit and development of Bait Al Arab Kuwait State Stud and Equestrian Center.

The benefits of breeding purebred Arabians in an Arabian country are, for one thing, that there is a lot of love and enthusiasm for the horses, and in addition, there is this important fact that Arabian horses are the horses of the people who live on the Arabian peninsula. The Arabian horse belongs to these people, they are an essential component of the historic development of the Arabian countries and their cultures. And there is another thing to be emphasised: they breed without any competition here, without wanting to be better than their fellow breeders. What's foremost is the joint endeavour to preserve, maintain, and

promote a creature that has been an issue in their cultures from ancient times and that is closely connected to the people of Arabia.

DH: Many of our readers might like to visit Kuwait for a personal, first-hand impression. What are the places any visitor should have seen?

KB: Kuwait is worth a journey for any breeder and friend of Arabian horses. Visitors are met with heartfelt hospitality and are lavishly cared for. All of the breeders do their very best to make a stay nice and unforgettable for their guests. There is a constantly increasing number of breeders, with many of their studs worth seeing and visiting. Find an overview on the www.baitalarab-kw.com website – the “breeders” menu introduces studs, with new studs being added constantly. In addition, there is a list of names of all owners of Arabian horses in Kuwait, with their contact information.

I am ever ready to act as contact person for planning a visit and compiling a round trip from stud to stud. Of course, the breeders can be contacted directly and all of them look forward



to visits from like-minded fellow breeders.

DH: For many years, you were much in demand as a judge. What was your first show, and what has changed until today, in your opinion?

KB: The first show I was allowed to judge was the C-Show in Gieboldshausen, near Göttingen in Germany, in 1984.

At that time, shows were not yet purely "beauty contests", but they were considered stock shows and had an element of counselling. Usually, owners would present their horses themselves, there were no professional trainers. Together, everybody would delight in achievements and successes, and there was an atmosphere of familiarity. Gradually, this character and the atmosphere were lost. Competition and professionalism became foremost. Shows developed into marketing platforms and beauty contests.

By now, a "show type" of uniform appearance has developed from out of a cocktail of different breeding programmes, bloodlines, and origins. What is "top" today, urgently wanted by spectators and judges, might not be up to date any more even tomorrow. It is basically impossible to follow trends of fashion when breeding animals. Any serious breeder should, therefore, carefully consider his aims, have a clear impression of his personal breeding goals, and should refrain from being misled and influenced by trends of fashion.

DH: Having achieved as much as you have – do you still have visions for the future?

KB: Well, I feel like a fulfilled man. My dreams regarding the jobs that I wanted to do - working for a horse breed organization and/or a state stud - became reality. My two boys are in good health and so far they are developing well. I have a wonderful wife who shares with me my love and passion for Arabian horses and supports me unflinchingly. At present I have a job that I love and which is a great

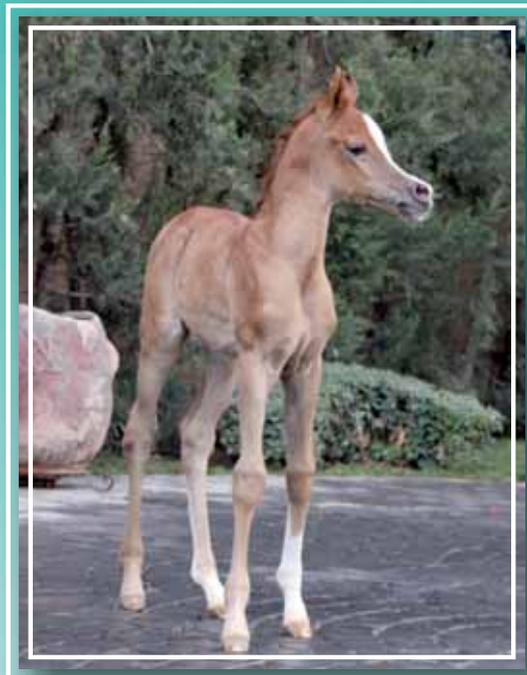
challenge and gives me the opportunity to contribute to the purebred Arabian horse and also to the country of Kuwait that has become my second home.

The wishes I have for the future are that I will stay in good health as long as possible, that I will never lose contact with my children, and I hope that after retirement I will have a wonderful time with my wife Cornelia and her Arabian horses at El Thayeba Stud.

DH: Is there an advice you would like to give newcomers in the Arabian scene?

KB: Every new breeder should initially try to find out for himself or herself which type of Arabian horse he likes most, and which bloodline or type within the purebred Arabian horse he prefers most. Then he needs to study as much as possible: not only by reading books, but by visiting other breeders and farms that have the type of horse he likes most. He needs to study the pedigrees and learn as much as possible about the ancestors of the horses in question, and the conditions of their matings. No one should follow any trends, as they are changing constantly and quickly. Every one should have a goal and a vision and needs to understand that it takes a lot of time and effort. Last but not least, it is important to understand that making a profit should not be the main issue when establishing a breeding programme. What is foremost should not be

money, but love, passion, and enthusiasm for preserving the purebred Arabian horse. □



Filly by El Thay Mahfouz out of Mathija Al Sabah

Klaus G. Beste
e-mail: beste_ger@hotmail.com
phone: 00965 247 13532
mobile: 00965 99429726
web: www.el-thayeba.de