



LEGENDS LIVE FOREVER

Orashan

by Ralph Suarez

"HE'S BEEN A FRIEND, AN INSPIRATION, A CHAMPION, A PIONEER AND A PATIENT, LOYAL COMPANION TO ANY HUMAN WHO WAS WISE ENOUGH TO ALLOW HIM INTO THEIR HEART."

- LOUISE CORDINA



Imperial Orissah

For those of us who were fortunate to know Orashan, to love him, he will continue to live within our memories, kept within our minds and hearts, in the most intimate spaces of our being, that is reserved for those who have touched our lives the most. He was a beautiful, sweet, willing, generous, kind and loving horse, who is sadly gone from this world and now, will only live within the hope and promise of his progeny.

Many words have been written about the stallion, Orashan. In some ways, I believe this is further proof of his significance, that many would experience feelings which are strong enough, they would commit them forever to paper. There can be no better indication of a stallion's pivotal importance than to generate interest and continued dialogue. We will all miss Orashan, who passed away on the 2nd November 2010 and it is in the power of these memories that we who loved him will be comforted as we deal with his absence from life as we know it.

"Orashan has spent his final years among people who have loved him. He has lived his days in happiness, with the respect and dignity that he deserved. He was a King within the breed and the most gracious, gentle soul one will ever hope to find. We will miss him tremendously."
- Louise Cordina

For most of Orashan's life, he was owned by Barbara Griffith of Imperial Egyptian Stud in Parkton, Maryland, USA. Imperial was founded on the strength of their broodmares, blended primarily with Ansata Imperial and Moniet El Nafis. It was time for "something" different, "something" that would stretch the influence of Imperial far beyond the pastures of Maryland.

In Germany, Eileen Verdieck, then Imperial's trainer, saw the elite stallion Messaoud (Madkour x Maymoonah) and immediately recognized the "something" they were searching for. Bred by Günter Seidlitz and owned by Erika Rudolph, Messaoud was not for sale at any price. At Vollblutaraber Gestüt Maiworm, in Balve (Höveringhausen) Germany, Eileen found the Messaoud-sired colt she was looking for – it was Orashan.

In Maryland, he blossomed into a beautiful Arabian stallion. He had a charming personality and a fabulous mind. Loving of people, curious and friendly, he was representative of a Bedouin tent horse. Orashan won in many Class A arenas including Scottsdale, the US and Canadian National Championships. He was a top ten halter stallion in both countries, as well as a top ten Champion under saddle in Canada. Orashan also competed in harness at the Regional and Class A level. There have not been many Egyptian stallions



Orashan pictured at 26 years of age



Orion Al Saba



Orashan with Glenn North and Jamie Zissis in 2010

who have demonstrated the level of versatility that Orashan easily achieved.

In the twilight of Orashan's life, he was purchased by Louise Cordina and Glenn North of Saba Arabians, Australia. He travelled from America to Australia to join his daughter, the lovely Imperial Orissah, who is also owned by Saba Arabians. Louise comments, "Imperial Orissah is one of the most complete and outstanding mares we've seen anywhere in our travels. Representing the combination of Orashan and Imperial Madheen, she is correct with wonderful substance, yet still refined. She has beautiful eyes and type, a gorgeous neck, throat, body and hindquarter, excellent movement and a beautiful nature."

Orashan saw the end of his life with dignity and in the company of people who appreciated him and understood well the impact that he had already made and would continue to have upon the breed. Orashan was an outstanding sire of broodmares, who in turn have become influential and critically important, vital even, producing dynamic and vibrant families of champion horses at Imperial and around the world. With well over 150 Orashan-sired horses, of this number, over 70% are daughters. That's amazing. In an article written by Nancy Ryan, in the February 2005 issue of *Arabian Horse World*, the late Barbara

Griffith said, "Perhaps Orashan's greatest contribution is his ability as one of the great Egyptian Arabian broodmare sires. Many of his 150 foals have become Regional and National Champions."

Everyone has a favourite Orashan daughter, as there are so many to choose from. For me, there are two daughters who have risen above all the others because of the amazing sons they have produced. BB Ora Kalilah (out of PH Safina) produced the stallion many people call "the ultimate Arabian Horse," the Reserve World Champion, Imperial Baarez by PVA Karim. Another equally famous Orashan daughter, Imperial Orianah, produced the important stallion, Imperial Madori by Imperial Madheen. This stallion, who is owned by Mr Omar Sakr in Egypt and who, when bred to the Al Badeia mare Anhar Albadeia, sired the World Champion mare, Gelgelah Albadeia. Madori also produced numerous other noteworthy offspring including the lovely Samara Sakr and Kenz Noor.

Imperial Baarez and Imperial Madori very powerfully illustrate the superior production capabilities of the Orashan daughters. In February of 2005, Barbara Griffith shared with Nancy Ryan, "Orashan's contribution to the Imperial breeding program can never be overestimated."



Imperial Orianah



Meydan Al Saba

So why do some stallions sire better daughters more consistently? The answer to Orashan's siring ability may lie within the pedigree of his dam, Ora, whose name in Hebrew means "light". Ora was an Ibn Shaker I daughter out of the Om el Arab daughter, Omera. Om el Arab, an Alaa el Din daughter, was one of five horses purchased by Heinz-Rüdiger Merz from Al Badeia in Egypt and brought back with him and Sigi, to Germany. Om el Arab, which means "mother of all Arabians", produced several outstanding horses.

Through his tail female line, Orashan traced to the Bahraini mare, Bint el Bahreyn, whom we also find in the tail female line of horses like El Sareei and *Bint Maisa el Saghira. Ora, combined with Messaoud, intensifies the influence of the Kazmeen-sired Zareefa, who appears five times in the pedigree of Orashan: twice through the stallion El Sareei and through the Zareefa daughters Maisa, Bint Zareefa and Elwya. The Shaloul son, El Sareei, a crucially important horse for the EAO, sired mares who figured prominently in Egyptian breeding. His daughters included the mares Bint Nefisa, Malacha, Mohga, Amani and Salomy to name a few.

It is very interesting to consider how Orashan, like El Sareei, sired mares who have become critical

foundation horses in other programs all over the world. Is the family of Zareefa, which is a line that is intensified in Orashan's pedigree, responsible for this phenomenon? Consider the tail female line of Orashan's sire, Messaoud (Madkour x Maymoonah) which traces through the Halima daughter Moheba, to the Dahmah Shahwaniyah mare, Farida. This is also a significant piece of information to consider, in attempting to understand Orashan's superior siring

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Sangreal Al Saba



Gelgelah Al Badia

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capabilities. The Farida tail female line is also the tail female line of the classic and most physically balanced stallion, Ansata Ibn Halima.

The Farida influence, as observed in Orashan's phenotype, resulted in smoother lines, with a powerful hind end, strong and deep in the hip, loin and croup. Louise Cordina in an article written by Anne-Louise Toner, said the following about Orashan as an individual. “As an older horse, he stood as a testament to sheer quality. He had the best body, hindquarter and top line of any horse you will find. Even in his late twenties, his body was absolutely flawless. His face was reminiscent of his sire's side of the family, short and deep jowled with beautiful black eyes that could melt your heart.”

There have been many discussions, pro and con, regarding strain-to-type, as defined by Carl Raswan. While some may dismiss that a horse's strain does not set type, Orashan is a second generation, pure-in-the-strain Dahman Shahwan horse, as both his sire and dam are also pure-in-the-strain Dahman horses. I feel that Orashan, as harmonious and smooth of body as he was, presents a perfect picture of the ideal Dahman strain horse.

At Saba Arabians, Orashan was bred to the Thaqib Al Nasser daughters. I find this cross especially interesting, not only because Ansata Halim Shah is a Dahman strain horse, but also because Thaqib Al Nasser's dam is Imperial Madanah, an Imperial Madheen daughter out of a Deena granddaughter. The tail female line traces to Farida, through the mare Dahma II, which is a different source of Farida, than through Halima.

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Imperial Baarez

In what may turn out to be a surprising twist of Orashan's predictable influence and final legacy, he sired more sons than daughters for Saba Arabians. From the National Champion mare, Suhalia Al Saba, he produced Sangreal Al Saba, a grey colt of great quality and charisma who has since returned to the United States under the ownership of Jamie Zissis. Another Thaqib Al Nasser daughter, Maarena Al Saba, has produced two colts: the chestnut Meydan Al Saba and his newly born full brother. Maarena's half sister J'adore Madinah has also produced an outstanding Orashan colt in Orion Al Saba, to name a few.

Louise feels quietly confident that in Orashan's final chapter he has produced some sons who will fulfill their sire's "shoes". Louise says, "Throughout most of Orashan's life, he's been known as a producer of broodmares and history has already recorded his great influence, through his daughters. However, we always believed that a stallion of Orashan's quality could produce a son to equal or exceed himself and with all the lovely colts he gave us, I think Orashan wanted to prove that point too!" Louise continues, "On Orashan's passing we received tributes from all over the world, with notes and

stories from people who had encountered Orashan at all different times throughout his years. Orashan touched so many people on a level that was way beyond sheer beauty. He had a connection with people and a zest for life. He had a special way of looking at you that conveyed an understanding of bigger things. A type of "knowing" look that I can only imagine came from the fact that in his life, he had truly done it all. We can only thank our lucky stars that we had the honour to be his final partners on this journey. History will remember Orashan".

Yes, history will forever remember Orashan as a timeless representative of the Bedouin tent horse, for he was consistently loyal, willing and kind to the people who surrounded him. He will be remembered for the athlete he was, excelling in any discipline he was asked to perform, as well as the significant impact he continues to make on the Egyptian Arabian horse breed, whether directly through a daughter or son or through his grand get. There will come a time when someone will encounter that curious look in a horse's eye and the desire to be ever closer to his human. And then this person will realize that a long ago horse named Orashan is still very much alive. ■