

The man behind the scenes



By Yasmin El Habashy

For those of us who often pass by the Equestrian Club in Zamalek, also known as the Ferosia Club, the recent modifications that have been made there might appear to be nothing more than the customary. However, for every little change that has taken place, an overflow of commitment, effort, resources and patience have been contributed. The director behind the scenes is a man of true horsemanship who has dedicated his life for the equestrian sport in Egypt. The man is General Elwy Ghazy.

Board member of the Ferosia club since 1965, and of the Egyptian Equestrian Federation from 1988 to 1992, elected General Secretary of the club in 1970, and General Manager of the Federation from 1992 to 1996, are but part of his curriculum vitae. Simply speaking, we are dealing with a remarkable amount of experience here! Yet, as much as these titles and positions sound prestigious, they have required a great deal of toil and diligence in their fulfillment.

The attractive state of the Ferosia club today is but a recent and fresh image. Who would have thought that only 30 years ago the Ferosia club was ruined to become a construction site for the establishment of the prominent 6th of October bridge. Every single facility, from fences to grounds, in the club was destroyed. "I first agreed with the site engineers to re-do the track, and then I did the different grounds all over again," General Ghazy stated.

Recently the government came up with the idea of moving the club to 6th of October city for four years, while they would build an underground mall & parking lot in the exact area of the club. Gen.Ghazy fought the idea with staunch persistence and through his personal connections succeeded in eliminating what could have been a major problem and hinderance to the future of the club and its members.

Various achievements have been made and numerous goals have been reached over the years. In 1985, the Ferosia club held the first international equestrian event in Egypt, inviting top riders like Michael & John Whitaker, David Broome, Paul Darrah and Nick Skelton. In addition to that, the club has raised two riders out of the eight that compete in the name of Egypt "Khaled Assem and Karim Habashy".

Furthermore, the club has imported shipments of horses from abroad on several occasions, namely 1978, 1983, 1985 and 1993, which were made possible with the assistance and

contribution of Dr. Abdel Moniem Omara, Minister of Youth and Sports, and Mr. Abdel Hamid El Wakeil. This move later proved to be one of the prime factors which would help advance and enhance the equestrian sport, improve the level of riders and elevate the level of competition, not only in the club, but in Egypt as a whole.

Yet, the club has had a makeover. The new grounds, fences, lighting systems and facilities, are all elements essential for a successful riding club and have altered its image. But why now? "Well, I wanted to do something for the club and its members before I would leave. I'm very satisfied with and grateful for the members

who supported me to change for the better," Gen.Ghazy explained.

He also stressed the point that these improvements were made possible by the generous donations of time, effort and resources by prominent figures in the field, amongst whom Abdallah El Gazaeri, Amr Eid, Abdel Fattah Ragab, Ahmed Shawki, and Hisham Abou El Ghar are a few. Gen.Ghazy expressed his optimism and desire to re-build the stables and set it as his project to come. "It would be my dream come true," he said.

Still, the Ferosia club is considered the only specialized equestrian club in Egypt, not to mention the biggest riding school for non-members. General Gamil Harres has been responsible for the

technical administration in the club for the past 10 years, and for his efforts the club owes him a lot of appreciation.

"We consider ourselves one big family of approx. 400 members," Gen. Ghazy proudly mentioned, "and I hope whoever comes into this club now and at times to come appreciates and keeps up what I and everyone else has done for this club." All facts considered, General Ghazy set one primary prerequisite which he felt must be present in everyone involved within Ferosia, and the field in general.....that they "more than anything love the horse before the game."

