



A Passion for Breeding

By Khaled Assem

In 1987, an Egyptian business man started to take an interest in breeding Arabian horses. His hobbies were taken lightly at first, but as learning is an everlasting process, he is now determined & confident that the future of his stud farms lies promisingly in the palm of his hands. With a brief hold-up from his full-time activities & focus on breeding, **Mr. Gawdat Hamam** gives Horse Times his views on how successful breeding takes time, and how a passion for breeding largely helps in implementing that.

Mr. Hamam got hold of the idea of creating an Arabian stud farm in 1987. It all started with his being brought up in Semoha, Alexandria where horses were brought in for training. During his leisure summer time, he would spend his allowance on carrots to feed the horses, learn about them, and know their names. His passion simply grew every summer. In 1984, a friend of his called Sami Daboos bought him his first Arabian horse and that's when he started the process of breeding

Mr. Hamam states that a lot of people have influenced him, and that he has gained lots of experience from their good conducts, as well as their bad ones. At first, he spent a lot of money on buying and selling horses, and then discovered that it was not the right thing to do: "turns out I had the wrong guidance"! However, he fully expresses his utmost appreciation to Dr. Ibrahim Zaghoul and the wonderful Mrs. Wigdan Elbarbari who helped him greatly in

making some right decisions. Furthermore, Mr. Omar Sakr has also helped him in learning about the different lines of horses giving him an ideology that goes beyond the EAO (Egyptian Agricultural Organisation). From there, he started to understand the true meaning of breeding, and hence in 1996, he imported horses from America. He wanted to follow the footsteps of others who are leading the way. "Mr. Omar Sakr is one of them". Mr. Hamam has also worked with the late Sayed Marei and the Hamza family.

On the sensitive controversial issue of "importing horses from America" and how it would have had an impact on the development of the local breeding lines with the dispute that this step had to be implemented in order to further upgrade the lines, as opposed to the inbreeding that took place, Mr. Hamam answers Horse Times' question about why buyers would come and look for horses from Egypt if they could go to the source where Egypt bought from. He says that Egypt is a pioneer in Arabian breeding



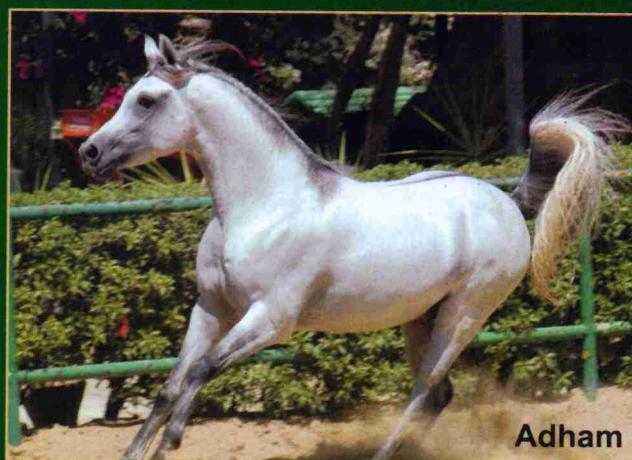
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programmes, and what happened was simply done with the purpose of going back to the source that was taken when there was a trend in the EAO's technical committee to export most of the excellent origins. "We have to expand our visions and way of thinking. Egyptians who want to be associated with the true meaning of breeding started to bring in the Egyptian Arabian lines that have left Egypt". Not so keen on being biased, Mr. Hamam still thinks that the level of breeding in Egypt has been raised with affirming that Dr. Nasr Marei's Albadeia, imported Simoen Sharav; a horse that is a champion. On the argumentative subject of Egypt exporting Murafik & Nazeer and thus losing a huge part of its great origins, and with others squabbling that it didn't, Mr. Hamam also disagrees by saying that the exportation of those horses was a huge mistake consequently leading to the build up of the origins of breeding Egyptian Arabians in America & Europe. "The origin was taken and now we are looking for it".

As a prominent and productive Arabian breeder, Mr. Hamam is very optimistic about his 5 year plan to make an achievement for the Gawdat Hamam breeding programme. He will be retiring from his other actives as to concentrate on his programme and 2 studs, 'Gawdat' and 'Al Huda'. He has 2 daughters and wishes that they would follow his footsteps. He looks forward to having better quality horses, feeling that a lot of his horses will have promising futures. "I will try hard to help accomplish this process and I will enjoy seeing some of my quality progeny being well presented and well taken care of". To gain experience as well as success and confidence on an international level, he will start his development process by participating in shows in Baden Baden: "I will send the best horses from Gawdat Stud and

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I hope God helps me in achieving what the likes of me have achieved. I am also starting a project soon, and that is to establish a modern hospital just for the care of horses. I will use the help of foreign experts to train the locals”.

“Egypt is a little bit behind on the issue of how to further develop, for example, the horse presenters are always foreign. Can this be changed?”

“Unfortunately foreigners are thought of as being better, and in order to compete, you have to get an efficient foreign horse presenter. However, just to test the truth of this, during the last show at Sakkara Country Club, I used an Egyptian to present my horses which received awards. One of the foreign judges asked the ring master, Rafik Mohsin, to tell the presenter that he was the best throughout the whole competition. A horse fell and he handled him very well immediately to complete the show. It was very touching to hear that the best presenter was Egyptian. I don’t mind if taking him abroad just to train more, eventually, he is Egyptian. So, one of my plans is to train as many Egyptians in that field”. ■

