

2014 RABAB CHAMPIONSHIP
INTERVIEW WITH ENG. KHALED BIN LADEN

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem



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IN OCTOBER 2014 AND FOR THE FOURTH YEAR RUNNING, THE RABAB INTERNATIONAL ARABIAN HORSE CHAMPIONSHIP WAS HOSTED AND ORGANISED AT THE HAVEN FOR ARABIAN HORSES, THE RABAB STUD, LOCATED IN SAQQARA - SOUTH OF THE GREAT GIZA PYRAMIDS. PASSIONATE ARABIAN HORSE BREEDERS AND FANS ENERGISED THE THREE-DAY EVENT WHILE THE HOST AND FOUNDER OF THE STUD, INTERNATIONAL ARABIAN HORSE BREEDER AND BUSINESSMAN ENG. KHALED BIN LADEN, EFFORTLESSLY CIRCULATED TO ENSURE THAT ALL HIS GUESTS WERE HAVING A SPLENDID TIME. AND WHILE DOING SO, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SIT WITH HIM FOR A VERY RARE AND EXCLUSIVE HT INTERVIEW WITH HIS VIEWS ON THE CHAMPIONSHIP AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EGYPTIAN ARABIAN HORSE.

You have been organising this successful Championship since 2010, what do you hope to achieve?

Allow me to first start with some Arabian horse history and what this horse represents for many of us. Arabian horses originated in the Arabian Peninsula. They are horses with great character and strength as they were used during warfare, for battle, as well as for peace. Some of the Arabian's - in particular, the Egyptian Arabian's - traits are intelligence, affection for humans and the capability to endure desert and heated climates. Such traits became represented in their gene pools. Straight Egyptian Arabians, as we know them today, reach back to the mares and stallions of Viceroy Mohammed Ali and his grandson





Abbas Pasha I. Authentic and pure, they came in unbroken lines from Bedouin tribes in the Arabian deserts. Some horses were added to European collections; others remained in Egypt with Ali Pasha Sherif, a relative of Abbas Pasha. However after the dispersal of his magnificent stud, the horses were purchased by many European breeders. The government of Egypt formed the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) in 1908, which is known today as the Egyptian Agricultural Organization (EAO), for the preservation of the best of the remaining pure Arabian bloodstock.

As a breeder, my aim is to respect such a long history and to work on maintaining and nourishing these traits and situating this horse in the same natural habitat as that of his ancestors. Moreover, my aim is to contribute to enlightening breeders about the principle of participation in shows and the acceptance of other breeders and their horses. The latter process could help in producing powerful and beautiful horses, horses that will be capable of competing at international levels and horses that can strongly compete against other Arabian lines. The secret to these advancements lays in the development of the breeder's breeding programme, the horse's health and training, and finally, local and international championship environments.

The Egyptian Arabian horse is not simply a treasure, it would undoubtedly aid in the economic development of Egypt. And to me, the breed is a symbolic fourth great Pyramid of Giza. If we shed light on the importance the breed signifies for Egypt and for the world, we would see that while the Egyptian line only represents 2.5 % of the total of Arabian horses in the world, 65% it triumphs at shows. The Rabab Championship is annually organised due to the passion I embrace for the authenticity and heritage of the breed. Each year the Organising Committee reviews all details and carefully works on examining the points that need development and improvement in order for spectators to witness some significant progress in the event year after year.

Given the economic problems that have been facing Egypt since 2011, have you faced



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any challenges in organising the Championship?

Not at all. This is the fourth year that we have hosted the Championship and I am adamant about continuing every year. In fact, we have had an increase in the number of participant horses and stud farms. We hope for the event to see more participation and development each year.

Compared to last year, how different are the horses this year?

The special vision that the West had after purchasing the breeding lines of Egyptian Arabian horses decades ago was choosing a specific breeding programme that would improve some of the Egyptian Arabian's traits and qualities and there's no doubt that their efforts brought about many positive improvements. Having said this, whether a specific Egyptian Arabian was bred in a European or Arab nation, his identity and spirit will always remain as an Egyptian Arabian. We have worked on returning this line to its natural habitat and this is what many breeders have come to realise and this is what they aim to present at the Championship. The beauty of the breeders' horses and their breeding programmes keep improving each year.

It was a great initiative to host a seminar about the ongoing EU Equine Ban on the importation of Egyptian horses, what are your comments about the situation?

As breeders, we have exerted our best to understand the dimensions and the details of the problem by hosting such seminars. Everyone involved in this industry should understand and absorb the facts underlying the existence of this ban, and its solution. We will keep pursuing further solutions and in the end, it would be safe to say that I am quite optimistic. 🍀

To read the Arabic version of this article, see: <http://tinyurl.com/pnykgnq>

