

ALI AL AHRACH
SHOWJUMPING PHILOSOPHY

PAITENCE & PARTNERSHIP
IS THE WAY



MOROCCAN SHOWJUMPING ATHLETE ALI AL AHRACH IS GEARING UP FOR A HIGHLY ANTICIPATED SHOWJUMPING SEASON IN MOROCCO. BEFORE HE HEADS TO TETOUAN FOR THE FIRST LEG OF THE MOROCCO ROYAL TOUR ON 18 SEPTEMBER 18, WE TOUCHED BASE WITH HIM TO DISCUSS HIS RIDING METHODOLOGY.

AL AHRACH HAS RISEN TO COMPETE INTERNATIONALLY WITH A SIMPLE YET PROFOUND PHILOSOPHY CENTRED ON PATIENCE, CONSISTENCY, AND RESPECT FOR THE HORSE. HE SHARES THE TRAINING SECRETS AND KEY MOMENTS THAT HAVE DEFINED HIS CAREER, FROM THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FLATWORK TO THE PRESSURES OF AN OLYMPIC WARM-UP. HE SHOWCASES A DEEP-SEATED PARTNERSHIP WITH EVERY HORSE HE RIDES.



Ali and El Ghali Boukaa



You've had success with a variety of horses throughout your career. Can you describe your fundamental training philosophy?

My philosophy is simple: patience, consistency, and respect for the horse. Every horse has its own personality and rhythm, and my job is to adapt to each one, to help them build confidence step by step. I believe in strong basics, correct flatwork, and creating a partnership where the horse wants to give its best.

Moroccan showjumping is developing on the world stage. How has the training infrastructure in Morocco influenced your own training methods?

Over the years Morocco has invested in equestrian infrastructure, both in facilities and in competitions. Training here has taught me to be resourceful; that gave me discipline and creativity in my methods, and it pushed me to maximise every opportunity for learning and progress.

In a high-pressure environment like the Olympic Games or a major championship, what are the key technical points you focus on during the warm-up to ensure your horse is mentally and physically prepared?

In big championships, less is more. I keep my warm-up short, precise, and focused on rhythm, balance, and responsiveness. I make sure the horse is confident and not overworked. Mentally, I try to stay calm because the horse feels everything.

Can you tell us about a specific moment in a competition where your deep understanding of your horse made the difference between a fault and a clear round?

I remember a Nations Cup round where my horse hesitated at the water jump. I felt it a stride earlier, so I softened my hand, gave him space with my body, and encouraged him to take off. That small anticipation, that trust, turned a potential fault into a clear round. These little invisible moments are what define partnership.



As a multiple-time Moroccan champion, what do you believe are the most significant factors that have contributed to your sustained success at the national level?

Discipline, hard work, and surrounding myself with the right people. I believe in constant learning, every round, every horse, every mistake is an opportunity to improve. Having a supportive family and team has also made a big difference.

Looking at the global showjumping circuit, which riders or training programmes do you admire, and have they influenced your own approach to the sport?

I admire riders like Marcus Ehning for his feel, and Scott Brash for his consistency at the top level. Their ability to stay composed and adapt to any situation has definitely inspired me.

What is the process like for developing a young horse in your programme from a raw prospect to a Grand Prix contender?

It's a long journey that cannot be rushed. I start by giving young horses confidence in small classes, focusing on rhythm, balance, and exposure to different environments. Step by step, I increase the level, but always making sure the horse enjoys the process. The goal is to build both their body and their mind.

What message would you give to young, aspiring riders in Morocco who dream of one day competing at the international level like you have?

Believe in yourself, work hard, and don't be afraid of failure. Each setback is a step forward if you learn

from it. And above all, never forget that it's about the horse; respect them, and success will follow.

In a sport that's heavily dependent on the quality of horses, what is Morocco doing to breed and acquire top-tier showjumping talent? Do you see a rise in Moroccan-bred horses on the international stage?

Morocco is making real efforts in breeding with improved bloodlines and more structured programmes. We're starting to see Moroccan-bred horses competing abroad which is encouraging. It will take time, but the foundation is being built for the future.

Tell us about your trainers and sponsors?

I've been fortunate to learn from great trainers throughout my career, each bringing different perspectives. As for sponsors, I'm very grateful for their trust and support—it makes this demanding sport possible at the highest level.

What other interests do you have besides showjumping?

I enjoy spending time with my family as it gives me balance. I also love sports in general; they inspire

me to stay fit and disciplined.

If there's a horse you could own, which one would it be?

There are many, but honestly, I always believe the best horse is the one under my saddle today. That's the one I want to focus on and believe in; Ike 1348.

If your horse could talk, what is the one thing you think they'd tell you?

"Trust me, and I'll give you everything."

Tell us about humbling moment you faced in the arena?

Once in a Grand Prix I misjudged a distance, and my horse stopped. I nearly fell off in front of the crowd. But it taught me to stay focused and not let pressure take over.

Do you think there's a question we should've asked you but did not?

Maybe about the future of Moroccan showjumping? Because I believe the next generation has great potential, and I'm proud to contribute to building that legacy. 🇲🇴

