

Endurance...

the Egyptian way!

When you are indulged into something that you love so much, you just keep trying hard to improve so as to get the best out of it for yourself and for anyone who shares the same passion. Moreover, there may come a time when more people start joining in until this friendly joint-venture evolves into a foundation; that's how EERA started. Egyptian Endurance Riding Association, EERA, Started back in year 2001 by its founders; Mohamed Kharma, Sherif Fouda, Sumaya Fahmy, Aly Shaarawy, Shaher Khalifa, Dr. Aly Abd El-Rehim, Magdy Abd El-Aziz, Nagwa El-Daly, Murad Sedky, and Farouk Younis. All those members shared the same passion of riding in the desert; in Fact most of them are well-known winners of the Endurance races held by the Egyptian Equestrian Federation, EEF.

EERA's main goal is to train both the riders and horses so as to get qualified for the official races organized by the EEF. This training takes place once every month all through the year except for July, August, and September, where the riders

“EERA's main goal is to train both the riders and horses so as to get qualified for the official races organized by the EEF.”

are on Vacation but the horses still get their training.

On Friday 13th of June the last EERA's training before the annual vacation took place in the desert of Sakkara. The total training distance was 20 km, rider's took off at 7:30 and the last rider arrived at around nine. A Friendly gathering for all the members took place in Dr. Aly Abd El-Rehim's stables

One of the strictest rules enforced by EERA's mem-

bers is that only horse owners are allowed to ride the horses i.e. no jockey's allowed. According to Ms. Summaya Fahmy, EERA's treasurer, "this rule is enforced so as to protect the horses; if you are riding your own horse you will never force it too much or drive it to death so as to finish the race."

The first Endurance race to be held in Egypt was in 1996, the distance of the race was 20 km, it was organized by the United Arab Emirates and the first place winner was Sherif Wagih. Nowadays, Endurance Races in Egypt ranges from 20 to 80 Km Long. And for a horse to enter the race, it should be in good condition and possess very strong legs. An endurance race would be divided into a number of loops according to the value judgment of the Judges. There are flags along the way to guide the riders, check points to register the rider's number, make sure they all move in the same track, and check the horse's condition, and water points for the horses and riders to drink from. There is also at least one vet check in the middle of the way to check the horse's condition, dehydration level, and heart beats, where unfit horses could be disqualified ■



Mohamed Kharma, Sherine Kharma and a friend during the EERA training.