

NABILA AL ALI

THE ARAB VOICE OF EQUINE STRENGTH AND BEAUTY

By Khaled Assem

MADAME NABILA AL ALI IS THAT VERY DETERMINED KUWAITI LEVEL 3 SHOW JUMPING JUDGE AND ARABIAN HORSE SHOW COMMENTATOR WITH THE LASTING SMILE AND BEAUTIFUL VOICE THAT ALWAYS KEEPS SPECTATORS ATTENTIVE AND ENTERTAINED. BEING THE FIRST WOMAN COMMENTATOR, JUDGE AND FEMALE ARAB VOICE IN ARABIAN HORSE SHOWS TO COVER INTERNATIONAL EVENTS, SHE IS VERY ELOQUENT AND ENCOURAGING WITH HER CONSISTENTLY MOTIVATING TONE. SHE ADDS A SENSE OF FAMILY WITHIN THE COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT OF RING OR SHOW. HER VOICE IS IMMEDIATELY RECOGNISABLE, WITH THAT FAMILIAR GENTLE AND POSITIVE VIBE TO IT. BEING A JUDGE ADDS AN EXTRA TOUCH OF CONFIDENCE AND AUTHORITY AND WITH MORE EXPERIENCE AND EXPOSURE THERE IS A HORSE SHOW CELEBRITY IN THE MAKING.





THE BEGINNING:

My eldest son, Khaled Al Hammad, currently 25 years old, started to ride when he was seven years old with Noaf Bin Essa, Khaled Al Khorafi, and Ahmed Al Omran at the Kuwait Riding Center. It was still a small centre and we took Khaled there almost daily. My family spent more time at the centre than at home!

Back then, I used to work at the Kuwait Investment Authority, then the National Bank of Kuwait and finally ended in the Budget Department in Ministry of Finance. At that time I was also studying for my Master's Degree. I had to stop all that as it created conflict with my family's needs and time. As such I invested time with them and equestrian sport as well as helping Noaf in organising some of the local events. The Kuwait Riding Center then organised a workshop with the late Gen. Sami Negm Eldin to take the first steps to becoming a Judge. I always had a soft spot for the microphone while Noaf and Al Khorafi always encouraged me to comment at our local shows. Being a Judge created a stronger bond with the microphone.

THE MICROPHONE:

I was motivated to watch more show jumping and Arabian horse commentary videos and to pay special attention to commentators, their abilities and their remarks. Soon enough I nurtured my own form and technique that corresponded with our environment, norms, and expectations. After commentating at several shows, I started receiving more offers to do various shows in the Middle East and being a Judge gave me strong confidence. This field continued to fascinate me and now after my last workshop in Paris this year, I am a Level III certified international Judge. Level IV Judging will automatically come with more experience.

The Longines Global Champion Tours Finals in Qatar and Abu Dhabi

were another good mark on my calendar and I became their "Arab Voice". Moreover, the GCT gave me further exposure as this is where I was approached by the President of the Belgium Equestrian Federation to be the first Arab female Judge to work in Europe.

THE ARABIAN SHOWS:

Four years ago, I was approached to commentate at Arabian horse shows where I really had no experience at all. I did my homework and watched previous events on CDs and got the hang of it. I actually had a lot of support from my family and my husband in particular, as well as the equestrian community in Kuwait.

I have every intention to take Judging Workshops and seminars to become a certified Judge in Arabian horse shows as well. I have to say that the support I received from Mr. Abdullah Al Brehy encouraging me to go to the first Arabian horse show was my first step in that field.

THE WORLD:

Today I cover almost all Arabian shows such as Rabab and El Khalideh in Egypt, shows in Belgium, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Saudi Arabia, a place I cherish. In Belgium I was a Judge and I was in charge of the water jump. I remember I started at 8 am in the morning and continued until 8 in the evening where it rained almost the entire day. They asked me if I wanted to retire but I explained that "Kuwaiti/Arab women are as tough as any man out there." I stood my ground – damp as it was - and did my job well.

I was also invited in July 2014 to an Arabian horse show in Moscow after which I will be in Singapore in December for another Arabian event as well as a show jumping Judge. I am pushing forward towards building more experience and more contacts such as my contact with HORSE TIMES.