

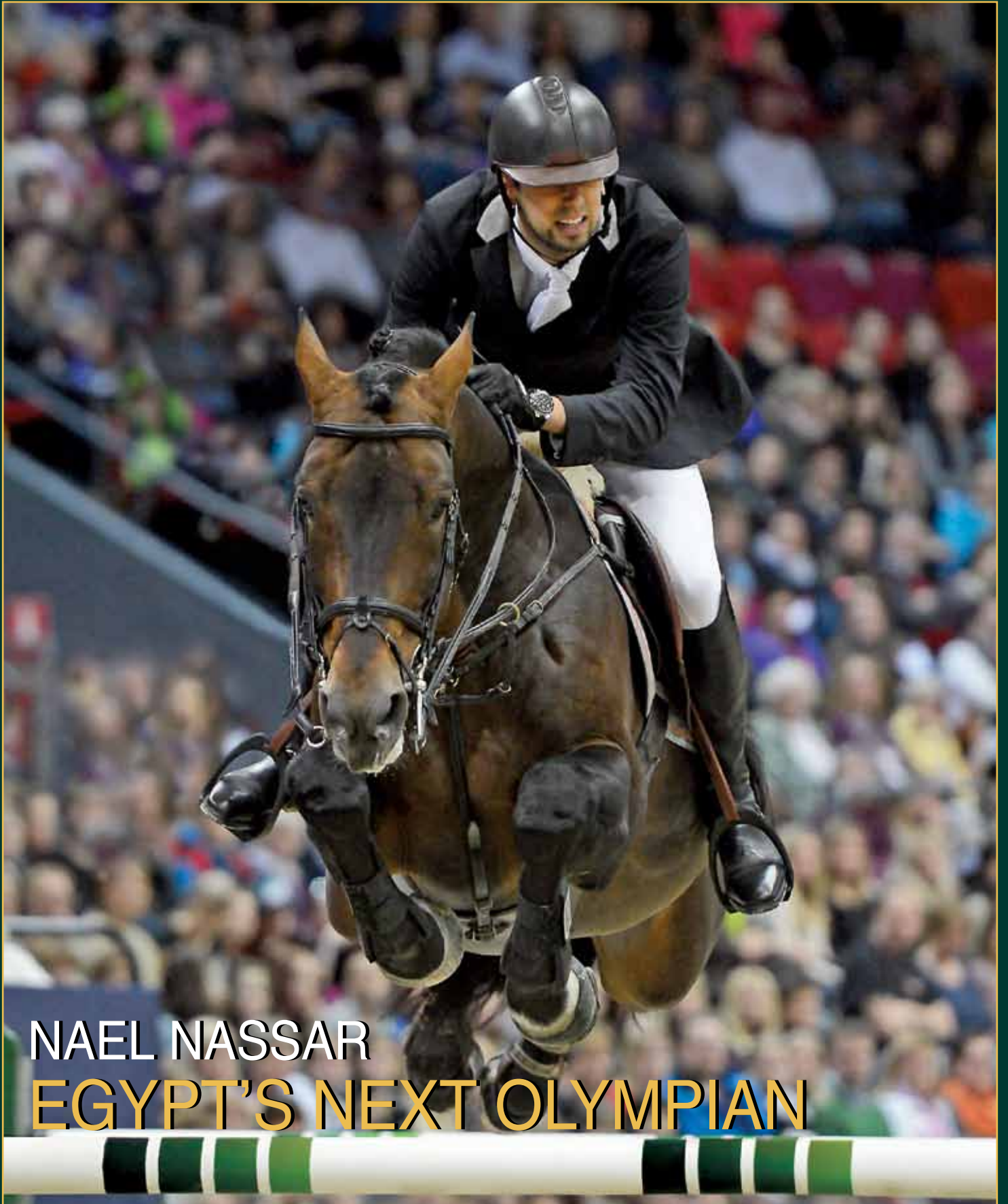
# HORSE TIMES



no. **42**

SUMMER 2013

THE LEADING EQUESTRIAN MAGAZINE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



NAEL NASSAR

EGYPT'S NEXT OLYMPIAN

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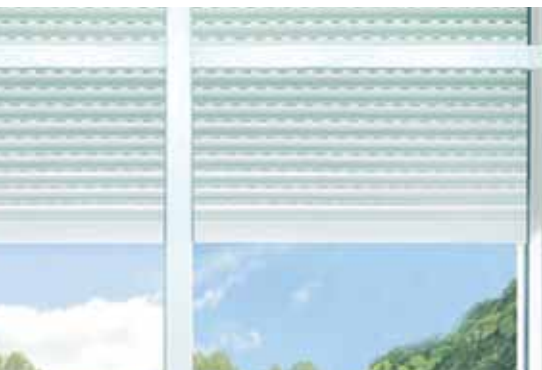
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# VIEW POINT

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Readers,

"Ramadan kareem" and we hope that this holy month has brought happiness, tolerance, charity and peace to everyone.

We start our Spring issue with a feature of our very talented cover personality, Egypt's leading rider Nael Nassar and his achievements, hopes and dreams. Following on from his excellent results at the Gothenburg Horse Show in Sweden, we were hoping for a spectacular performance from him at the Mediterranean Games but unfortunately, the equestrian discipline was cancelled. We still very much look forward to seeing Nassar compete in the 2014 World Equestrian Games.

Our polo correspondent, Bridget, reports on the return of polo once again to London's Hurlingham Park, the 'home

and cradle of British Polo'. In a streamlined format developed for speed, thrills and fun, Mint Polo in the Park brought together teams from Abu Dhabi, Buenos Aires, Beijing, London, Moscow, and Sydney for this 3-day tournament, one of London's social events of the year.

From the world of art, we feature sublime images from Tariq Dajani's new book *Asil: Photographic Studies of the Purebred Arabian Horse*. Dajani's photographic techniques are both unique and evocative, we're sure you'll agree. From photography we move to painting and wood-burnings: we feature the latest inspirational works from international Iraqi painter, Ali Al Mimar, and Siham Moharam with her original and exquisitely crafted pieces.

We take the opportunity in this issue to celebrate another triumph for internationally recognised Arabian horse breeder and judge Dr. Nasr Marei who was the winner of this year's Arabian Horse Breeders Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

In our 60 Seconds segment, we join the 'impatient' show jumping Spaniard Manuel Fernandez Saro for a quick and fun Q&A.

Two years after our last interview with Qatar's Ali Al Rumahi we catch up with him again for his news and views and plans for a berth in the 2016 Olympics.

Have you ever really needed some information on show jumping events, riders, horses, scores or upcoming events and had to run all over the internet, often down dead-ends, to get that information? Well, that happened to three show jumping enthusiasts and they decided to do something about it. They developed the website World of Show Jumping to gather and report show jumping news and information all in one place. Meet these remarkable and hard-working women behind it.

In a special four-part series we focus on the good works of Select International Company, which provides sponsorship and support to selected Egyptian equestrians who meet the threshold of both notable equestrian achievement and high career standards. In this issue we meet show jumper and professional dentist Dr. Karim El Sobky.

Finally, as usual, we bring you equine medical information and training tips with a fascinating report on the new use of real-action endoscopy to better detect and diagnose respiratory ailments in horses and my training tips about flat work for jumping and concepts to keep working in harmony.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we've enjoyed bringing it to you. We welcome any comments or suggestions to make HT even better.

Sincerely, **Khaled Assem**

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# NAEL NASSAR EGYPT'S NEXT OLYMPIAN

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

TWENTY-TWO YEAR OLD EGYPTIAN RIDER NAEL NASSAR HAS STUNNED THE SHOW JUMPING WORLD WITH HIS CONSISTENT AND REMARKABLE WINS, HIS PRECISION AND HIS HUMBLE CHARM AND CHARISMA. UPON FIRST OBSERVING NASSAR RIDING OPHELIA DURING THE 2009 4\* ARAB LEAGUE SHOW IN SYRIA AND WINNING THE 'CAT A' COMPETITIONS THROUGHOUT THE FOUR-DAY EVENT, IT WAS EVIDENT THAT EGYPT WAS PRODUCING A WORLD-CLASS EQUESTRIAN AND OLYMPIAN-IN-TRAINING. THEN, AS NOW, NASSAR HAD STYLE, HARMONY AND REFINED ALERTNESS WHEN RIDING, AND ABOVE ALL, HE HAD TALENT. HERE'S NASSAR'S ACCOUNT OF WHAT HE HAS BEEN ACHIEVING IN THE PAST THREE YEARS.







© Tommy Holl



Thani for Qatar. Al Sharabatly withdrew and his spot was taken by Qatar's Bassem Mohammed. Then comes Nassar deservedly earning a seat for Egypt as an extra rider riding outside his region and as the leader of the North American West Coast League, by earning at least equal points to the qualified riders for that region.

Born in Chicago, "the City of Big Shoulders", raised in Kuwait, studying Economics at Stanford University in northern California, fluent in four languages, this cosmopolitan native Egyptian showed promise from an early age. Standing now above six feet, most of his earlier mounts were on the small side, leading some of his fellow competitors to label them 'bicycles'. To this, in our HT interview with Nassar published in the 2009 summer edition (issue 29) he said, "I think having small horses just makes it more fun and challenging. Getting through a 1.45m course with a horse almost small enough to be deemed a pony is very rewarding".

Also from our interview, about taking in and training a new horse, here are some words of experience from someone so young: "I'd say it always starts with the flatwork. When you get on a new horse, you don't just attack the fences right away. You begin with feeling the canter under you, so that you have a slight idea of what you will be dealing with when fences come into play. Some horses are very handy and comfortable in the stride, others are elephants. Some have the blood of a thoroughbred; others are as cold as an ox. If you're able to get a good feeling of the horse as a whole and have roughly good control on the flat, your job already becomes that much easier. When jumping, while you continue to familiarise yourself with the horse's temperament, you start to concentrate on the feeling of the jump itself. You want to feel the horse's mouth, acceptance of pressure from the leg,

Just two years after Nassar's win in Syria and while still studying in university, he steadily kept making his mark in several international competitions. He managed to capture the attention of the audience and the accolades at the 2012 Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, Florida, when he seemed to come out of nowhere in Week 7 to win the \$15,000 Artisan Farms Young Rider Grand Prix, then progressing from there to win the entire 2012 Artisan Farms Young Rider Grand Prix Series.

Then, in July 2012, he blew past the likes of Olympians Beezie Madden, Reed Kessler and McLain Ward at the Spruce Meadows North American Tournament to win the \$35,00 Progress Energy Cup, a course technically tough with quite a challenging time limit. With his Belgian Warmblood

stallion, Raging Bull Vangelis S, Nassar beat more than 40 other experienced riders, advancing to a jump-off of two to earn his first win at Spruce Meadows in the only double clear of the class, and to earn Egypt its first win ever in Spruce Meadows.

Nassar showed every sign of continuing on this trajectory as he came into the 2012 autumn and winter, at the \$50,000 HITS Grand Prix in March 2013. And yet for all this, he remains humble, grateful, simple, and genuine.

From the twelve FEI World Cup Arab League Qualifiers that took place in the 2012/2013 season, two Arab riders qualified to represent their nations during the FEI World Cup Final in Gothenburg, Sweden (WC): Abdulllah Al Sharbatly for Saudi Arabia and Sheikh Ali Al



© Tommy Holl

Nassar & RB Vangelis during the WC class in Gothenburg

tidiness, scope, light-footedness, concentration, and joy. The most successful horses are those who you feel enjoy jumping.”

During the WC in Gothenburg, while Nassar and Vangelis had unlucky rounds, with his small horse Lordan, he excelled and they were placed in several classes. In the following interview, he spoke to us about how the whole event went, and how this time Lordan was the star.

**How did it feel when you realised that you qualified for the Rolex FEI World Cup in Sweden?**

I was very excited as this has been my goal for a year. It’s also sweet that I can achieve what I’ve been aiming for and also extra sweet that the show is in Sweden as my lifelong groom Linda Algeborg

is Swedish; we were both pretty excited. We were also hoping that it would go a little bit better than it went for us, but we are still happy to be here.

**You had two down on the first day of the WC class; what went wrong there?**

Vangelis and I decided to go for it as obviously we are not here just to be here. It was a speed class and I took a tough inside turn to this big Swedish oxer. I ended up a few centimetres too close there and unfortunately had my first rail of the weekend. At the second inside-turn, I thought I had a good shot. I honestly believed that we would leave it up. Maybe I rushed the first half of the turn and put him on a tough angle, but that’s kind of what needs to be done when you are going against the clock. Sometimes

you ride well and luck just isn’t on your side. Not to mention that Vangelis came up completely lame a week before the final. He tweaked his neck in the paddock and it took a serious toll on the rest of his body. Maybe that’s a reason for his uncharacteristic nature this weekend, maybe not. That’s just how this game is sometimes.

**What are your comments about the technicalities of the courses?**

The speed class wasn’t too tough if you weren’t trying to go fast which is usually how it’s supposed to be. There were quite a few clears and the courses were a little bigger than I expected on the first day. As for the second round on the Friday, I thought we rode really nicely for a WC round and we all saw 17 clears which is a lot more than what



*Nassar testing Lordan against the clock during the international competitions in Gothenburg*

should happen in a WC class. It was great for the crowd of course but the riders were disappointed. I thought the courses were big in general, not too technical except for one or two lines where you really had to adjust; otherwise everything was nice and smooth.

**You have been featured on the cover of an American magazine called 'Horse & Style' with the caption "Best of the West" immediately before the WC; do you think there were a lot of expectations?**

That's a good question. It's my first WC and I am still a young rider, there couldn't have possibly been too many expectations even though I won the US West Coast League and beat Rich Fellers, the winner of the 2012 WC. I don't think people had a lot riding on me and I just tried to

ride like I would at any other show. We will be back in form soon enough and I couldn't really pay too much attention to what people thought; I generally always expect a lot from myself anyway. I think I rode the best round I could have possibly ridden, Vangelis was simply not up for it this weekend.

**In the USA, are the crowds as big as the one we saw here at the WC?**

Not even close.

**Did the crowd play a role?**

I was hoping the crowd would play a bigger role, maybe wake Vangelis up a little bit, but he was completely unfazed by it. And to be honest, even though there were 10,000 spectators and once you go into the arena the whole place is lit up as if you are on a stage, once I went in I didn't

really look at them and tried to block everything else out.

**On Friday in the international competitions you were placed third with Lordan; you beat the times of several riders such as Edwina Alexander-Tops and Christine McCree; there were only around 12 clears and your two clear rounds were carefully executed. What was your plan before going in?**

My current trainer Piet Raijmakers and I had agreed that Lordan and I would go for it; Vangelis wasn't having a good weekend as I mentioned earlier but Lordan was my remaining choice. I thought it was a really nice jump-off and was built really well for him. I was a little slow from fence one to two; this is where I think I lost at least the second place. But then I picked it up and had

a really short turn back to the oxer and got my rhythm, from there I just came flying home. It was super fun, probably one of the most enjoyable rounds I cleared.

### **Was that the first time you really tested Lordan against the clock?**

Probably. I tried to go faster and he usually gets more careful as I go quicker, it's just sometimes he gets too careful and spends too much time in the air – and then I end up going a little slower than I want to. But he felt great throughout the weekend; he attacked the fences, he was confident and he was responding well.

### **Tell us more about Lordan and Vangelis?**

Vangelis still feels young and fresh, not this weekend obviously! Hopefully he can still jump until he is 18 so we should still have a few more years in him. I acquired Lordan at the end of his sixth year. He got hurt when he came to us so I couldn't start riding him until the end of his seventh. Then, things moved quite fast after his rehab and getting back to being sound, and we took him to a couple of national shows where he was all over the place. Subsequently I threw him straight into the young horse championships; he was just really responsive. Things went uphill afterwards: he won the young riders series in Florida in 2012 as an eight-year-old and I also had him jump some 150 classes there at the end of the circuit as well as some of the WC qualifying classes where he won one in Thermal. He is really stepping up. He is a lovely horse, small, compact with a lot of blood and I really enjoy riding him.

### **And how have things been shaping up with your trainer Piet Raijmakers?**

They are great. He is always bubbly, friendly, outgoing and at the same time he is a legend. He's won two Olympic gold medals and as many Grand Prix as you can think of. And



© HT

you can see that he is really well respected by all the riders from the sport, people are always asking for his advice. It is a privilege to be with him. And it has been reassuring to have him here with me as I haven't had a trainer for about a year now. As much as I enjoy not having one as it helps me develop, it's still great to have someone give you some pointers, help you while warming-up and helping right before a competition.

### **When will you graduate and tell us about the support you get?**

I have one more quarter left as I took two quarters off, one in the fall of 2011 to prepare for the Pan Arab Games, and one in the spring of 2013 to prepare for the WC Final at Gothenburg. I'll graduate in December. As for my support group, I have a great one, my parents first

and foremost. The people in Egypt have been great as well. In the USA, even though I came out of nowhere and stole a few classes, they are still friendly and nice to me. I qualify to shows as an extra athlete so I am not really stealing any of their spots which is a plus. To be honest, I've been really lucky as it's really important to have a good support group behind you. 🏆

### **FACTS:**

- North America is allowed a total of ten riders for the World Cup Final; seven from the East Coast, and three from the West Coast. Rich Fellers was already qualified as he had won the World Cup Final in 2012, consequently he was exempted from the requirement of qualification points. Nassar needed to have at least 77 points to qualify, which is the score of the 3rd ranked US West

Coast rider excluding Fellers. As it turned out, Nassar's score wound up totalling a colossal 94 and topped all of the US West Coast riders including Fellers.

- During the fourth day of the international competitions at Gothenburg, in a very technical and big course, veteran names such as Meredith Michaels-Berberbaum, Luciana Diniz and Mclain Ward could not give the Gothenburg Horse Show crowd any clear rounds. Following nine starts and no clears, Nassar and Lordan trotted into the arena with calculated calm. They jumped a flawless clear round and were the first to do so and qualify for the jump-off, and were the good luck charm for the riders who followed as only then, the crowd started to see some clears.

- Also, during the fifth and final day of the international competitions at Gothenburg, Nassar's WC horse Vangelis finally awoke and they were placed a strong second.

- Post WC, Nassar was placed 2nd with Raging Bull Vangelis at CSI2\* Grand Prix of Drammen, 4th at CSI2\* Grand Prix of Bonheiden, and 2nd with Lordan at CSI3\* Grote Prijs van de Provincie Gelderland.

- Nassar's current Longines FEI World Ranking is 98.

- Nassar and Lordan have qualified for the 2014 World Equestrian Games that will be held in Normandy, France.

#### HORSES:

**Raging Bull Vangelis S**, Belgian Warmblood Stallion, 15 years old; **Lordan**, Hannoverian Gelding, 9 years old; **Dunsoghly Junior**, Irish Gelding, 11 years old; **Baraka**, Oldenburger gelding, 6 years old (Lordan's brother); **Alva**, Holsteiner Warmblood mare, 5 years old; **Dalaya**, KWPN Warmblood mare, 5 years old; **Zayn**, Holsteiner gelding, 4 years old.

#### Gothenburg Horse Show Results:

CLASS 6 PRESENTED BY AGRIA, APRIL 26, 2013 - 1m50 WITH ONE JUMP-OFF:

RANK	RIDER	HORSE	COUNTRY
1	Roger Yves-Bost	Castle Forbes Vivaldo	FRANCE
2	Marcus Ehning	Campbel	GERMANY
3	Nael Nassar	Lordan	EGYPT
4	Edwina Tops-Alexander	Vienna Olympic	AUSTRALIA
5	Christine McCrea	Wannick WH	USA

Gothenburg Trophy Presented by Carpe Diem, April 27, 2013 - 1m55 WITH ONE JUMP-OFF:

RANK	RIDER	HORSE	COUNTRY
1	Ludger Beerbaum	Chaman	GERMANY
2	Marcus Ehning	Plot Blue	GERMANY
3	Rolf-Göran Bengtsson	Casall La Silla	SWEDEN
4	Rich Fellers	Flexible	USA
5	Nael Nassar	Lordan	EGYPT

CLASS 10 PRESENTED BY VOLVO, APRIL 28, 2013 - 1m45 AGAINST THE CLOCK:

RANK	RIDER	HORSE	COUNTRY
1	Rolf-Göran Bengtsson	Corcega La Silla	SWEDEN
2	Nael Nassar	Raging Bull Vangelis S	EGYPT
3	Katherine Dinan	Glory Days	USA
4	Ludger Beerbaum	Crespo PKZ	GERMANY
5	Sheikh Ali Al Thani	Sieshofs Abraksas	QATAR

#### Other Prominent Results:

*1st place: Damascus (Syria), Abu Dhabi (UAE), Gera (Germany), Wellington (Florida, USA), Spruce Meadows (Calgary, Canada), Langley (Canada), Burbank (LA, USA), Thermal (California, USA). 2nd and 3rd places: Pan Arab Games (Doha, Qatar) and Lexington (Kentucky, USA). Other placings: Doha (Qatar), Dubai (UAE), Kiel (Germany), Odense (Denmark), Lanaken (Belgium), and others.*

- Full results and figures from the WC in Gothenburg: <http://tinyurl.com/mmqe9gj>

- HT full reports about the WC in Gothenburg: <http://tinyurl.com/m37gnpw>

- Nassar's clear rounds: <http://tinyurl.com/luznrer>, <http://tinyurl.com/myv9f99>, <http://tinyurl.com/l6zyjq5>

- HT Nassar's 2009 interview: <http://tinyurl.com/cbfbccv>

- HT Nassar's LIVE interview: <http://tinyurl.com/mabfr29>

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## MINT POLO IN THE PARK 2013

# POLO RETURNS ONCE AGAIN TO HURLINGHAM

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

THE PURISTS MAY SCOFF, BUT IF YOU TAKE THE LIKES OF SOME HEFTY 6-, 7-, AND 8-GOAL PLAYERS, CUT THE OVERALL PLAYING AREA BY ABOUT A THIRD, STREAM-LINE THE RULES FOR SWIFT PLAY, PUT THE SPECTATORS RIGHT UP FRONT (WITH THEIR PIMM'S AND POMMERY'S), AND STAGE THE WHOLE EVENT IN THE 'HOME AND CRADLE OF BRITISH POLO' AT HURLINGHAM, BELIEVE ME, YOU HAVE ONE EXHILARATING EVENT.

The brainchild of Daniel Fox-Davies, founder of Fox-Davies Capital, this event has really caught on and is going stronger than ever in its fifth iteration. As was done with Twenty 20 changes to cricket, so Fox-Davies devised a polo event with revised rules which would promote the sport of polo and attract a whole new generation to the sport. Polo generally suffers from bad PR, being considered snooty, inaccessible, difficult to view and film, too technical and complex, and with no 'home team' to cheer for. Fox-Davies with expert technical advisors revised the rules to produce an accessible, incredibly fast-paced and thrilling exhibition polo tournament at middle-goal level.

As Fox-Davies explains: "The

idea started after I'd been playing for eight or nine years and I realised that many people really had never seen a polo match." He came to realise that you would need to bring the play closer to the crowd. And he thought: "Let's bring it to the city...find a ground." After looking at Hyde Park and Regent's Park, they came across Hurlingham Park and with its polo history it was the obvious choice.

Fox-Davies believes that a crowd-and-sponsor-pleasing event with a 'faster and dynamic game' will raise awareness and enthuse spectators, which will benefit and support standard competition polo. And with five such successful events here at Hurlingham and one in Abu Dhabi - and more on the drawing

board - it looks like his formula is working!

Whether as one of the 32,000 spectators at this year's MINT Polo in the Park you paid more attention to your lawn picnic co-partiers and beverages or stayed riveted to the boards watching play, you will not have gone home from this event disappointed.

### **'HOME AND CRADLE OF BRITISH POLO':**

Held at Hurlingham Park, the event has strong nostalgic and emotional pull. It was at the Hurlingham Club itself that British polo first found a formal home in 1874 following the establishment of the Hurlingham Club Polo Rules in





*The competing teams line up*

1873, now the Hurlingham Polo Association Rules, which govern international polo to this very day. The renowned club hosted the first international match between England and the United States in 1886 (which became the venerable Westchester Cup) as well as the polo competition for the 1908 Summer Olympics.

World War II changed it all when several acres of the Club were absorbed by the local authorities, including the old Polo Field No. 1, where MINT Polo in the Park 2013 presided this June.

No bad feelings, though... the stately Hurlingham Club embraced the return of polo. As Niall Kilgour CB, Secretary and Chief Executive of The Hurlingham Club said: "I am

delighted to see polo back here; it seems a natural fit for the area and polo in the Club's old No. 1 field." Long-time Club member Jane Westbrook agrees: "Of course, The Hurlingham Club and the sport of polo are tied inextricably. As members of the Club we are pleased to see this great sport return to our old field. And having a Club marquee makes the event very special indeed." The Club Secretary also expressed gratitude to the Hammersmith & Fulham Council for its 'brave and bold' decision to allocate the venue for this event for the benefit of the local area.

### **IT'S NOT POLO LITE!**

For Polo in the Park, the rules were adjusted for speed, excitement, and spectator

participation – offering a concise but complete experience of the sport. The field was designed in an elongated octagonal and shortened to 250 yds length x 120 yds width at the widest (a standard field is 300 yds x 160 yds). The number of team members was reduced from four to three with the number 2 and 3 position roles taken on by the number 2 player. The throw-in has been substituted by the "Dash", in which, as the name implies, from the goal line one representative of each team charges madly at the ball placed on the mid-line (and at his opponent). I thought this was some kind of pseudo-Medieval jousting, but was to learn from Fox-Davies that the "Dash" was an old American polo starting practice at Westchester which

was later discontinued following events such as the TKO of both opponents in a “Dash” collision in 1888 at Myopia Polo Club in Massachusetts. Myopia, indeed!

Another oddity is the “D Ring” at the 45 yard line, from which all fouls are played and from outside of which scores played carry double score. And the pace of play is ensured by the rule that teams only change sides at the half. While I felt that the rules added, yes, excitement, but also an extra element of danger, every player I spoke with had this to say about this unique event: ‘It’s FUN’!

Mohamed El Habtoor, patron of City AM Abu Dhabi Team, second place winner at this year’s event and the winner of

Polo in the Park 2011, explained: “Polo in the Park is completely different. This is not like normal polo. It’s closer, you can hear the people and see the people, they’re right there next to you. As a spectator, if you can’t see the play, you might lose interest. Here people really watch, it’s fun. And everyone has a good seat, whether in the grandstand or hospitality.”

#### PLAY HIGHLIGHTS:

Day one Friday, 7 June, was London’s official Summer Office Party, and it was clear that some attendees had skived off work to attend as the omniscient cameras and unabashed big screen revealed group after group with brochures or hands hiding identity! Ah, well, the

ponies kicked off with Camino Real Team Buenos Aires (with highest ranked 8-goal player Piki Diaz Alberdi) in a reasonably calm and professional win over Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park Team Beijing 9 to 7, followed by a more enthralling match between City AM Team Abu Dhabi who out-goaled Otkritie Team Moscow 5 to 3. 2012 champs MINT Team London held their own - just - over IG Team Sydney in a tense moment when home team player George Meyrick scored his goal in the last 10 seconds to take the match 5 to 4.

Saturday was Ladies’ Day billed as ‘the Social Event of the Season’, which some social arbiters might debate, but which still attracted the young and

*The crowds cheer Team Sydney and Team BA*





2013 Mint Polo in the Park Winners Team Sydney

the bold, the restless and the beautiful of London. This day of typical London clear/rain/drizzle/clear weather witnessed Moscow take it from Beijing 9 to 7 and Sydney beat Buenos Aires 7 to 4. Abu Dhabi took the edge over the MINT London team 4 to 3 in a frightening match which saw Guillermo Cuitino, Abu Dhabi's No. 3, take a horrific tumble which had him out cold for several minutes. While play stopped and all players abandoned their mounts and mates to run to Guillermo's aid, specialist medical care and transportation was summoned and in the background Otkritie's Max Charlton jumped on to substitute and finish the match in Abu Dhabi's favour.

Final's Day was promoted as a

family day and the organisers made sure that mater, pater and familia were all catered for with the Mahiki Coconut Sunday Brunch Party, Club Med Kids' Zone, luxury shops, art galleries, and the KERB Food Market with every foodie taste imaginable. Octopus curry, anyone?

Eyes were on the home team for the Plate Final match for third and fourth places between MINT Team London and Otkritie Team Moscow, where despite a valiant try, London failed 5 to 4. The Grand Final match of the tournament placed IG Team Sydney against City AM Abu Dhabi. The adrenalin and excitement of the crowd pulsed through the grounds as excellent play after play brought each of the teams within striking distance of the win. Sydney

held out to win MINT Polo in the Park 2013 7 goals to 5. Special mention to Max Charlton again for substituting for Cuitino (who although he was able to leave hospital in time for Sunday's final match, was forbidden to play) in the final for Team Abu Dhabi and a special mention of the excellent commentary and insights by sports presenter Abi Griffiths throughout the three-day event.

Where else can you dress up, watch serious polo, hob-nob with celebs and polo stars, maybe find yourself on television, drink Champagne to your heart's delight and then trundle over and catch the Putney Bridge Tube home at the end of the day? 🍷

*Photos courtesy Captive Minds*

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# TARIQ DAJANI'S ASIL: PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES OF THE PUREBRED ARABIAN HORSE

*ASIL: PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES OF THE PUREBRED ARABIAN HORSE IS A WORK OF ART IN EVERY SENSE. THE RESULT OF TARIQ DAJANI'S LIFE-LONG FASCINATION WITH THE ARABIAN HORSE, IT CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF THE BREED IN BEAUTIFULLY OBSERVED AND MASTERED PHOTOGRAPHS WHICH HAVE BEEN REPRODUCED TO AN EXTREMELY HIGH STANDARD. INSIDE AND OUT, THIS BOOK CARRIES THE SUBTLE MESSAGE: 'THIS IS ART; THIS IS CLASS'.*

The Arabic word 'Asil' signifies purity, nobility and authenticity. It is a word used to describe the purebred Arabian horse, and one that could equally describe Tariq Dajani's photographs.

Originally bred by the Bedouin tribes for battle, the pure-blooded Arabian evolved over centuries into a creature of beauty and strength. The care of the Bedu for their horses, coupled with the harsh environment, produced an animal of distinctive intelligence and sensitivity, whose power and stamina enabled it to endure the harshest conditions and demands. While the usefulness of the horse gradually declined with the advent of mechanised transport, the Arabian horse remains a symbol of pride and of historical and cultural importance for the Arabs of the Middle East.

For as long as Dajani can remember, he has been drawn to this fascinating breed. He is not simply interested in documenting its appearance, nor in photographing it in romantic settings, but in expressing the elements of the horse's personality, intelligence, pride and self-esteem, its sense

of calm or strength.

Dajani's deep connection with his subject shows in every portrait, and there is something instantly recognisable about his photographs. They contain an elusive quality that draws the eye as he delves into the personality of each horse. They ask questions of his audience: questions about identity, the definition of beauty, the nature of art. They can be appreciated on many levels, from the visually pleasing to the intellectually challenging to the spiritually satisfying, but all bear the hallmark of Dajani's outstanding talent.

The foreword is written by HRH Princess Alia Al Hussein, whose knowledge and understanding of the Arabian horse is well known and who is personally acquainted with some of Dajani's subjects; she says: "... *His photographs also capture the personalities of the horses. We not only see Hlayyil Ramadan, for instance, portrayed as a beautiful stallion, we also see his casual and benevolently mischievous mood. His work honestly represents an individual essence. That is perhaps what is most remarkable.*"

The book also carries a fascinating preface by John Wood, the internationally-renowned poet and photographic historian, describing Dajani's work in the context of art, literature and Islam through the ages. His essay is illustrated with examples of some of Dajani's other subjects – falcons, cityscapes and portraits – which show the same acute observation and technical mastery. Wood writes:

*"And so Tariq Dajani with history, culture, tradition, and asil all woven into the fabric of his art has come to the horse with a fresh eye – an eye as fresh as Vermeer's looking at an interior, or Cézanne's gaze upon an apple. How has he done that? The answer is simple: through the discipline of art. A serious photograph is like any other serious work of art – a painting, a poem, a symphony, a dance.*

*"A serious photograph not only sets itself apart from all other moments but also captures the particularity of its subject – a horse, a horse's eye, a human face, a landscape, tree, store front, tool, cigarette butt, pattern of ice crystals – while*









at the same time revealing the universality of those things. That is what art does. That is what art demands and requires. Without particularity a photograph is but a meaningless generality.

“Dajani’s art confronts us with questions and amazes us with his deeply humane insights. As beautiful as the reproductions are in this book, they only begin to suggest an actual Dajani print. The first time I saw his prints, goose flesh literally rose in excitement on my arms – and I have looked at thousands upon thousands of photographs. Though Dajani mastered the traditional crafts of the darkroom photographer, for *Asil* he wisely chose to work digitally in colour. Today it is no longer a matter of darkroom versus digital; the only question is darkroom or digital, and the decision depends upon the subject matter. Mohanna Durra, Dajani’s mentor, once said to him, “The pencil is a tool which

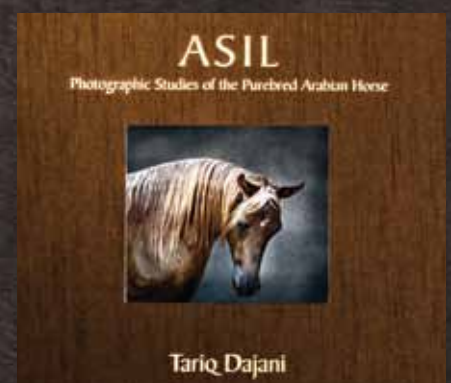
the hand guides according to instructions from the mind and the eye, but it is the heart that feels what you want to draw; so let go, and go with your heart.” And that is what Dajani does. He, unlike many contemporary photographers, is unafraid of beauty. He understands that it is something the human spirit needs – that it is essential to life, or at least to a full life.”

Born in England, Dajani spent his formative years moving between the Middle East and Europe, gaining an understanding and appreciation of different cultures and traditions. A passion for art and music lead him to explore various outlets for creative expression, until he eventually chose a career in photography. His time and experiences of living and working in London, Stockholm, Dubai and Amman continued to inspire and shape his ideas. In 2012, Dajani and his wife Siets relocated to the Alpujarran Mountains of Spain

with their family – two salukis and two purebred Arabian horses.

*Asil* is a book of rare quality, one to treasure, and one that should form part of the collection of all lovers of the horse, photography and art. 📖

*Asil: Photographic Studies of the Purebred Arabian Horse*  
 Medina Publishing  
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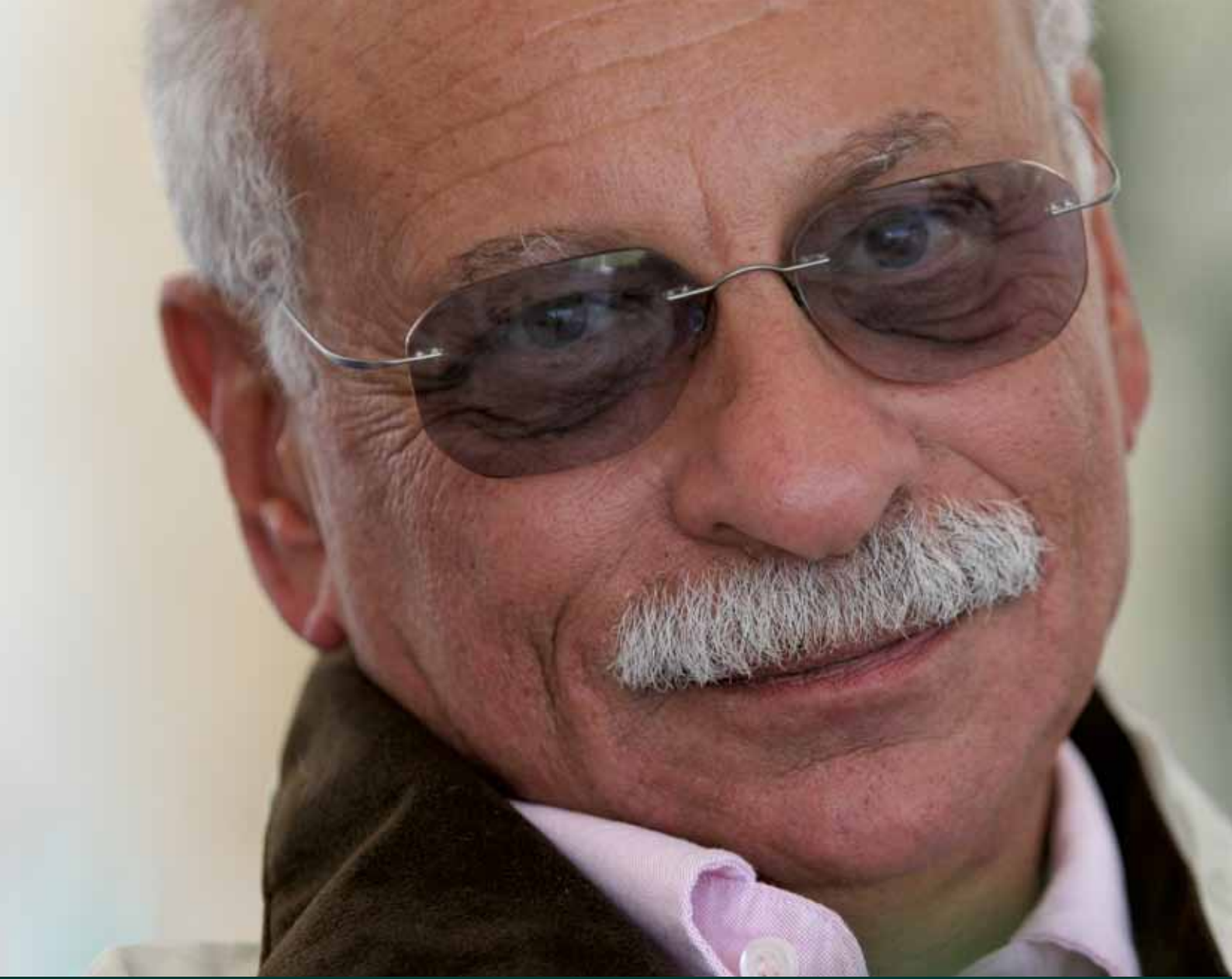
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## DR. NASR MAREI 2013 AHBA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER

*By Cynthia Culbertson, USA*

DR. NASR MAREI IS A WORLD-RENOWNED BREEDER, INTERNATIONAL JUDGE, AND GRACIOUS AMBASSADOR FOR THE ARABIAN BREED AND THIS YEAR'S ARABIAN HORSE BREEDERS ALLIANCE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT. HIS FAMED ALBADEIA STUD REPRESENTS A FAMILY LEGACY OF OVER SEVEN DECADES AND TEN GENERATIONS OF ARABIAN HORSES. THIS HISTORIC BREEDING PROGRAMME BEGAN IN 1935 WHEN HIS GRANDFATHER, AHMED MAREI, PURCHASED TWO ARABIAN FILLIES FROM THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF EGYPT. THE STUD GREW AND FLOURISHED UNDER NASR'S FATHER, DR. SAYED MAREI, WHO, DESPITE DEMANDING POSITIONS WITHIN THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT, ALWAYS RETAINED HIS GREAT LOVE AND PASSION FOR THE FAMILY'S ARABIAN HORSES. IN 1961, THE RULING REGIME IN EGYPT DECREED THAT THE ARABIAN HORSES OF THE EGYPTIAN AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION BE DISPERSED. DR. SAYED MAREI, ACTING ALONE AND RISKING HIS CAREER, GAVE A PASSIONATE PLEA THAT SAVED THIS BREEDING PROGRAMME AND FOREVER INFLUENCED THE HISTORY OF THE ARABIAN HORSE.


breeding decisions resulted in horses that garnered multiple national and international championships throughout the show rings of Egypt, Europe, and beyond, including the exquisite World Champion mare, Gelgelah Albadeia. The extraordinary horses bred by this historic farm have been exported to more than 17 countries around the world, and are influential not only in the realm of Egyptian Arabians, but within many of the world's most notable breeding programs.

Along with the world-wide success of the Albadeia breeding program, Dr. Nasr Marei remains a tireless ambassador for the Arabian breed. Along with his father and brother Hassan, he was a founder of the Egyptian Breeders Association. He is also a life member of the World Arabian Horse Organization (WAHO), has held numerous positions within the European Conference of Arab Horse Organisations (ECAHO), including member of the Executive Committee and head of the Judging Systems Revision Group, and is a long-time member of The Pyramid Society, the premiere international breeders organization dedicated to the preservation, perpetuation and promotion of the Straight Egyptian Arabian horse.

As one of the most highly sought-after Arabian horse judges in the world,

Nasr has judged more than 200 shows on five continents since 1990. These shows have included the breed's most prestigious competitions, such as the World Championships in Paris, which he has judged six times, the Nation's Cup, which he has judged 5 times, and many other important national and International shows.

Dr. Nasr Marei's eye for beauty and harmony is evident, not only within the context of Arabian horse breeding, but also in his passion for the visual arts. He is an amazingly talented photographer in a variety of genres, and his rich and vibrant images of his beloved homeland are particularly breathtaking. His images of Arabian horses and related subjects have graced many publications around the world and he has also produced two books: "Albadeia Studbook" and the critically acclaimed "The Arabian Horse of Egypt" published by the American University in Cairo Press. Venturing into the world of film, he worked with an Egyptian director to produce the spectacular film "Hilm".

The Arabian horse world is fortunate indeed for the enduring contributions of Dr. Nasr Marei and Albadeia Stud. 

*This article is courtesy of Arabian Horse Breeders Alliance*

After obtaining his PhD in the USA, Dr. Nasr Marei returned to Egypt and a career as a professor in business. But his heart was always with the horses, and in 1990 Albadeia breeding programme began a new era under his direction. As the third generation Arabian horse lover dedicated to the breeding programme, he felt a great responsibility to carry on the heritage and legacy of Albadeia. Yet, Dr. Nasr Marei did much more than simply preserve the breeding programme. Through his discerning eye, astute breeding choices, and pure passion for the Arabian breed, he elevated Albadeia programme to new heights.

The rich and concentrated gene pool of the Albadeia herd ensured that the farm's horses had a distinct look, yet Dr. Nasr searched the world to carefully add the blood of select stallions that would refine and improve the existing qualities of the herd. His



*Mr. Hank DeShazer handing Dr. Marei his AHBA trophy*

# 60 SECONDS WITH MANUEL FERNANDEZ SARO

COUNTRY: SPAIN

DATE OF BIRTH: JANUARY 27 1975

STAR SIGN: AQUARIUS

PROFESSION: PROFESSIONAL SHOW JUMPER

WE FIRST MET MANUEL, KNOWN TO HIS FRIENDS AS FANFA, AT CSI 1\* (A) - HORSES & HOPES INTERNATIONAL SHOW JUMPING FESTIVAL HERE IN CAIRO LAST YEAR, WHERE HE WAS PLACED TWICE ON BORROWED MOUNTS. THE PERFECT SPANISH GENTLEMAN, HE WAS SO GALLANT AND COMPLEMENTARY, BUT WITH SUCH A WRY INFECTIOUS DARK SENSE OF HUMOUR! HE WAS A GOOD SPORT AS WELL, RIDING A CAMEL AT THE PYRAMIDS AND RELISHING THE LOCAL CUISINE, INCLUDING *KIBDA*, EGYPTIAN-STYLE CHICKEN LIVERS.





**What is your best achievement?**

To be my own boss!

**Who is your favourite athlete (rider or other sports person)?**

John Whitaker.

**Do you keep any pets?**

Yes, three Jack Russell dogs.

**What is your favourite movie?**

“Gladiator”.

**Who is your ideal celebrity (female or male)?**

Don't have one!

**What is your favourite gadget?**

The iPhone.

**What bands do you like?**

I like U2 as a band.

**What is your second favourite sport?**

Golf.

**Do you like to cook?**

No.

**What is your strength and what is your weakness?**

Strength: Never give up.

Weakness: Too trusting.

**What makes you happy and what makes you sad?**

Doing the right thing and doing the wrong one!!

**To your close friends & family, you are known to be?**

Forgetful.

**If you had the power to change something, what would you change?**

The imbalance in the world.

**If there is something about Fanfa that you would like to change, what would that be?**

To have more patience.

**Do you support any charitable organisations?**

Yes, a few different animal ones.

**And when you're not rooting for Team Fanfa, who are you rooting for?**

Real Betis from my hometown Seville! 🇪🇸



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ALI AL MIMAR

# MAGIC OF ORIGINALITY

“EVER SINCE I FIRST EXPERIENCED THE WORLD OF ARABIAN HORSES, I HAVE ALWAYS TRIED TO SEEK WAYS TO DEVELOP THE SKILLS OF ART AND GAIN MORE KNOWLEDGE AND ACCESS TO ALL THE DETAILS OF THIS WORLD. TO DO SO, I STUDIED THE HISTORY AND WONDERFUL STORIES OF THE ARABIAN HORSE IN ORDER TO DISCOVER THE SUBTLETIES AND SECRETS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HORSE AND ITS HUMAN COMPANION.



This inspired many of the paintings that formed the artistic benchmarks of my career.

During my travels throughout the countries of the world whether for tourism or as a short working visit, I always try to find plenty of time to learn about impacts or venues related to the world of horses or speak with anyone who has a story or information to add as much to my experience and the impressions as possible.

Any artist who seeks to be a specialist in this area must first have a sense of and be fully aware of the details of

the real beauty of the Arabian horse and to strive to define this because it has its own style which would leave something unique in his paintings.

I've been lucky because I have met several Arab specialist equestrian painters around the world and I was privileged to interview some of them and this has greatly helped me to refine my experience...and I think I succeeded in that I find myself in the distinguished company of these artists, and this success is attested by many specialists in this area.

Now, having lived in Canada for more than two and a half years I

can see that a distinctive and clear change has occurred in my artwork; it began with ideas and subjects moving towards a more dynamic and fresh view and the impact of natural beauty here in Canada is evident in most of the paintings I've done here...I always say that the most beautiful of my paintings are those that remain unfinished, leaving me with more ideas and stories, which are renewed daily.”

*About Ali Al Mimar: Mr. Ali Al Mimar is an internationally renowned Iraqi painter. Website: [www.magicoforiginality.com](http://www.magicoforiginality.com)*



# THE ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL HUNTING AND EQUESTRIAN EXHIBITION



UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH HAMDAN BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN, RULER'S REPRESENTATIVE IN THE WESTERN REGION (AL GHARBIA) AND CHAIRMAN OF THE EMIRATES FALCONER'S CLUB, AND WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CULTURAL PROGRAMMES AND HERITAGE FESTIVALS COMMITTEE – ABU DHABI, THE 11<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF THE ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL HUNTING AND EQUESTRIAN EXHIBITION (ADIHEX 2013) WILL BE HELD FROM THE 4<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 7<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER.

In 2012, the 10th edition saw the participation of 40 countries represented by 630 exhibitors and companies and over 100,000 visitors. The space dedicated to the Exhibition was 38,000 sqm, the largest space in the history of the event, which combines ancient heritage and today's latest technological innovations.

Chairman of the ADIHEX Higher Organising Committee and Adviser for Culture and Heritage in the Court of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed Khalaf Al Mazrouei noted that the "overwhelming response to the Exhibition during the previous editions, both in terms of participation and daily public visits, clearly demonstrates people's desire and need of all what is reminiscent of the past, authenticity and inherited traditions."


At this year's ADIHEX, activities of participating companies will include: horse shows, camel auction, Arabian

Saluki Beauty Competition, archery and shooting range, falconry and hunting demonstrations, a heritage museum, an art gallery, and plenty of children's activities.

Today, ADIHEX not only represents a meeting place for advocates of environmental preservation, hunting enthusiasts, poets and artists but also a top destination for the manufacturers and distributors of hunting and equestrian gear and related equipment and has been witness to the conclusion of major deals and contracts. This gives the exhibition a distinct regional and international dimension that helps it raise the awareness on sustainable hunting and the preservation of the historical legacy, with all its characteristics, virtues and values while promoting business and trade and the UAE as a leisure, cultural, and commercial destination.

Abu Dhabi is the largest of the seven emirates that make up the

UAE, and fishing, diving and boating are deeply rooted within the local culture. With more than 200 natural islands, year-round sunshine and fabulous beaches, the popularity of water sports and the marine leisure lifestyle is long-established and ever-increasing.

In addition, the capital offers a host of world-class corporate and leisure amenities: five-star hotels, award-winning restaurants and a number of major cultural and heritage festivals and attractions that relate to falconry, camels, equestrian, palm trees, handicrafts and folklore. 

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
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## HOW TO KNOW THE BODY CONDITION SCORE OF YOUR HORSE

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
1	<u>Poor</u> – The horse is extremely emaciated. The backbone, ribs, hip bones, and tail head are all very prominent. The neck is hollow, and the bones of the shoulders, withers, and neck are easily noticeable. Individual vertebrae are clearly seen and easily felt. No fat can be felt anywhere.
2	<u>Very thin</u> – The horse is emaciated. The backbone is prominent and the ribs, tailhead and hipbones stand out. There is a slight fat covering over the vertebrae in the spine, but individual vertebrae are visible. The bones in the shoulders, withers and neck are faintly noticeable.
3	<u>Thin</u> – The backbone is prominent. The tailhead is evident, but individual vertebrae cannot be seen. Ribs are easily visible, but a slight fat layer can be felt over the ribs. Hipbones appear rounded, but they are easily seen. Neck, withers and shoulders are emphasized.
4	<u>Moderately thin</u> – The vertebrae produce a slight ridge along the back. A faint outline of the ribs is visible. The prominence of the tailhead depends on breed and conformation, but fat can be felt around the tailhead. Hipbones cannot be seen. Neck, withers and shoulders are not obviously thin.
5	<u>Moderate</u> – The horse's back is level. Fat around the tailhead appears spongy. Withers are rounded, and the shoulders and neck blend smoothly into the body. Ribs cannot be seen, but are easily felt.
6	<u>Moderately fleshy</u> – The horse may have a slight inverted crease along the spine as fat is built up along the back. Fat around the tailhead feels soft. Fat over the ribs feels spongy. Small deposits of fat are over the
7	<u>Fleshy</u> – The horse has an inverted crease along the spine as fat is built up along the back. Fat around the tailhead feels soft. Individual ribs can be felt, but there is noticeable filling between ribs with fat. Noticeable fat is over the withers, behind the shoulders and along the sides of the neck.
8	<u>Fat</u> – The horse has a noticeable inverted crease along the back. Fat around the tailhead feels very soft. Individual ribs are difficult to feel due to the fat in between. Noticeable thickening of the neck. The area over the withers is filled with fat. The space behind the shoulders is filled in and flush with the barrel of the horse. Fat is deposited along the inner buttocks.
9	<u>Extremely fat</u> – The horse has an obvious inverted crease along the back. Fat appears in patches over the rib area. Bulging fat appears over the tailhead, withers, neck and shoulders. Fat along inner buttocks may rub together and the flank is filled in flush with the barrel of the horse.

## NUTRITIONAL TIPS FOR HEALTHY HORSES

- Horses should consume 1.5 to 3.0% of their body weight per day. At least 50%, probably more, of caloric requirements (80% of feed by weight of feed) of this should come from forages (grass and hay).
- Ample turn-out and grazing time is important and will help keep your horse from getting bored, if his digestive system is working as nature intended, however if pasture is limited or unavailable, you can minimize the effects by feeding several small meals per day. Stabled horses should never be fed only one meal, but two works well for most horses. Three meals a day is better for horses under strenuous work such as endurance riding and three-day eventing.
- Don't ride your horse right after he finishes eating. Give him at least an hour after a big meal. Also don't feed him right after riding. Give him at least half an hour, longer if he is still hot. It is okay to ride a horse that has been eating hay or out on pasture.



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By Khaled Assem

THE TRUE VALUE OF A COMPANY IS IN ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY, REALISED IN DIFFERENT FORMS WHICH MAY BE DESCRIBED AS CORE VALUES. ONE OF THE CORE VALUES THAT SELECT INTERNATIONAL HAS CHOSEN TO PROMOTE IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF EQUESTRIAN SPORT IN EGYPT THROUGH REVITALISING THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE SPORT AS WELL AS OFFERING THE COMMUNITY GOOD ROLE MODELS OF RIDERS WHO HAVE SET THE STANDARDS OF SUCCESS NOT ONLY IN THE SPORT BUT IN THEIR WORKING LIVES AS WELL.

SPSS MIDDLE EAST, A SELECT GROUP COMPANY, ESTABLISHED BY SHADY SAMIR, IS A LEADING GLOBAL PROVIDER OF PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS SOFTWARE AND SOLUTIONS. THE COMPANY STARTED SPONSORING LOCAL RIDERS IN 2009 AND HAS BEEN DOING SO EVER SINCE. IN A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE FOUR RIDERS CARRIED BY SPSS AHMED BASSIONI, KARIM ABDEL FATAH, KARIM EL SOBKY AND MOHAMED EL NAGGAR, WE PRESENT THEIR VIEWS ON HOW THE SPONSORSHIP HAS BEEN WORKING SO FAR. WE START WITH THE PRACTICING DENTIST, DR. KARIM EL SOBKY.

### **Why do you think you were chosen to be sponsored by SPSS?**

For my consistent results and for being a successful member of society. I believe that being a role model has two sides, one that has to do with the sport's achievements and the other has to do with being a useful and active member in society at any level.

### **Please tell us about some of your best results to date?**

I have been competing in national shows since 1982 and I have around 30 national titles ranging from first A1 to sixth places in the C classes, and of course some good results in

international shows as well. But in general all of them were the best at the time, because even the lowest result took a lot of effort.

### **Do you feel as an individual that you can add to the image of the team?**

I can add value to the team with my experience and as a member of society with an active role.

### **In your personal opinion, how could this SPSS sponsorship programme be further developed?**

Well, any help is always a plus, but lot of things can be done to elevate the

team and at the same time benefit SPSS. We can sponsor a show, the company can help its members compete at international shows and it can invite an international trainer to help the team further and help other riders as well. This training idea can be duplicated with vets and farriers as well, as this helps both the team and the riding community which is a part of the main idea.

### **Do you feel that the sponsor is getting good feedback – and if not, what kind of developments would you suggest?**

Well, feedback isn't as good as it should be; we need more publicity



for the company to get the benefits of the sponsorship. Unfortunately, show jumping isn't getting much attention from the media so we need to invest some effort in making it more appealing.

### **Tell us more about your family?**

They are my best friends. My parents are very young at heart and they have always supported me. I haven't gotten married yet. I have a very close relation with my niece and nephew who started riding and are very attached to the sport. I love my family.

### **Do you feel you influence others with your results as well as your character?**

Well, I think I do; being a successful rider with a career will always be influential for the young generations who follow. I also still work as a Dentist every day and am accomplished in that field as well. Probably the key is to successfully balance the different elements of life.

### **What would you say to: family and friends, younger riders, people?**

To my family: "You are the best".....  
As for my friends: "I'm so lucky to have such quality people in my life".....  
For young riders: "Some people dream of success, others stay awake to achieve it. Work hard, play harder. We might win some and we might lose one but don't stop trying because you only live once" 🏇

### **ABOUT SPSS:**

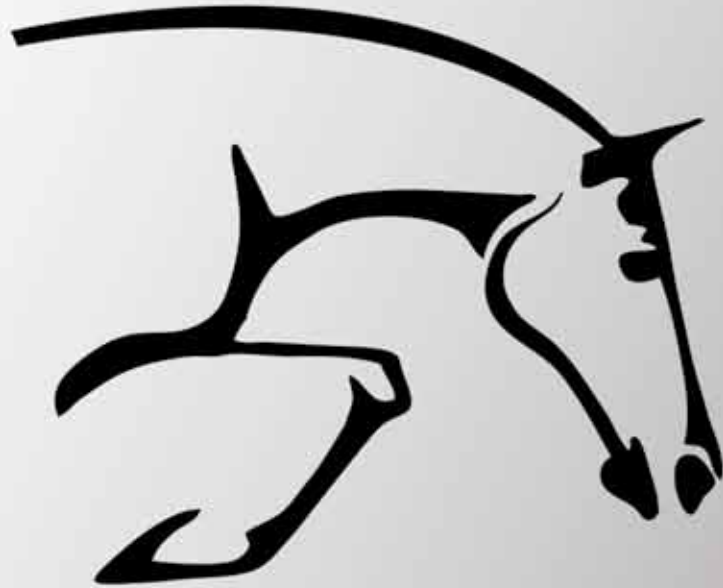
*Founded in 1968, today SPSS has more than 250,000 customers worldwide, served by more than 1,200 employees in 60 countries. Smart Vision (SPSS-ME) is an IBM partner after the IBM acquisition to SPSS Inc. and assists a wide variety of customers in the region in different business areas, playing the role of helping researchers in getting deeper insight into their existing data and applying these insights and forecasts at both the strategic and tactical levels to number of critical business problems.*



Karim on Aragon



Karim with his 2 bundles of joy; his nephew Zohar & niece Lily



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# ALI AL RUMAIHI QUEST FOR SUCCESS

By Khaled Assem

IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE WE LAST SAT DOWN WITH QATAR'S ALI AL RUMAIHI FOR OUR 'PERISCOPE' INTERVIEW IN THE SUMMER OF 2011. WE THOUGHT THAT IT WAS TIME THAT WE CAUGHT UP ON HIS NEWS AND VIEWS. DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, AL RUMAIHI HAS EXTENDED HIS EXPERIENCE, TALENT AND HORSEMANSHIP AS PART OF THE QATARI'S TEAM EFFORT TO QUALIFY FOR THE 2016 OLYMPICS. THAT TAKES MANAGEMENT AND EFFORT. LET'S FOLLOW UP WITH THE QATARI'S QUEST FOR SUCCESS.



© Waleed Al Jassem

Ali & Ravena

**So, Ali, tell us what you have been up to in the arena these past two years? Any new horses? Trainers? Strategies? Significant professional development events?**

We have started a new experience training with Jan Tops in Holland and we are beginning to see great results in the highest level of competition. I had a new mare, Victoria, but now she is with the rider Bassem Saif.

**Who were the coaches that were most influential in your career?**

I have had many good coaches in



*Ali & his daughter Nora*



my riding career and from each of them I learnt different things. Each coach has a different style of riding. Some coaches were with us for longer than others but in the end, I benefitted from them all. The benefits were not only to do with my riding skills, but with being a horseman and learning about the sport.

**The landmarks that were turning points whether they were horses, or shows or decisions?**

When it comes to horses I have been fortunate to ride many good ones. However it was my bay stallion Nagano who gave me my first gold medal at the Asian Games in 2006.

The Asian Games were the starting point in terms of the big league. Not only for me, but for the whole Qatar equestrian team. It was after this win that we began to seriously contemplate competing at the highest level.

**What is your daily routine with your horses regarding training?**

I am currently based at Jan Tops' stable in Holland. We do whatever we can to keep the horses in good shape physically and mentally. We try to ensure that they are taken out of the boxes more than twice a day. In the morning the horses are flat worked or jumped, and then in the afternoon they do more flat work or we take them on a hack. They must

be kept extremely fit to keep up with the demanding schedule of 5\* shows.


**Who has influenced you the most in your riding?**

My father was not only a horse owner and breeder, he was also the manager of the Qatar Racing and Equestrian club and the president of the Arab Equestrian Federation. His life was all about horses, so obviously this rubbed off on my brothers and me. I loved horses from a young age and enjoyed riding, but it was his choice to put me in show jumping. That was how it all started.

**What is the impact of your riding schedule on your family?**

It is difficult as I have to spend so much time away from them. We compete all year round in many different countries so we are a constantly traveling.

**What are your plans and goals for the future?**

I try not to think too far ahead, I am all about living in the moment. However, we do have a busy schedule with the Global Champions Tour which we will be competing in till the Final which will be held in Doha in November. I have qualified for the World Equestrian Games in Normandy, France 2014. We will also be trying to qualify for the 2016 Olympics Games. 



*Hanne, Jannicke & Jenny*

## WORLD OF SHOW JUMPING

# THE WOMEN BEHIND IT

**By Nada H. Abdelmoniem**

IN 2009, THREE WOMEN STARTED A SMALL BLOG TO COLLECT THEIR NEWS AND MATERIAL ON SHOW JUMPING. THREE YEARS LATER AND THE BLOG EVOLVED INTO THE WEBSITE 'WORLD OF SHOW JUMPING' WHICH IS PROBABLY THE LEADING AND MOST RELIED ON WEBSITE FOR SHOW JUMPING NEWS IN THE WORLD. WHO ARE THOSE WOMEN, HOW DID THE IDEA OF A SHOW JUMPING SOURCE OF NEWS COME ABOUT, AND HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT SUCH AN ACHIEVEMENT IN SUCH A SHORT SPAN OF TIME? HERE IS AN **HT** INTERVIEW WITH JENNY ABRAHAMASSON, HANNE CHRISTESEN AND JANNICKE NAUSTDAL – THE WOMEN JOURNALISTS BEHIND 'WORLD OF SHOW JUMPING' (WOSJ).





## WHO ARE THEY?

### JENNY ABRAHAMSSON:

Swedish, based in Lastrup, Germany and in Karlskrona, Sweden, 38 years old. Works as an equestrian journalist and photographer and has done so for several years. Background as a groom and rider in stables in Germany, Great Britain and Sweden. Speaks Swedish, German and English. Still rides.

### HANNE CHRISTENSEN:

Norwegian, lives in Oslo, Norway. 31 years old, attended Law School at the University of Oslo and has

worked as a lawyer for several years. Speaks Norwegian and English. Was an active show jumper for a few years while growing up. Still rides but only as a hobby.

### JANNICKE NAUSTDAL:

Norwegian, lives in Askim, Norway. 34 years old, attended Law School at the University of Oslo, has worked as a lawyer for several years. Speaks Norwegian and English. Was an active show jumper and currently rides her five-year-old home bred.

### When did you start WOSJ and how did the idea come about?

That's a long story. The three of us met by coincidence during the European finals at Windsor in 2009. Jenny was working there as a journalist and photographer while Hanne and I were watching the event as spectators. Our meeting in Windsor was not only the start of our friendship, but also the start of WoSJ. It started up as a small blog in the autumn of 2010 while building up the website, and more as a place to collect our material than anything else. The first event which was covered was the World Equestrian Games in Kentucky, and then we went on from there.

The three of us shared a passion for the sport, and what we all agreed on was that there really lacked a website dedicated to the international show jumping scene – or at least none that we know of. To find information and follow the sport we had to go into all kinds of different websites in German, Dutch, French – and in the end we thought, 'Why don't we create the website we want?' We were quite sure that if we were missing such a website, others were for sure as well. So one evening in August Jenny and I sat down on my sofa and made a draft of what we wanted it to look like and what we wanted it to contain. We bought the domain – and that's how it started. So the initial intention was to create something we were missing; we almost made WoSJ for ourselves, so to speak.

### Is this your full-time job?

Jenny works full-time as an equestrian journalist and photographer, but not full-time with WoSJ – although she gradually is able to do little else as new assignments and jobs show up all the time. It is not yet full-time for Hanne and me, but that might look different as of 2014. The website has grown a lot the past year, and so have our assignments for others – so it looks like we will make the big step and do this more or less full-time from next year.

### Are you all very passionate about show jumping or this site is simply a "job" that became successful?

We feel pretty safe in saying that we all really love this sport. That was why we made the website in the first place, and it's what keeps us going – nothing else. It's an amazing sport, with some truly fantastic athletes – both on four and two legs. It's also very interesting to be involved in the sport at the moment as it evolves and develops a lot – for the short time that we have been involved the sport has already changed a lot and it will be interesting to see where it is heading in the future. To be able to maybe contribute in bringing the sport a little closer to those interested also feels great.

### Which other sports do you enjoy?

We enjoy a little dressage and eventing every now and again, especially Jenny who also works with those disciplines.

### You are three women managing the website; how do you divide the work?

Jenny is the one out of the three that does most of the shows, but we all try to go at least once a month.

Jenny also usually takes all the photos, it's only if we are without her – and that rarely happens – that Hanne steps in and does that job. At shows where we are all three, Hanne or I usually write the reports together. I usually take care of writing the WoSJ Exclusives, at least



*Hanne & Rolf-Goran Bengtsson*

for the time being. Then there is a lot of administration at the moment with Hanne taking care of that. Apart from all these details, it depends on what our days and weeks look like; we kind of just do things as they come along – we're quite easy going and if Jenny is busy I try to step in and vice-versa. It really just flows as long as we communicate well together.

**Do you attend all show jumping events you write about? If yes, how do you divide the work as there are shows every weekend?**

No, we don't – that would be impossible with all the events going on at the moment. There are so many shows now that to be everywhere is not doable. Some reports are press releases, some – such as our 'Sunday's Grand Prix Winners' – are written together on the basis of results only. And sometimes – for example, with all the Nations Cups – we are lucky to have LIVE stream and create our coverage from that.

**When you started WOSJ, did you know that it would bring such a huge audience from around the world?**

We had no clue! Maybe we dreamed it would – but I don't think we ever saw any of this coming. It's been a fantastic journey, to build something up from scratch and see it become

what it has become. To follow our statistics and see it increasing and growing – and to see all the different parts of the world that our readers come from. It puts a smile on our faces! We must say it's still a huge compliment every time anyone says they visit our website – it still feels a little unreal. But we still have some serious work to do – we are not where we want to be yet!

**Some commented that you are only focused on bringing show jumping news from Europe and not from the rest of the world where the sport is developing in many countries; any particular reason?**

That's not completely right; we have lots of North American show jumping news on our website as well as European – but when it comes to news from, for example, the Middle East or Asia we can for sure become a lot better. But that also has to do with our own capacity; we are three people running everything with this website and sometimes we rely on contributions from others to be able to cover show jumping in the parts of the world that we are not able to go ourselves. And such contributions are always welcome – and whenever we receive any we usually publish it! So, that's an invitation to those who would like us to cover more!

**Does WOSJ have any sponsors?**

We don't have any sponsors or investors backing us; no – the website is run purely on the income we get through our own company, mainly from the advertisers or other assignments that bring in cash. And we've put quite some money into it ourselves as well. That being said, we have some supporters that have backed us along the way – and that believed in WoSJ from the beginning. They have been very important to us.

**What is your three-year plan for WOSJ?**

We kind of reached the goals of our three year plan after the first year. Once the snow ball started rolling, everything went so fast – maybe too fast. We have not really had time to think, we have just gone along with it. So we have had to set some new goals for ourselves, and now it's all about structuring, rethinking and planning our work for 2014 so we develop the website and also our company further. We all believe that 2014 will be a very exciting year for us!

**What kind of challenges do you face as female photographers and writers in a male-dominated industry?**

We can't really say there have been any huge challenges in that regard. When it comes to our male colleagues they have been nothing but nice and we have had help from quite a few – such as Ken Braddick who has been amazingly kind to us. Having been riders ourselves, we were already used to the male-domination of the sport and it's nothing we really ever thought that much about. If any challenges it must be that some – whatever gender – might have underestimated us. Not only because we are three women, but also because we have a lot of fun together and like to have a laugh. But being underestimated is really more of an advantage than challenge when you think about it.

**If each of you could pick just one show jumping rider past or**

**present, which one do you admire most and why?**

**JENNY:** There are so many that I admire – if I have to mention some it would be John and Michael Whitaker, Rolf-Göran Bengtsson, Marcus Ehning, Gerco Schröder and when I was a child Hugo Simon was my big idol.

**HANNE:** A rider I truly admire is Marco Kutscher. I love his riding which is very elegant without being boring and his jump-offs are always incredible. It never looks fast, but it always is. He is also a very nice person and everybody likes him.

**JANNICKE:** It's almost impossible to pick one as there are – and have been – so many good riders out there. When I was little my bedroom was covered in posters of John and Michael Whittaker, so I have to mention them. But if I have to pick one, it'd be Katharina Offel. I think she is an amazing rider with an incredible feel for what she does; I believe she is a rider that gets the most and the best out of the horses she rides. She really understands and loves her horses, and makes them trust her and what she does. I admire that.

**Tell us about one amusing experience you women went through while working and one which you would rather put behind you?**

We could go on and on with the amusing part, but not all of those stories are suitable to publish! We have had so much fun travelling around – creating amazing memories, and meeting some incredible people. But one funny story was maybe when Rolf was signing his new autograph cards after he won the European Championships in Madrid. The picture on the card was of him and Ninja over a fence, and in the background you could see two people – all arms and legs watching. Zooming in Rolf suddenly sees that these two people are actually Hanne and Jannicke going completely crazy while watching! We laughed so much at this photo and how we ended up on these autograph cards! After that



*Nelson Pessoa talking to Jannicke*

we have been put in 'The Rolf's biggest fans' category.

The most horrible thing that has happened during our time with WoSJ was probably when Hickstead passed away. We were not in Verona, but in Munich – luckily, as we are glad we did not have to witness it. It was awful enough finding out and hearing about his passing. Hickstead was a living legend, a king – and it really should not have ended the way it did.

**Which show jumping event that you attended and covered is close to your heart and which one would you like to attend and cover?**

**JENNY:** The European Championships in Madrid were really special, but then I always like to go to the Gothenburg Horse Show - I have been there since I was a small girl and the spectators there are just amazing.

**HANNE:** For me it's also the European Championships in Madrid. Not only did one of our favourites take home the gold, but it was that kind of show where everything turns out in the best possible way. We had great guest-bloggers and expert comments, and we made some funny and inspiring

interviews. It is always positive with a warm climate as well. One of the shows that we have not yet attended, that I have on my to-do list is Spruce Meadows. I imagine that being something different from what we are used to in Europe.

**JANNICKE:** Aachen is always special; it's just a unique event in every way. The atmosphere there is incredible; even though it's so big there it still feels really intimate. I love being there, I love following the sport there and I love working there. That being said, the European Championships in Madrid in 2011 are closest to my heart – just because Rolf won. I will never ever forget that! Like Hanne, I would also love to go to Spruce Meadows.

**Any final comments?**

If we could just maybe add that we feel really lucky to be able to do what we do with WoSJ, and that we are really grateful to all those who have supported us along the way – from riders and grooms, to readers, to advertisers and to colleagues who have helped us out. If we also could mention that it's been an amazing experience to meet so many of this sport's exceptional people – riders, grooms, owners, show organisers – who all share a passion for the sport. 🐾



# LONGINES GCT SEASON 2013 WINNERS



*Madrid, Spain - May 2013*  
Michael Whitaker riding Viking, Great Britain



*Hamburg, Germany - May 2013*  
Christian Ahlmann riding Codex One, Germany



*Wiesbaden, Germany - May 2013*  
Laura Kraut riding Cedric, USA



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London, Great Britain - June 2013  
Ben Maher riding Cella, Great Britain



Cannes, France - June 2013  
Marcus Ehning riding Plot Blue, Germany



Monte-Carlo, Monaco - June 2013  
Richard Spooner riding Cristallo, USA

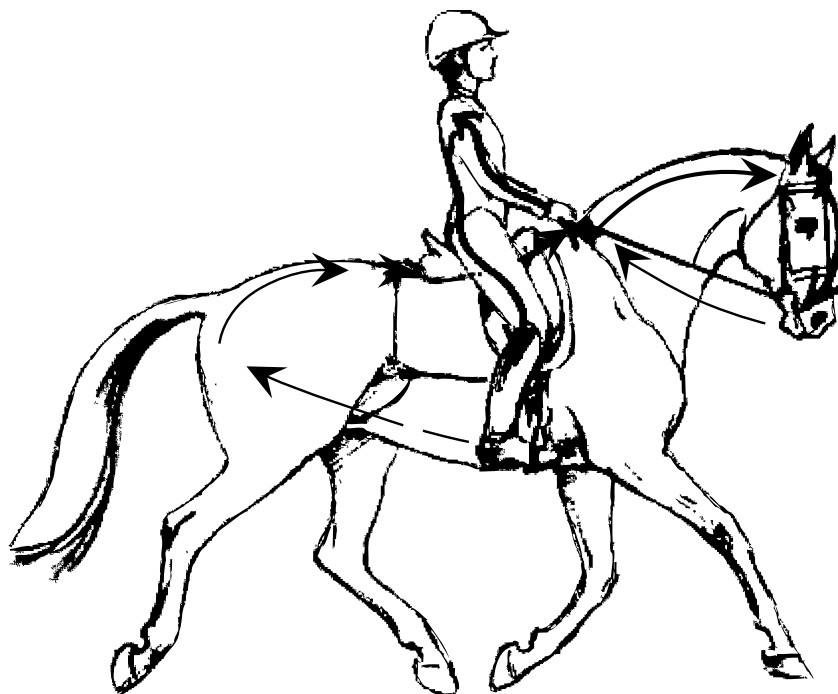


# TRAINING TIPS

## FLATWORK FOR JUMPING

By Khaled Assem

TO GO OVER A JUMP SUCCESSFULLY THERE ARE SEVERAL PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS THAT NEED TO WORK IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIP: DIRECTION, SPEED, IMPULSION AND TIMING. OUT OF ALL THESE ELEMENTS WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED AS CONSTANTS, IMPULSION IS THE ONLY VARIABLE THAT IS DEPENDENT ON THE HORSE'S LEVEL OF TRAINING. YET IN GENERAL, THESE ELEMENTS WHEN WORKED IN HARMONY PROVIDE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESSFUL JUMPING.



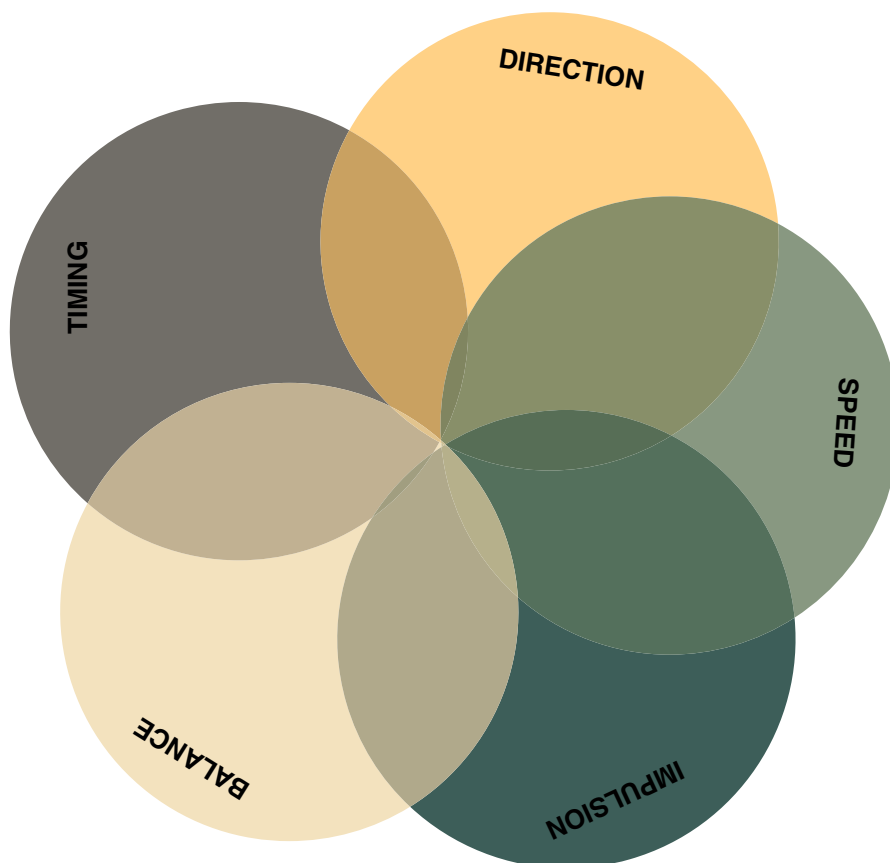
### SPEED & DIRECTION:

One of the priorities in any show jumping round is to have the right speed and direction which naturally relate to the routing of the course where controlling the turns through the horse's head and neck is guided by the position of the forehand. Riders will find it easier to control the direction if they look ahead to where they want to go; their upper body will follow and, accordingly, their seat will enable an accurate application of the aids.

Speed is executed through the upward and downward transition within the pace and this is achieved by the rider's aids keeping the impulsion level in perspective at all times.

### BALANCE & TRAINING:

Horses, such as race horses and novice horses, tend to be balanced



on the forehand. Through correct training this balance is shifted so that the hindquarters are lowered and the forehand is raised. This disposition achieves the right balance in order to maintain impulsion at the required speed, even though the horse's natural way of regaining balance is to slow down.

### IMPULSION:

Impulsion refers to the power that originates from the hind-legs to support the horse and propel him forward, so that he is working as one coordinated unit.

Impulsion is maintained through working the horse from his hindquarters to his front end in order to utilise his full power at all times similar to a car with a rear-wheel drive and front-wheel steering.

Controlled impulsion is the key element of successful performance. The harmony between impulsion and speed generates correct rhythm and good tempo.

### HARMONY:

In conclusion, when jumping a full course, once the rider has fully understood the elements of speed, direction, balance and impulsion, the rider has to allow his instinct to



Rotation & turns

© Jacques Toffi

take over. So, continuous practice and refinement of timing is crucial to allow those elements to blend and harmonise at a specific moment to produce successful jumping.

*About the author:*  
Khaled Assem is a certified Level 2 FEI trainer. He has been training for 15 years, competing internationally for 10 years and locally for 25 years.



Flatwork to create better Impulsion

© Jacques Toffi

## AN UPDATE ON OVER-GROUND ENDOSCOPY

By Lewis Smith, Rossgdales, UK

### WHAT IS OVER-GROUND RESPIRATORY ENDOSCOPY?

Over-ground endoscopy is a method of observing the horse's upper airway whilst it exercises. Unlike the previously used treadmill endoscopy examinations, these examinations are performed in ridden animals with a small unit mounted and positioned in front of the saddle. A small rigid camera (endoscope) is placed up the horse's nose. This is linked to a box that is secured to the bridle. This box in turn is linked to a computer and light source that sit either side of the withers. The endoscope is passed up the right nostril and directed by remote control to point at the soft palate and larynx. The system is well tolerated and the camera can normally be placed without the use of sedation or even a twitch.

For our racing clients this system means that the horse may be examined during normal exercise with minimal disruption to training, and the horse does not have to be hospitalised for a period of treadmill training. For sports horses, pleasure horses and hunters, it means that they can be examined while working in their normal routines and ridden in a style they are more accustomed to. This is not only more natural for the horses but it is often essential for the accurate diagnosis of some conditions (*Figures 1 and 2*). Unbroken and non-ridden horses can be exercised on the lunge during the examination and driving horses can be examined whilst pulling a carriage.

### WHAT SORT OF PROBLEMS IS OVER-GROUND ENDOSCOPY USEFUL FOR?



▲▼ *Figures 1 & 2: A horse undergoing over-ground endoscopy on a frosty morning*



The over-ground endoscope can be used to investigate two main problems; firstly, horses that make a noise when they breathe during exercise and secondly, for investigating horses that may be performing poorly.

### WHAT CONDITIONS DO WE SEE WITH OVER-GROUND ENDOSCOPY?

The conditions that we commonly see with over-ground respiratory endoscopy fall into two broad categories – problems associated with the larynx and problems associated with the soft palate (*Figure 3*).

#### LARYNGEAL PROBLEMS:

- Recurrent laryngeal neuropathy (RLN) (previously known as left



## **laryngeal hemiplegia):**

Left RLN or “roarer syndrome” is perhaps the most commonly thought of wind problem in many types of horse. The horse is unable to hold the left side of the larynx out of the airway as the horse exercises, and causes obstruction of the airway. Horses severely affected usually will exhibit a lower pitched “roaring” noise or more mildly affected horses will make a higher pitched whistling noise, coinciding with inspiration (*Figure 4*). In its severest form RLN can be diagnosed by conventional resting endoscopic forms. With milder forms of the disease the laryngeal muscles may still be fully functional while the horse exercises and the horse will not experience any airway obstruction. In these cases, the examination with exercising endoscopy will ensure that these horses are identified.

### **- Axial deviation of the aryepiglottic folds:**

Another cause of high-pitched whistling noises in the exercising horse has been identified as axial deviation of the aryepiglottic folds (ADAF). This condition is caused by loose tissue associated with the larynx getting pulled into the airway during inspiration. This may be a cause of poor performance and causes anything from a subtle to severe upper airway obstruction. When working at maximum speed any obstruction of the airway can cause a decrease in performance. ADAF can cause obstruction without necessarily causing an upper respiratory tract noise (*Figure 5*).

### **- Vocal Fold Collapse and Billowing of the Ventricles:**

Other conditions that may or may not be linked to left laryngeal hemiplegia are billowing of the small sacks of tissue that lie behind the vocal cords in the larynx, the so called ventricles. If air rushing in and out of the lungs as the horse breathes catches the sacks, it



*Figure 3: Endoscopic still image from a normal larynx and soft palate at exercise*



*Figure 5: Over-ground endoscopy image showing collapse of both aryepiglottic folds into the airway*



*Figure 4: Endoscopy image showing collapse of the left side of the larynx typical of left laryngeal hemiplegia*



*Figure 6: Over-ground endoscopy image showing collapse of both vocal folds (and aryepiglottic folds) into the airway*

causes a whistling noise and mild obstruction of the airway. Billowing of the left or right vocal cord commonly occurs and can cause a variety of respiratory sounds.

Vocal fold collapse is often related to RLN, and in less severe cases, or in horses not competing at high levels of physical exercise the only problem appreciable is increased respiratory noise. Diagnosis of this condition by exercising endoscopy, in such horses, may allow less invasive treatment to be

recommended.

### **- Epiglottic entrapment and Sub-epiglottic cysts:**

Epiglottal entrapment is where tissue underneath the front part of the larynx, the “epiglottis”, folds back on itself around the epiglottis. This will often cause poor performance and may be associated with severe increase of respiratory noise (*Figure 7*).

Sub-epiglottic cysts are fluid-filled

structures that form underneath the epiglottis. Their presence in the airway obstructs the passage of air, and can predispose the horse to epiglottal entrapment and palatal dysfunction. These conditions can be recognised by conventional standing endoscopy exam, but if the cyst or entrapment of the epiglottis is only visible intermittently, then they may only be detected on over-ground endoscopy (Figure 8).

### PALATE PROBLEMS:

#### - Palatal Instability and Intermittent Dorsal Displacement of the Soft Palate:

Horses that seem to 'choke', 'swallow their tongues' or suddenly pull up or tail off while working may be suffering from intermittent dorsal displacement of the soft palate (DDSP) or palatal instability. The condition is thought to be due to a dysfunction in the muscles of respiration around the palate and therefore may respond to conservative therapy such as a "tongue tie" and a general increase in fitness (Figure 9).

#### - Pharyngeal Collapse:

This is another condition associated with dysfunction of the respiratory muscles of the upper airway. Pharyngeal collapse manifests as collapse of the roof and walls of the upper airway during exercise, even at slower speeds, causing a fairly severe harsh noise. (Figure 10).

### A REVOLUTION IN THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT RESPIRATORY CONDITIONS:

#### - In conclusion:

Traditionally it has been the left side of the larynx or the palate that have been implicated in the majority of breathing conditions. Problems do occur more commonly on the left side because of the specific anatomy of nerves that supply the larynx. However with the use of exercising endoscopic examinations we have understood that a significant proportion of problems relate to both



Figure 7: Endoscopy image showing an entrapped epiglottis



Figure 9: Endoscopic image displacement of the palate over the top of the epiglottis



Figure 8: Over-ground Endoscopic image showing a sub-epiglottal cyst



Figure 10: Endoscopic image displacement of dorsal and lateral pharyngeal collapse

sides of the larynx and to other, previously overlooked, structures. Also, we are aware that many horses are affected by more than one abnormality at any one time. Exercising endoscopy has become an essential step in the diagnosis of respiratory conditions, providing a much more accurate diagnosis, and as such increasing the likelihood of successful treatment. 🐾

#### About the author:

Lewis Smith MRCVS is an associate at Rosssdales, and an RCVS Recognised Specialist in Equine Surgery. He is responsible for the practice's over-ground dynamic

endoscopy service. Rosssdales is an internationally renowned equine veterinary practice in Newmarket, UK, providing first opinion, emergency, referral and laboratory services. For more than 50 years, Rosssdales' reputation as a world leader in equine veterinary healthcare has been built on expertise, the provision of innovative and specialised treatments, and our commitment to providing an always-available quality service. A full range of respiratory investigations are available from the team at Rosssdales. To arrange an over-ground respiratory endoscopy, please contact Lewis Smith MRCVS at [lewis.smith@rossdales.com](mailto:lewis.smith@rossdales.com).



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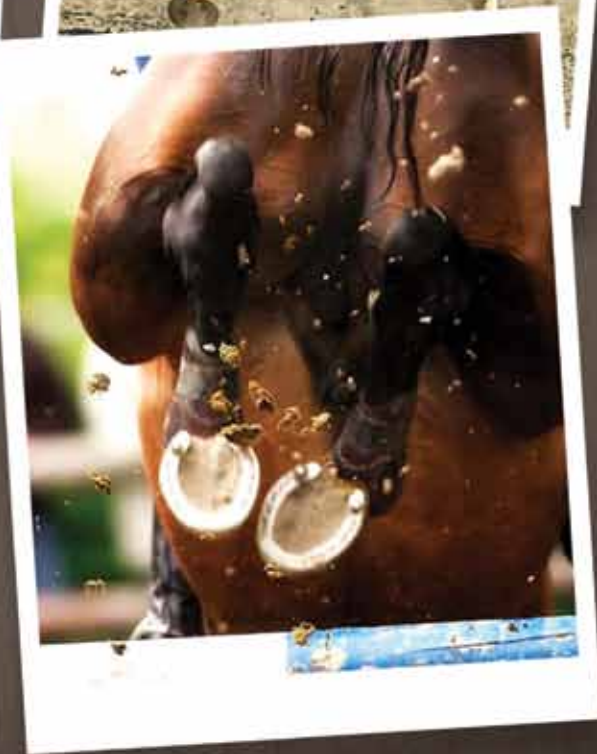
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