

2016 SCOTTSDALE ARHA

REINING FUTURITY SUCCESS

By Sue Adams

ARABIAN & HALF-ARABIAN FUTURITY CLASSIC SCORES PERFECT MARKS IN FUN, EXCITEMENT AND WEATHER

Judged a big success, the Arabian Reining Horse Association (ARHA) Arabian and Half Arabian Futurity at the 2016 Scottsdale Arabian Show boasted top scores in all categories. The weather was picture perfect with warm, some might say hot, desert sun providing unlimited tanning opportunities daily. The competition was outstanding, with 239 entries, and each year of the Futurity sees improvement in reining stock quality. Enthusiastic audiences gathered daily around the Wells Fargo Advisors Arena enjoying the performances of both seasoned and new competitors.

The Scottsdale Arabian Show continues to shine as the world's most prestigious Arabian event. For 2016 some 2,200 horses accounted for approximately 10,000 class entries. Nearly 300,000 people attended the event over the eleven days of the Show according to Taryl O'Shea who is executive director of the producing Arabian Horse Association of Arizona (AHAA). The event is a massive undertaking that requires 40 judges, 100 temporary staff members and some 400 volunteers.

Over finals weekend Judy Kibler, president of the ARHA Board of Directors, confirmed the success of the Futurity with an announcement that \$100,000 in prize monies are committed for the 2017 Futurity. "The ARHA Futurity aims to count among the world's best in reining horse competitions. Securing additional Futurity money for next year keeps us moving toward that goal," she stated.

EXHIBITORS AND BREEDERS WELCOME INCREASED FUTURITY SUPPORT

Dick Ames, together with Joe Betten and Tom Redmond, are fondly called the "Founding Fathers" of the Arabian and Half Arabian Futurity. Their financial commitment helped propel the Futurity's status in the reining horse world. The Ames family's Cedar Ridge Arabians breeding program speaks to his long term commitment to the sport of reining with some thirty horses in their reining program. "We are very positive about the future of the ARHA and the Futurity," explains Ames. "We have fifteen (TA) Mozart

foals coming this spring. We have a number in training with Brian Welman and Mozart will be in Scottsdale with Crystal McNutt. The Futurity program is getting better funding again, the amateur entries are growing, everybody's having a good time and we've had perfect Show weather. It's all good with us."

Reining is a "couples sport" for Michelle and Joe Betten. Joe credits Crystal McNutt for convincing Michelle to give reining a try and now their names are appearing one after another on the winners lists. Joe spoke candidly about the Futurity in saying, "Our numbers are not what we had hoped, we got hurt a little when the money went down. That's just life, people are going to show where the money is but prize money increases are coming for next year and beyond, and amateur participation is very strong. I'm excited about the future of reining. I like what Dick (Ames) has going at Cedar Ridge. I'm breeding a couple mares to TA Mozart. We're all going to keep having fun, that's for sure."

ARHA FUTURITY ATTRACTS LOYAL SPONSORS

One of those loyal sponsors, Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC, is a subsidiary of Wells Fargo & Company, one of the United States' largest and strongest financial institutions. In business since 1852, Wells Fargo is known and respected for its responsible stewardship of client assets.

A renowned symbol of the company's brand, the Wells Fargo Stagecoach, rolled into the Arabian Horse Show for the opening weekend of the Show, on Saturday, February 13, 2016. Show attendees were welcomed onto the Stagecoach for a firsthand experience of this American icon. "The Wells Fargo Stagecoach is a unique expression of the company's rich heritage tracing to the settlement of the West," explains David Kistner, Managing Director Market Manager of Wells Fargo Advisors. "The stagecoach symbolizes how we continue to come through for our customers and the diverse communities in which we serve."

Kyle Tack from Whitesboro, Texas has been a supporting sponsor at the ARHA Futurity since the first show. Marshall Kyle, caught hammering on a spur behind the counter of his mobile tack store, laughed, "We fix or repair just about anything." Kyle's great sense of humor combined with his "we fix anything" motto makes him a go-to-guy when any kind help is needed. This year, he was in center ring in the Equidome serving as the color commentator for the Celebrity Slide as well as Calcutta auctioneer raising money for the Futurity. Kyle Tack also generously donates their custom saddles that are cherished by the Futurity winners.

Additional returning sponsors include Markel Insurance as presenting

sponsor of the Celebrity Slide, Silver Spurs Equine, Scottsdale, AZ, and Bingham Equipment Company, Mesa, Arizona. The "Granddame of Reining", Eleanor Hamilton, of Eleanor's Arabian Farm in Rogers, Minnesota, together with her late multi-champion stallion, Hesa Zee, continue as bedrock supporters of the sport where Hesa Zee's offspring carry on his championship legacy.

OPENING WEEKEND

An expanded array of Youth classes marked the opening days of the Futurity Classic together with equitation and junior to ride classes. Late Monday afternoon reining action moved to the main stage at the Equidome with Freestyle Reining. This competition features reining maneuvers performed to the rider's choice of music, complete with coordinating costume and props, creating a high energy, unique ride by each participant.

The popular and entertaining Celebrity Slide presented by Markel Insurance followed Freestyle. This event pairs top reining trainers with novice reining riders for a few training sessions for a fun and fund-raising competition. This year's winning team was trainer Tye McDaniel, of Crystal McNutt Performance Horses, and exuberant rider Brett Becker, of Becker Stables Grass Valley, California. Becker thinks there should be more Slide events to bring people from different areas of the business together to have a great time.

And the Finals Winners Are...

Friday night's Arabian Reining Futurity opened finals weekend with Crystal McNutt and Zee Gun Slinger riding to an \$8,341 Championship for owners David and Shirley Thielman, of Spokane, Washington. Kissed in

the Mist ridden by Gary Ferguson won Reserve Champion honors for Eleanor Hamilton. Crystal McNutt claimed third place of \$4,906 riding her own AM Notorious Star. Fourth place and \$2,453 went to Nspring for the Top and Larae Fletcher Powell for owner Ingrid Bentzen of Auburn, Washington. Brian Welman and Proper Etiquette

RA claimed the fifth spot of \$2,208 for Dick Ames, Jordon, Minnesota.

The following night the Half Arabian Reining Futurity took the center stage as the top reiners competed for a top prize of nearly \$10,170. And in an exciting "ride off finish" between Andrea Fappani and Tyson Randle, Fappani took home the money on TS Mae Gossip for owner Amanda Brumley of Cave Creek, Arizona. Randle on Destined to Shine claimed \$8,605 for Gayle Pniak from Elbert, Colorado. Crystal McNutt riding TR Por Quixote won \$5,476 for Joe Betten of Grand Haven, Illinois. In fourth place, Nathan Kent on SH Smoke N Sparks, owned by Connie Cole O'Brien of Winnemaca, Nevada, claimed \$3,912.

Troy Heikes riding LJ Marshall placed fifth winning \$3,520 for Linda Jacobs from Hinsdale, Illinois. Crystal McNutt on Chocolate Valentine for owner Joe Frizzell of Ames, Iowa, won \$3,129 for sixth place. In the seventh slot, John O'Hara on Ima Smart One won \$2,347 for Buckshot Farms in Lincoln, Nebraska. Eighth place paid \$1,956 to TR Flash Flood and Crystal McNutt for owner Bryan Nelson of Houston, Texas.

A complete listing of winners, including Derby classes, is available on the ARHA website at www.arha.net

Photos by Osteen Schatzberg



Crystal McNutt rides all-time money winner, TA Mozart for owner, Dick Ames, Cedar Ridge Arabians, Jordon, MN.



Half Arabian Futurity 3rd Place, Crystal McNutt on TR Por Quixote, for Joe Betten, Grand Haven, MI.



Level 4 Champion Half Arabian Futurity, TS Mae Gossip ridden by Andrea Fappani for owner Amanda Brumley, Cave Creek, AZ.



Half Arabian Futurity 7th Place John O'Hara on Ima Smart One, for Buckshot Farms, Lincoln, NE.