

In Search of MORAFIC

■ by Joe Ferriss
photos by Judith Forbis Collection



Morafic at Gleannloch Farms with Tom McNair



Images of Morafic as a young horse in Egypt.
Photos by Judith Forbis



When I first saw the famed stallion Shaikh Al Badi (Morafic x Bint Maisa El Saghira) as a two year old I was smitten with his nobility and uniqueness relative to the kinds of Arabians that were mainstream in the U.S. in the early 1970s. [See Desert Heritage no. 14/2008] In my curiosity, I just had to discover what made such a horse so special and this led me on a journey to discover more about his sire Morafic who was imported to the U.S. in 1965 as a nine year old. Prior to coming here he was a much-admired stallion in Egypt and left behind 56 get at the time of his importation. Eleven of those would also later come to America.

The early 1970s in America was a grand time for an ever-growing enthusiasm for the Egyptian horse. The magnificent stallion Ansata Ibn Sudan (Ansata Ibn Halima x Ansata Bint Mabrouka) had won the prestigious title of U.S. National Champion and the unforgettably beautiful Serenity Sonbolah (Sameh x Bint Om El Saad) was crowned U.S. National Champion Mare the same year. Numerous other Egyptian horses were winning big at the U.S. and Canadian National shows as well as regionally around the country. Many of those winning were the get of Morafic. By the end of the 1970s Morafic was the leading imported Egyptian sire of national winners so it was quite clear that many were impressed with his influence. So many of his get had that special spark of nobility, dryness and incredible style.

Every photo I could get my hands on would further fan the flames of my enthusiasm to see this horse who seemed as if to step out of a 19th century engraving, bearing a higher sense of nobility. Speaking with those who had already seen the legendary Morafic in person, confirmed that this is an Arabian horse that I must see.

It was easy to conclude that Morafic was the most extraordinary blend of extreme beauty combined with strength. His head was unusual for his time, so extremely refined, long fo-

reface leading upward to very lively noble eyes. It was a "new look" to many Arabian enthusiasts in America, something many were not familiar with at the time. In addition his neck was more refined than most Arabians of the time while it was gracefully attached to very long shoulders reaching well back into prominent withers. The whole impression of his forehead was one of power yet his silhouette was dramatic, resembling the finest desert bred Saluqi dogs, and conveying the look of speed and grace.

Realizing all of these qualities, I felt that I must see this horse. However our travel plans to Texas had been put on

hold for various reasons, requiring a great deal of patience on my part while adding to my determination. In the meantime we had seen a good number of other Egyptian bred horses at regional shows. Some were sired by Shaikh Al Badi who had already impressed me greatly. Given his popularity as a sire there were a good many Shaikh Al Badi get in the show ring. The get of other Morafic sons began emerging in the show ring as well. In our area these included horses sired by The Egyptian Prince (Morafic x Bint Mona), Al Metrabbhi (Morafic x Sammara), Dalul (Morafic x Dawlat) and Khofo (Morafic x Nabilahh).

Early in 1974 we were making our plans for a summer vacation of visiting Arabian breeding farms to take movies and notes. First on our list was to go to Gleannloch and see the legendary Morafic. Then came the sad news. In March of that year Morafic had died. I was stunned and shocked. This supreme vision of an Arabian was gone. He was only 18 years old, which seemed too young for such a magnificent desert steed. It left me with a huge void and sadness. I was not able to see him in person. My only compensation became a quest to search for the illusion of Morafic in his descendants.

In May of 1974 was the first of a series of major Arabian Horse Events called the Arabian Horse Fair, held in Louisville, Kentucky. This spectacular four-day event included not only a major show and exhibits but also a major stallion row with stallions of all Arabian horse bloodlines. Fortunately among the famed stallions were a number of Egyptian stallions which included four sons of Morafic and three grandsons:

Al Fabir (Morafic x Sanaaa by Sid Abouhom)
 Hamid Ibn Morafic (Morafic x Somaia by Anter)
 Mosry (Morafic x Sanaaa by Sid Abouhom)
 Shaikh Al Badi (Morafic x Bint Maisa El Saghira)
 Al Nabr Montego (by the Morafic son Ibn Moniet El Nefous x Bint Fada)
 Moatasim (Sultan x Neamat by Morafic)
 Sakr (Sultan x Enayat by Morafic)

All of the above were grey and though they varied somewhat overall, one could clearly see Morafic's influence in details such as dryness, great nobility, depth of heart girth with long



The unforgettable Sakr, many times champion ridden by Tom McNair. Johnny Johnston photo

sloping shoulders and good movement. Sakr became a very famous performance horse in the U.S. Under saddle, Sakr perhaps captured the love and imagination of many admirers of the Egyptian horse for his incredible style and action. To see him perform was almost like watching a fiery desert steed protect its master from attacking lions as he struck out with such brilliant reaching motion, lively eyes, protruding veins, extremely expanded nostrils which drank in huge volumes of the wind! Yet in the stall he was as quiet as a turtle.

Morafic daughters also became a sensation just like his sons. Many were National winners. Without a doubt one of the most beloved Morafic daughters was the multi-National balter and performance winning Nahlah (x Mohga by El Sareei), half sister to Ibn Galal. She was imported from Egypt in 1965 along with her sire. She was stunningly beautiful and a versatile performer as well. Sadly she died young after only 3 foals so I did not see her in person. Another Nationals performance winning Morafic daughter, the beautiful Dalia (x Romanaa II by Sameh) will always be remembered as the dam of Imperial Imdal. In 1975 four Morafic daughters were major National winners, Bint Bint Hanaa (x Hanaa by El Sareei), Shafeekah (x Magidaa by Alaa El Din), Doriah (x Dawlat by Anter) and Shahira x (Shiaa by Alaa El Din). Shahira is the great grand dam of Paris World Reserve Champion and Middle Eastern Champion Bint Saida Al Nasser.



The beautiful Nahlah (Morafic x Mohga by El Sareei) many times U.S. National winner in halter and performance. Rhita McNair photo

That same year was the second Arabian Horse Fair and it was an even bigger event than the year before. Included in the stallion row were 24 straight Egyptian stallions among which were seven Morafic sons and four grandsons: Ansata El Emir (Morafic x Ansata Sabiha by Ansata Ibn Halima)

Dalul (Morafic x Dawlat by Anter)

Hamid Ibn Morafic (Morafic x Somaia by Anter)



Al Metrabbhi (Morafic x Samarra by Morafic) shown here in old age when on lease to Gleannloch

Ibn Moniet El Nefous (Morafic x Moniet El Nefous by Shabloul)

Ibn Morafic (Morafic x Kabramana by Anter)

Mosry (Morafic x Sanaaa by Sid Aboubom)

Shaikh Al Badi (Morafic x Bint Maisa El Saghira)

Al Nahr Montego (by the Morafic son Ibn Moniet El Nefous x Bint Fada)

Mazin (by the Morafic son Ezz El Arab x Nahid by Sid Aboubom)

Sakr (Sultan x Enayat by Morafic)

Serenity El Bitan (by the Morafic son Khofo x Serenity Sagda by Anter)

Morafic's grandson Sakr had again returned to the stallion row at the Fair. Again he was a crowd favorite as a brilliant performer in the show portion of the Fair. His son, Nabel was also in the stallion row. The young Nabel was to later



Dalia (Morafic x Romanaa II by Sameh) Many times champion and dam of Imperial Imdal. Johnny Johnston photo

win U.S. Top Ten Stallion in 1975. He was of interest to me because he was out of the legendary Magidaa, who was also dam of the beautiful Bint Magidaa, sired by the Morafic son Khofo. Because I had already fallen in love with the lovely young Bint Magidaa, I was curious to see her sire Khofo but more years would pass before that visit took place.

The next few summers were spent visiting the major Egyptian breeding farms in America in search of more Morafic descendants. At the famed Anchor Hill Ranch my wife and I were able to see the magnificent Al Metrabbhi (Morafic x Samarra by Morafic). He was a very handsome ivory white imposing sight with an ideal blend of both dry refinement and masculine strength. He displayed great nobility and style but also with an amiable personality. He was very



**Ansata Shah Zaman (Morafic x Ansata Bint Mabrouka)
with Don Forbis**

athletic and a great mover. He had very short canon bones in an ideal proportion with long forearms and deep heart girth. Al Metrabbhi was U.S. National Champion Futurity Colt in 1970 and sired many winners in both halter and performance. He was the only incest-bred son of Morafic. He was a popular sire producing 267 foals. Gleannloch Farms sold Al Metrabbhi as a youngster to the Atkinsons of Anchor Hill Ranch where he spent most of his life until he was an old horse when Gleannloch leased him from Anchor Hill.

On a visit to Ansata when the Forbises were located in Texas, we had the pleasure of seeing the regal Ansata Shah Zaman. He was the result of breeding Morafic to his full

sister Ansata Bint Mabrouka. Ansata Shah Zaman was a very noble horse with the look of the eagles often looking in the distance, head held high, and always interested in the mares. He was fine skinned horse with a very dry quality. He displayed an alert expression with big lively eyes, set in a masculine face with deep chiseled jowls. Like Al Metrabbhi, he had short canon bones and very free movement. He was extremely agile. Without question his daughters were magnificent and proved to be excellent producing mares.

It was only natural that our next visit be to Bentwood Farms in Texas where three sons of Morafic were at stud: Refky (x Rafica by Nazeer), TheEgyptianPrince (x Bint Mona) and Ibn Moniet El Nefous (x Moniet El Nefous).



TheEgyptianPrince (Morafic x Bint Mona). Johnny Johnston photo

Refky was a tall bold chestnut horse born in Egypt who had a racing career before being imported to the U.S. He was a maternal half brother to the EAO sire Mohawed (x Alaa El Din). TheEgyptianPrince was a full brother in blood to Ansata Shah Zaman. He was smaller horse, quite refined with a handsome noble expression and nicely shaped head with small muzzle. There was style and agility to his movement. Perhaps TheEgyptianPrince's most internationally renowned son is Prince Fa Moniet, sire of many excellent Ansata bred mares as well as the important sires AK Shah Munifeh (x AK Munifeh), Ansata Iemhotep (x Ansata Nefara) and Ansata Sinan (x Ansata Nefara). In his lifetime TheEgyptianPrince was to prove a very popular sire producing 826 foals. He also may have been the longest living Morafic son living to age 28. The chief sire at Bentwood was Ibn Moniet El Nefous, the result of breeding Morafic to his granddam making him 62.5% Moniet El Nefous blood, the highest in any Egyptian. He was imported to the



Prince Fa Moniet (TheEgyptianPrince x Fa Moniet by Ibn Moniet El Nefous)



**Ibn Moniet El Nefous (Morafic x Moniet El Nefous).
Johnny Johnston photo**

U.S. by Jay Stream as a yearling and acquired by Bentwood Farms when he was 10 years old. He was a very noble, bold white stallion that was truly his own horse not exactly like any of his ancestors. There was an aura about him that you just felt. You sensed his fearlessness, giving a sense that you are visiting him in his space on his terms. This was a true warhorse. He was a US Top Ten stallion but also sired many champions both in halter and performance and is found in racing pedigrees as well. His straight Egyptian sons and daughters were much in demand. Perhaps his most well known exported sons to Europe are AK El Sennari (x Il Bint Khedena), and Mohafez (x Abroufa).

Our visit to Gleannloch gave us the opportunity to see several sons of Morafic and numerous daughters. Morafic's replacement since his passing was the stallion Ibn Morafic (x Kabramana by Anter). He was a handsome young stallion with a beautiful head and a lovely eye. There were several chestnut sons of Morafic such as Al Fattah and Zaim both out of Safaa (Sameh x Lubna) and they seemed to more resemble their dam. Zaim was later exported to His Majesty Hassan, King of Morocco. There were lovely daughters of Morafic everywhere. One could not help but notice the beautiful full sisters to TheEgyptianPrince such as Nationals winning Il Muna and Norra. Later that summer we would see a third sister, Bint Bint Mona and it was clear that the cross of Morafic to his sister in blood Bint Mona was certainly a nick. This had already been done once in Egypt before Morafic left, producing the beautiful chestnut mare Farfoura.

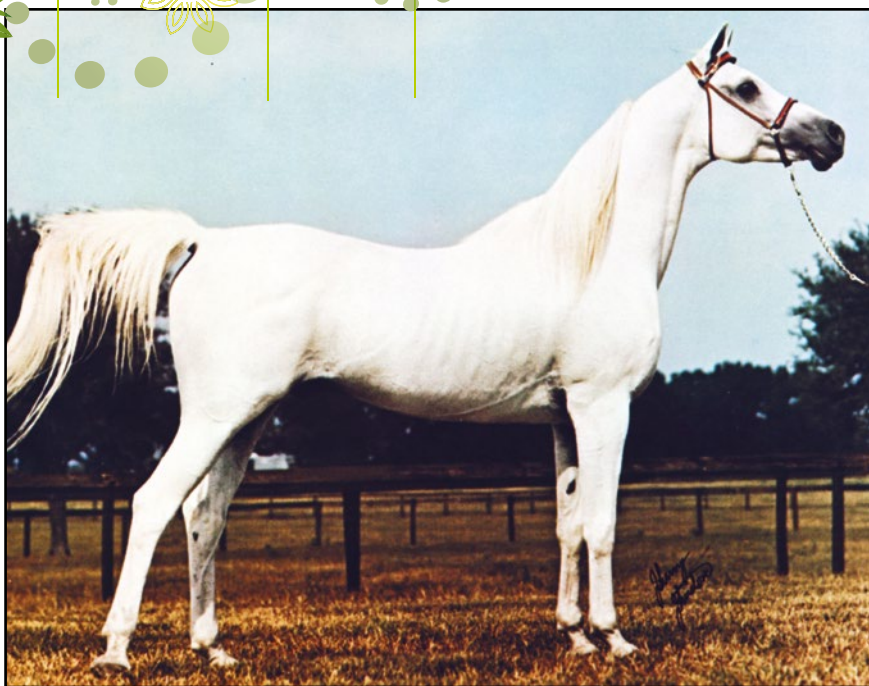
There were other travels which led to seeing a few more Morafic get, including the full brothers Shah Nishan and Febris, both out of Kabramana (Anter x Kamar). Both were noble horses with a bold stylish quality about them but having a bit more masculine bearing, perhaps deferring to some influence through Anter.

Then, ten years after Morafic's passing we made the long journey down to Florida to visit Bill and Hansi Melnyk at Serenity Egyptian Stud to see Khofo (Morafic x Nabilahh by Anter). This was the last of the Morafic get that I saw in person.



The lovely Farfoura (Morafic x Bint Mona) full sister to TheEgyptianPrince, Il Muna and Norra. She was foaled prior to her dam being imported with Morafic. She remained a broodmare for the EAO. Judith Forbis photo

By this time Khofo was 19 years old. I had wanted to see him for a long time ever since I saw the lovely filly Bint Magidaa in 1972 and now it was time. As we approached his stall, Hansi told me to go ahead and open the door and step inside. As I entered the stall that opened out into a long sandy paddock, at first I saw nothing. Then from around the corner walking with the long pendulous stride of a panther, enters the pure white Khofo. He walked up to me quietly and very confidently arched his neck slightly so as to align his eyes with mine and then stared right into my eyes. Unlike most stallions he did not choose first to sniff me for a scent. Instead it was all about the eye contact -- creature to creature, not man and beast. Those deep dark eyes seemed to radiate the thousand years of the horse of the desert. And then it occurred to me. As I kept looking for Morafic all those years, Khofo re-



Khofo (Morafic x Nabilahh by Anter)
in old age.
Johnny Johnston photo



Morafic in his prime at Gleannloch
Farms. Johnny Johnston photo

mind ed me it was something bigger. It was not just Morafic but it was the vision of the noble horse that is supreme and timeless, the gift of Allah that is unequalled. It is what we all look for in the ideal Arabian horse. It was that special, almost indescribable essence that stops us in our tracks. In Khofo's

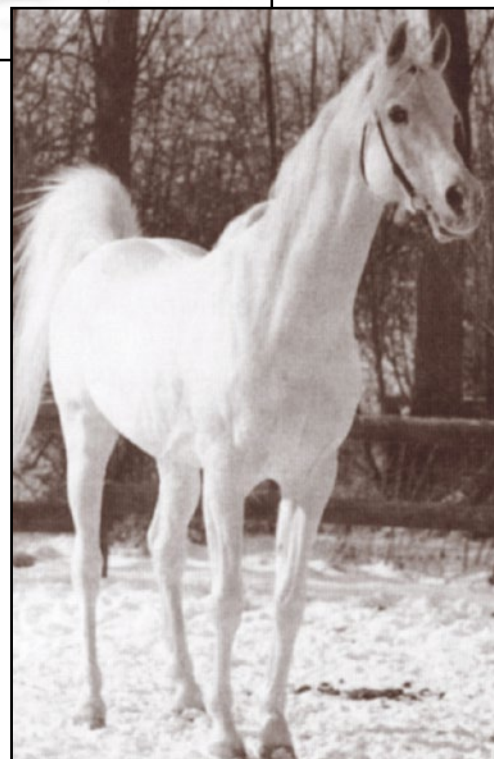
eyes I finally saw Morafic. Without deep souls like Morafic there would be no El Shaklan, no Ali Jamaal, no Marwan Al Shaqab, no Bint Saida Al Nasser, no Ansata Halim Shah. I left Florida that day fulfilled and with a greater appreciation for the heritage of the horse of the desert. □



Shaker El Masri (Morafic x Zebeda by El Sareei) imported to Germany from Egypt. Sire of El Shaklan and others. Forbis photo



Ghalion (Morafic x Lubna by Sid Abouhom) imported to Hungary for the Babolna Stud. Photo here taken in Egypt prior to his exportation. Forbis photo



Farag (Morafic x Bint Kateefa by Sid Abouhom) imported to Hungary for the Babolna Stud and later to Germany. Very much resembling his sire. Forbis photo