

The Hilton King's Ranch: A Riding Paradise!!

"The most exquisite creature after man is the horse, the best employment is that of rearing it, the most blessed of all domestic actions is that of feeding it and the most delightful posture is that of sitting on its back."

BY: May Elkhishen

The King's Ranch is ideally situated outside the city, next to Borg El Arab airport, 10.5km of Borg El Arab road, between the Alex/Cairo desert road (28km from Alex and 190km away from Cairo) taking you away from the hustle and bustle of the traditional city life. This unique location enables you to



fully enjoy all the facilities and services provided there, making it an unforgettable experience for you, your friends or family, and last but not least your horse.

All of you in the equestrian world for sure know what is expected to be found in a riding club or an equestrian centre: at least one riding arena, some horses, stables, grooms and an instructor; but what differentiates King's Ranch and makes it stand out amongst the rest of all other traditional riding clubs here in Egypt?

From the moment you set foot inside, you are spellbound by the magnificent sight that lies before you, a rider, horse lover and even horses' true heaven. Entering from the club's main gate, you will notice that it is separated by an s-shaped path, dividing the club into two sections. The left section includes two grass arenas (official Olympic size, 90 times 70 meters), surrounded by two warm up sand and fiber arenas (60 x 40 meters). Where as the right section includes two other warm up sand and fiber arenas, situated in between them is an Olympic sized sand and fiber arena. All arenas have automated sprinklers and night lights enabling riders to enjoy riding at anytime of the day, even during the evening. Coming to the end of the path you will find an area designed especially for lounging horses or ponies, behind that is the stable area. The stable area consists of three yards; each containing a total of twenty-four stables, in the midst of each yard is a square-shaped garden, so not only do us (humans) get to enjoy a great view from our rooms, but so do our horses!! On the right side of these yards, there is a newly installed walker, and another one hundred and ten stables.

Since Alexandria is famous for its rainy winter season, King's Ranch is currently constructing a new covered sand and fiber arena (next to the 110 stables, similar to the covered arena in the Police riding club/ Basateen), hence creating a solution for the wet and muddy rides, which frustrates both the horse and rider. The entire club is surrounded by a sand and fiber track, being an essential form of exercising your horse and also a great treat for the horse and his/her rider.

One of the very unique services King's Ranch provides is organizing tutorial sessions, i.e. clinics in numerous horses and riding

related fields by some of the world's most distinguished experts in the equestrian field. An example of the different sessions held there under the auspices of the F.E.I. (Federation Equestrian International): course designing (given by Olaf Peterson), judging and for farriers.

Others were focusing on increasing one's veterinary skills given by Ludger Beerbaum's (my favorite rider) vet, Rudiger Brems, who will be coming from three to four times per year. Moreover, various instructors from all around Europe have already given training sessions, like Barnabas Heversy from Hungary, Thierry Pommel from France, Robert Ehrens and Arno Neessen from the Netherlands. Furthermore, the club is also planning to organize sessions, given by international experts to local vets, on how to undergo surgical operations on horses.

Well, I'm sure that all of you horse lovers who have already been there before must have known all that, but do any of you know that there's still more hidden surprises! According to King's Ranch equestrian club manager, Mr. Abdullah Christopher Sargis, a new riding school is expected to open as of January 2004, him being in charge of it. And to all you Polo players, a new arena is being developed about five hundred meters away from the club, which will be dedicated only to Polo, with a 1km sand and fiber track surrounding it, which is expected to start operating sometime next year.

There's one more piece of good news, after last summer's competition season's success, King's Ranch has decided to make this an on going tradition every summer. To start with, this summer will definitely be a busy one in the King's Ranch as several riders and horse lovers from all over Eastern Europe (Russia, Bosnia, etc...) are coming this June, to ride at the ranch.

Moreover, when you're not riding, taking care of your horse or competing, there's more than one way to pamper or entertain yourself, you can laze around by the pool, without having to worry about your children, they have got their own pool or you could even enjoy sitting in an open air Jacuzzi, or you feel energetic and fit, you could go workout at the gymnasium or play a round of tennis, or you could try out one of their restaurants, they have got an exquisite collection, one to suit each and every mood, even sitting in your hotel room is bound to be enjoyable, all this is managed by Hilton, one of the world's most successful hotel chains throughout the world.

King's Ranch has been declared to be the official club of the African Equestrian Federation, which is headed by one of the place's co-owners Eng. Abdelfatah Ragab, also the president of the Egyptian Equestrian Federation. This makes Eng. Ragab's aims at improving horseback riding not only in Egypt, but all over Africa. King's Ranch long term objective is to be able to be perceived by anyone in the equestrian community or wishes to become part of it, as an ideal place for a fun and horse filled holiday, and I guess they are definitely reaching it.

Everyone out there, if you're a horse lover and addict, like myself then I'll definitely see you there!! ■

