

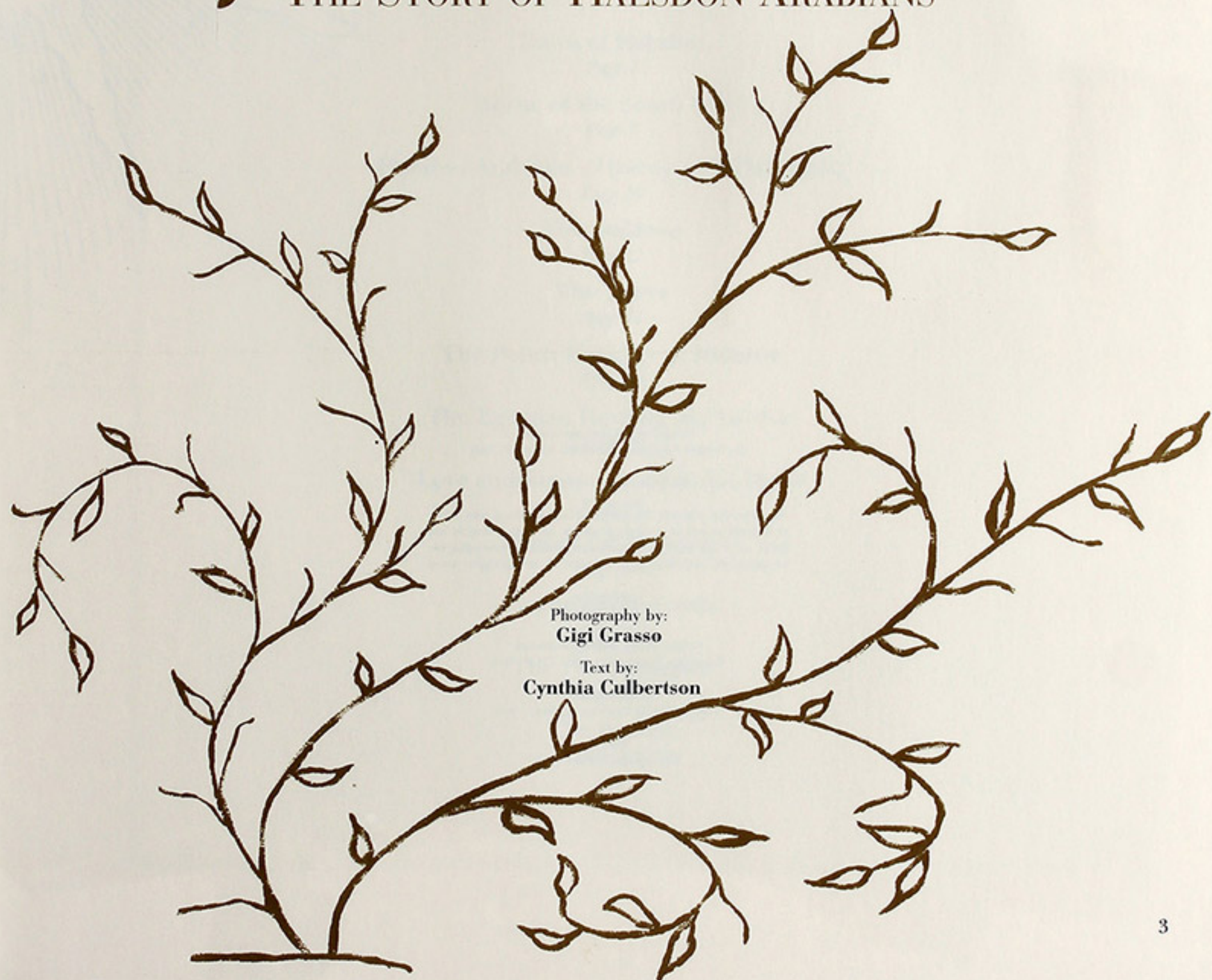
SPELLBOUND HORSES



THE STORY OF HALSDON ARABIANS

Spellbound Horses

THE STORY OF HALSDON ARABIANS



Photography by:
Gigi Grasso

Text by:
Cynthia Culbertson

Published by Gianluigi Grasso,
via Brigade Partigiane 12, 10082 - Cuorgné, Italy

© Gianluigi Grasso Torino 2002

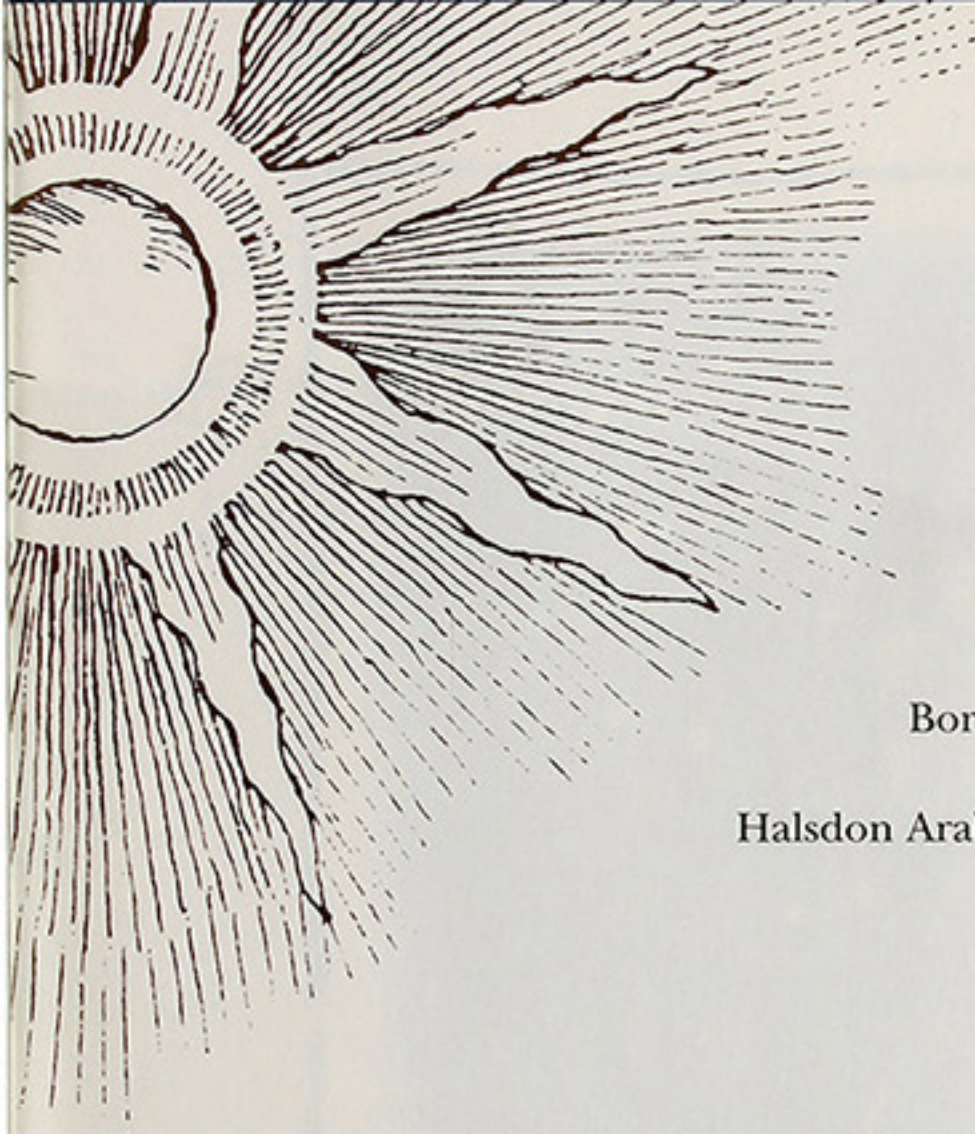
All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photographic or otherwise, without prior permission of the copyright owner.

Art Director:
Gigi Grasso

Graphic Design and Digital Artwork:
Francesco Rosati, Moncalieri (TO) - Italy

Photolithography:
Claudio Zucca, Pessione (Chieri) - Italy

Printed:
Tipostampa, Torino - Italy



Summary

Dawn at Halsdon

Page 7

Borne of the South Wind

Page 8

Halsdon Arabians – History and Philosophy

Page 10

The Stallions

Page 22

The Mares

Page 44

The Polish Heritage at Halsdon

Page 92

The Egyptian Heritage at Halsdon

Page 96

Love and Compassion for the Horse

Page 98

Twilight at Halsdon

Page 102

Acknowledgements

Page 105

The Photographer

Page 106

The Author

Page 107



Baja (Pamir x Bajeczka) 1996 Grey Mare



Dawn at Halsdon



This enchanted creature is not the fabled unicorn, but an Arabian mare of noble blood, possessing a beauty worthy of her own legend. Soon she

is joined by others of her kind, each more lovely than the last. As the mares walk along the edge of the wood they seem to glow in the light of dawn, reflecting a blessed sense of contentment – for this is indeed a magical place, and they are spell-bound horses.






Borne of the South Wind

Far back, far back in our dark soul the horse prances...

D.H. Lawrence



The imagery of the unicorn has transcended the ages as an enduring symbol of divine love. Yet the horse exists as the physical incarnation of one of the most profound events in human history – their domestication by man. Scientists have meticulously documented the fossil record which tells how ancestral equines conquered the challenges of a changing earth, but many questions remain unanswered. What uncertain pull caused the many-toed browser of the North American continent to fly westward towards the setting sun, growing ever taller and stronger until his singular hooves drummed a lively staccato across the steppes of Asia? Did a mysterious inner longing drive him to seek this destiny, or was he merely following a trail of sweet grasses and warm breezes? Perhaps, as the horse raised his head to scan the horizon, he sensed the soul of another who, ignorant of his very existence, still thirsted mightily for the gift of his spiritual sustenance.



Wherever man has left his footprint in his long ascent from barbarism to civilisation, we will find the hoof print of a horse beside it.

John Trotwood Moore

The nomadic peoples who realized the greatest successes with their equine companions considered the horse a gift from the realm of the sacred, and the horse remains a spiritual presence in the collective human consciousness until the present day. To the Mongols the horses in their midst

were known as *tahki*, meaning simply "spirit." American Indian tribes, whose unprecedented horse cultures emerged in a span of little more than a century, believed their horses were fashioned from all elements of the earth, and the powers of stars, rainbows, whirlwinds, hail and rain united to give them life. The celestial derivation of the horse is echoed by the Vedic poet, Dirga-Tamas, who wrote in 1000 B.C., "*The sun it was, ye glittering gods, ye took to make a horse.*"

In the distant deserts of Arabia a miraculous wind from the south arose. Perhaps it began its capricious life over the sea, where playful dolphins leapt to greet its sweet caress. Then, gathering a purposeful strength, it took to the mountains, embracing the intoxicating scents of frankincense and myrrh before travelling onwards towards the towering dunes. And there, soaring over an oasis, it played havoc with the graceful palms, announcing its arrival with a mighty clattering of fronds. Finally, it came to rest, far from spent, but softening in blissful contemplation to await a divine decree.

Thereupon God proclaimed to this wind from the south, "*I shall create from thee a new being, and I will make him good fortune for my followers, humiliation to my enemies, and protection for the obedient.*" And the wind said, "*Create!*" God condensed the wind, and fashioned from it a horse, proclaiming, "*I name thee horse, and I make thee Arabian. I have bound blessings to thy forelock, and bounty reposes upon thy back, and glory will be with thee, wherever thee may be...I make thee to fly without wings...*"

And so it was that the most celebrated horse in the history of the world came to exist....





Halsdon Arabians History and Philosophy

*To many, the words love, hope,
and dreams are synonymous with horses.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes



The story of Halsdon Arabians is filled with love, hope, and dreams. It began in a single shining moment on the streets of London when Shirley Watts first beheld a living horse. Time must have stood

still for the young girl, and it is easy to imagine her heart beating faster with the excitement of seeing this wondrous beast. At first, she merely stood and watched the horse. Then she was filled with a desire to be near him – to feel the warmth of his body, look into his mysterious dark eyes, and breathe in his soft sweet scent. Even as a child, she was keenly aware of the sense of peace and tranquility that emanates from a horse.

Such a feeling is arguably a primordial reflection of a similar human experience at the very dawn of time. But for Shirley Watts, the moment needed no analysis, no contemplation. She simply accepted that she had fallen deeply in love with horses.

Owning horses, however, is quite different from simply loving them from afar, and it often marks the turning point of whether one's passion ignites and spreads like a wildfire, or smoulders, sputters, and drifts away in a wisp of smoke. For Shirley, the acquisition of her first Arabian-related horse in 1974 was the spark that burst into flame.





*To get the full
value of joy,
you must have
someone to divide
it with...*

Mark Twain



Shirley and Charlie Watts with SHF Pearlie Mae



A life spent with horses is often filled with great joy. Yet the complete range of human emotions also comes into play, sometimes in a single day, and rarely does one succeed without a steadfast source

of support and encouragement. At Halsdon Arabians, Charlie Watts graciously provides these key ingredients. Always understanding of his wife's great passion for horses, it was he who purchased their first horse as a gift for Shirley shortly after they were married.

*Love is a fire kindled in the area around the heart...
It is inherent in the existence of beings and in the actions of the heavenly bodies.
Its origin is in animal motion...it is the flower of youth,
the garden of generosity, the charm of the soul and its diversion.
The elements engender it, the stars cause it,
the action of the sublime mysteries give it its form.
Then it combines the best of the substance with the purest elements.
It gives rise to the attraction of hearts,
the concordance of passions, the fusion of souls, the joining
of like minds, the purity of feelings in hearts and sympathy.
It cannot exist without beauty...*

al Mas'udi's account of the Thirteenth speaker on the topic of love at a 9th century Persian
gathering of poets, theologians, and philosophers



Shirley Watts and SHF Pearlle Mae in the garden at Halsdon





A visit to Halsdon is an event which assumes mythic proportions for lovers of the Arabian breed. Anticipation builds as the narrow lane framed by towering hedgerows meanders off the main road

just beyond the village of Winkleigh. As the lane briefly enters a wood, it becomes a leafy tunnel bound by an ancient stone wall where ferns and wildflowers have found a tenuous hold. Then it slowly begins to climb, and the hedgerows open to reveal verdant pastures dotted with mares and foals whose distant views extend across the valleys toward Dartmoor. Further down the lane a gate leads to the ivy-covered main stables whose subtle design elements – a crescent moon and star, mosaic tiles, and hanging lanterns – lend an exotic hint of the East to the traditional design.

The countryside may be beautiful, the views sublime, but it is the extraordinary quality of the horses which make Halsdon unforgettable. The herd features a selection of the finest bloodlines, including Polish, Russian, and Egyptian, and a plethora of British, European, Nations Cup, and World Champions grace the pastures and paddocks. How did one part-Arab gelding acquired almost thirty years ago lead to one of the world's greatest collections of Arabian horses? As a group of mares and foals gather on a hillside, ears pricked in welcome, the answer seems to lie in their beautiful dark eyes.

*...the spellbound horses walking
warm out of the whinnying green
stables onto the fields of praise...*

Dylan Thomas



In the eyes of the noble Arabian horse, Shirley Watts discovered all that she loved about horses and more. Like many who have experienced the delights of this celebrated breed, she was astonished by their re-

sponsiveness. When an Arab horse turns its head to look at you, there is an overwhelming sense of contact, of understanding. They crave love and affection, and actively seek the companionship of humans even when among other horses, balancing a haughty pride with an equal measure of grace and kindness. A successful relationship with an Arab horse must not be about control or domination, but rather a true partnership; when treated with respect and love these loyal horses respond with the full measure of their hearts and minds.

The ancient Arab poet Shahwan wrote that his mare "carries me to the realms accessible to none other". Supremely aware of their environment, an Arab horse seems to take great joy in sharing the sights and sounds of nature with their rider, creating an intimate conversation without words. Once you have experienced that feeling, there is simply no turning back.

*May the warm winds of heaven blow
softly upon your stable...*

Cherokee Horse Blessing







The future of Halsdon Arabians was forever influenced in 1987 when Charlie and Shirley Watts were captivated by two stunning Polish Arabians which swept

the European Championships that year. Determined to explore the source of such extraordinary horses, they visited the great Polish studs of Janów Podlaski and Michałów and experienced the sense of tradition and pride which surround these historical breeding farms. Thereafter they

began to make regular pilgrimages to the Polish National Show and Sale, and selectively enlarged the Halsdon herd with premier breeding stock from the Polish studs. Many of these horses went on to win numerous international championships, and soon, when someone uttered the name Halsdon, a vision of alabaster Polish beauties came to mind.

Gradually the focus of Halsdon changed from simply collecting great horses to breeding them. As a talented sculptor, Shirley Watts has an astute eye, a necessity for any successful breeder. She also understands the requirement for serious study and research, and continually seeks to ex-

pand her knowledge. The addition of the exquisite black stallion Simeon Sadik, for example, led Shirley to an appreciation of the straight Egyptian Arabian. Already familiar with the Egyptian blood of Palas in her Polish horses, she carefully chose a group of Egyptian mares for the herd. Quality, however, not bloodlines, remains the focus of the stud, and several additional bloodlines of Arabians are also selectively represented at Halsdon.

While breeding horses requires vast determination, and the joyous rewards are sometimes tempered by heartbreak, both Shirley and Charlie find great pleasure in the blessed renewal of life represented by each year's foal crop.



Many of the initial Halsdon Arabians were champion ridden horses, and as Shirley and Charlie Watts began to collect some of the best Arabian horses in the world, they retained a great emphasis on athleticism as well as beauty. Stallions are ridden as part of their daily routine, and youngsters sent to the racetracks of Poland to test their tractability, stamina, and character. In addition to her many duties managing the stud, Shirley also rides a beloved mare each day.

The Halsdon horses have garnered countless championships and continue to do so, yet showing is not a primary impetus of the stud. While competition with other horses can be a valuable measure of breeding success, victory is sometimes achieved at the expense of the horse. At Halsdon, young horses are never subjected to the undue stress required for extensive showing campaigns, and even mature horses are only selectively shown. In every case, the health and well-being of each animal always takes precedence.



*Steeds, steeds, what steeds!
Has the whirlwind
a home in your manes?*

Nikolai Gogol

SHF Pearlle Mae with her 2002 colt by Piechur





Shirley Watts believes that humans may reach a true understanding with our fellow animals in the near future; achieving a meaningful level of communication. Only then will we realize animals are not really much different from

us, and sadly, we may finally become aware of the cruelty mankind has perpetuated among the creatures sharing our earth.

Once a horse arrives at Halsdon, however, any sad tales in their lives are relegated to the past. Here each horse has an idyllic home and is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of show ring fame or breeding prowess. Despite the fact that some of the most coveted Arabians in the world reside here, Shirley Watts cheerfully proclaims that her favourite horse is the horse she's with at the time.

*The beautiful horse is the one
which combines everything that
is characteristic of a horse with
regard to appearance,
body colour, beautiful
movement and tractability...
The beauty of each object lies just
in its characteristic perfection.*

The 12th century
Persian mystic, Al-Ghazali



The Stallions

*...neither the Bucephalus of Alexander, nor the
Cid's Babieca, could be compared with him.*

Miguel de Cervantes





Simeon Sadik is the archetype of the Arabian breed; an extravagant portrayal of every defining attribute of his kind. His eyes are the deep wells of mystery that demand of the falcon, "Descend or I

shall come up to you..." His skin is a taut sheath of ebony silk caressing an exquisite head, elegantly arched neck, and fine-boned legs. In repose or motion, his splendour would tear verses from the heads of poets, and bring tears of joy to the finest sculptors. Sadik springs from the finest pure blood of Egypt and although he has conquered the show rings of many nations, he seems almost not of this earth. One can imagine him as the magical stallion in the *Tales of the Arabian Nights* of whom it was said, "You have only to climb on his back and wish yourself anywhere in the world – and no matter how far the distance, in a flash of time too short to count, you will find yourself there..."

*This king flies away from you
Ye mortals
He is not of the earth
He is of the sky.*

From the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts



Simeon Sadik



Simeon Sadik (Asfour x Simeon Safanad) 1989 Black Stallion

Gai Radiant





A vision in white, Gai Radiant seems aptly named. Not only does his engaging character shine forth to delight all who meet him, but his pedigree is also a reflection of the

finest horses of the famed Gainey breeding programme of America. His sire, Gai Parada, was a U.S. National Champion Stallion and his pedigree is a concentrated blend of Ferzon and Azraff sire lines. The single outcross in Gai Radiant's lineage is the Polish mare Paleta, a lovely Comet daughter out of a Nabor daughter. His ancestors were renowned for producing outstanding type and crossing well with a variety of bloodlines, and Gai Radiant's own ability as a sire was recently validated when his offspring emerged victorious in the Sire Produce Group at the 2002 British Nationals.

*There on the tips of fair fresh flowers
feedeth he; how joyous is his neigh, there,
in the midst of sacred pollen hidden,
all is he; how joyous is his neigh.*

Navajo Song



Gai Radiant (Gai Parada x Zee Radiance) 1990 Grey Stallion

Garsal



A stallion of wonderful type and harmony, Garsal brings to mind the origin of the Arabic word for horse, which means to take pride in one's carriage. An ancient text elaborates,

"It is the nature of the Arab horse to take pride in walking. He loves his groom, and pleases his master". Representing the sire line of the legendary Nazeer through his grandsire Palas, he also boasts multiple crosses to the great Polish sires Negatiw and Comet, and traces in tail female to the illustrious broodmare Canaria. Foaled in Germany, Garsal was named German National Champion Stallion in 1999, a victory popular with judges and spectators alike. He was also a successful sire in that country before coming to England where he was again victorious in the show ring before joining the illustrious ranks of the Halsdon stallions.

*...and the eye could scarcely realise his beauty
For, when gazing at one part, the
eye was drawn away by the
perfection of another part.*

From the Poem of Imru al Qais



Garsal (Dekolt x Garenka) 1991 Grey Stallion

Piechur





Piechur (Banat x Pierzeja) 1979 Grey Stallion



Piechur is the king, and like most Arab stallions he seems to possess an instinctive awareness of his status as monarch of Halsdon Arabians. He never demands an audience – rather

his extraordinary beauty and confidence simply draws a steady stream of admirers to pay homage. Bred at Janow Podlaski, Piechur began his winning ways on the racetracks of Poland, where he was victorious in 11 of his 13 starts and was named Polish Racehorse of the Year. His type, conformation, and extravagant movement also ensured a stellar show career, and he has been named a U.S. Top Ten Stallion, All Nations Cup Champion, and UK International Champion. As a sire Piechur consistently produces both beauty and athletic ability, and his offspring have attained national titles in several countries. But perhaps most importantly, Piechur is treasured for his marvellous temperament, a splendid inner reflection of his outward beauty.



A horse is a thing of such beauty... none will tire of looking at him as long as he displays himself in his splendour.

Xenophen, 400 B.C.





Like the finest of wines, Pilot is a stallion who steadily improves with age. Named Polish National Junior Champion, his attributes were readily apparent even in his youth, yet

only in the bloom of maturity has he realised the full potential of his powerful beauty and commanding character. From one of Poland's most celebrated dam lines, and the son of a Polish National Champion mare, it comes as no surprise that Pilot has already sired numerous winners, including a World Champion. Recently returned from his homeland, where he was honoured to be used at stud, Pilot will be a valued contributor to the Halsdon's breeding programme. A sheikh of centuries past might have been speaking of one of Pilot's desert forebears, or Pilot himself, as he described his favorite steed – "a bay with black mane, of incomparable beauty and tall body..."

*Well-bred was he, long-bodied,
outstripping the wild
beasts in speed,
Swift to attack, to flee,
to turn, yet firm as a rock
swept down by the torrent,
Bay-coloured, and so smooth
the saddle slips from him,
as the rain from a smooth stone...*

From the Poem of Imru al Qais



Pilot (Fawor x Pipi) 1987 Bay Stallion

Pilot



HS Pirandelo





HS Pirandelo is a great stallion in the making. As a promising youngster, it was decided that he should travel to Poland to participate in their time-honoured tradition

of proving tractability, soundness and athleticism

before being used for breeding. Pirandelo decreed the racetrack a fitting showcase for displaying his own grand style and *joie de vivre*. Galloping gleefully, head and tail held high, he showed a haughty disdain for those foolish colts racing towards the finish line, and played instead to the admiring crowds in the grandstands. In this, of course, he emerged victorious. Combining the elegant grace of his dam Pikieta with the powerful beauty of his sire Pilot, Pirandelo is surely a young prince who will be king.

*...he is pure air and fire;
and the dull elements of earth
and water never appear in him...*

William Shakespeare



HS Pirandelo (Pilot x Pikieta) 1999 Bay Stallion



Platoon HT



Platoon vigilantly watches for the moment Shirley Watts enters the stables, and when he spies her, summons her eagerly to his side. Bred in Holland, he was a Junior Champi-

on in Belgium before his exportation to the U.K., where he garnered the supreme honour of British National Champion stallion. For Halsdon he has sired a Junior Female International Champion at Towerlands, and from Shirley's beloved riding mare, Melisha, a British National Champion Colt. Both his sire and dam trace in tail female to the famous "P" family of Janów Podlaski, one of the most important dam lines in the Halsdon programme. Platoon is truly a wonderful stallion who has enriched the lives of all who know him.

...His lines were beyond all wonder.

From the prick of his ears to the flow of his tail he arched in my throat and eyes.

Steel and velvet grace!

...Oh, marvellous with the drifting clouds he drifted across the skies!

William Rose Benét



Platoon HT (Pedant x Padan) 1987 Grey Stallion

Ali Khamsin



Of the white horse
the Arabs say,
*"This is the mount
of kings... take
the white like a silk
flag, with a ring
of black skin
around his eyes..."*

Ali Khamsin (Camargue x Liana El Shaklan) 1996 Grey Stallion

*...this most noble beast
is the most beautiful,
the swiftest and of the
highest courage...his
long mane and tail
adorn and beautify
him. He is of a fiery
temperament,
but good tempered,
obedient, docile and
well-mannered.*

Pedro Garcia Conde, 1685



Endel



"You should judge a horse more by his character and moral attributes than by his appearance," said the Bedouin horsemen of times past, and Endel is a wonderful example of a stallion whose

beauty and quality is matched by an equally superb disposition. Royally bred by the Michalów Stud of Poland, his sire is the legendary Palas, and his dam, Elwira, traces in tail female to the Saqlawi foundation mare, Milordka. A gorgeous mover, with noble carriage and an abundance of type, Endel was honored as Polish Reserve National Champion stallion in 1998, as well as International Reserve Champion at Towerlands in the U.K.

*He trots the air;
the earth sings when he touches it;
the basest horn of his hoof is more
musical than the pipe of Hermes.*

William Shakespeare



Endel (Palas x Elwira) 1981 Grey Stallion

HS Etiquette



HS Etiquette (Simeon Sadik x Etenta) 1999 Grey Stallion



David, Prophet of God, loved horses greatly, and whenever he heard a horse mentioned by age, beauty or speed, he would send after it, until he gathered one thousand horses. In that day of the world, there were no more than this. When God seized David, Solomon inherited these horses, and sat in the throne of his father and proclaimed, 'My father could not bequeath me a treasure I would love more than these'. Solomon kept the horses, and bred them, and called for them one day, saying, 'Show them to me so that I might recognise them by their markings, their names, and their strains'. He stayed looking at them until the sun had set behind the veil. There was no precedence for their magnificence...

From the 14th century manuscript
of Ali ibn Abd al Rahman ibn Hudhayl al Andalusí





The Mares

*How swift is she
of the beautiful countenance.
No horse can surpass her in flight
save only her reflection.*

*...Look how marvellous her legs.
Behold her pleasing shape
which attracts the eye of all who see her.*

*Heavy burdens she bears lightly
over distances near or far.
Broad is her forehead,
her intelligence keen...*

Shahwan's Tribute to his Bedouin war mare



Emilda (Pamir x Emanacija) and Maesta (Partner x Maskotka)



Pilarka



Pilarka (Palas x Pierzga) 1975 Grey Mare



Pilarka was a mare certain of her own worth. Her life was by turns filled with shining moments and unbearable sadness, yet even in the face of adversity her re-

markable greatness still clung to her like a blessing. A World Champion, double European Champion, and British National Champion, she effortlessly conquered the international show ring in her earlier years. While Halsdon was privileged to own this great mare during her twilight of her life, Pilarka was equally blessed to have found such a loving home as her last. She was a mare of powerful personality – almost like a stallion in her forcefulness of character – neighing and striking to proclaim her importance. She could also be exceptionally charming, then, with an imperious toss of her head, dismiss her audience and gallop away. Yet her true greatness is perhaps best summed up by her last selfless act. Pilarka, obviously ill and in great pain, patiently waited to leave this earth until she had lovingly weaned her last foal.

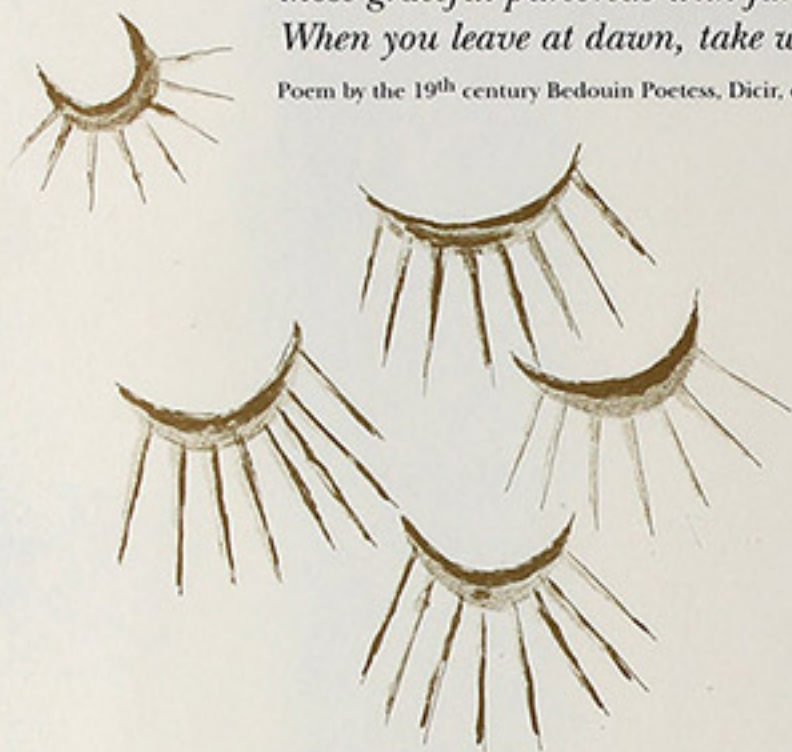
*Come, beloved mare...
Drink milk of the camel,
pick sweet-scented herbs.
And when you die, die with me.
Not downwards, but upwards flies your soul;
then I will gallop and race with you
across the heavenly spaces."*

Poem of Omaja, son of Abu-Agez

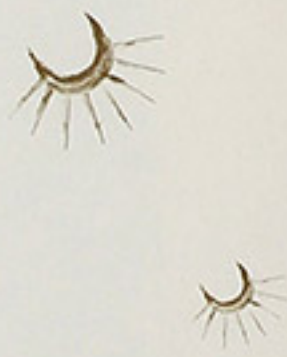


*Hail, riders on the swift coursing mounts,
those graceful purebreds with fancy saddles.
When you leave at dawn, take with you my fervent verses...*

Poem by the 19th century Bedouin Poetess, Dcir, of the Anazeh tribe

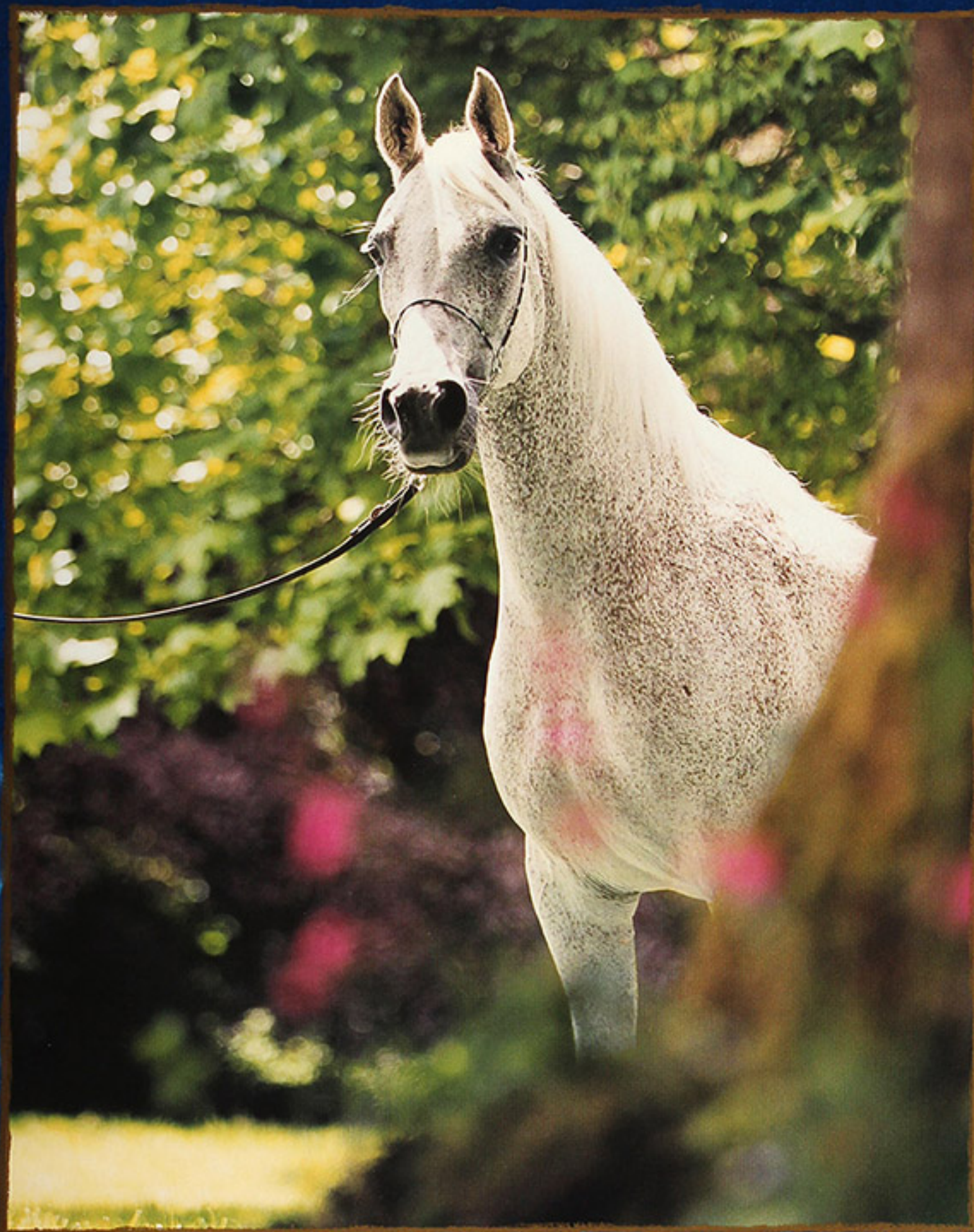


Pikieta



Pikieta is a poem of a mare, whose ethereal beauty brings to mind the melodious verses of the greatest Arab poets. She is also a lady – dignified and gracious. Although she loves people,

she demonstrates an enchanting aloofness that merely adds to her charm. Pikieta has done everything that has ever been asked of her, and succeeded brilliantly in every endeavour. In the show ring she has been showered with championships: British National Champion, Polish Reserve National Champion, and Reserve World Champion, to name but a few. As a broodmare she consistently produces truly exceptional foals. Pikieta is also one of those rare Arab mares who radiates greatness simply standing still; her eyes filled with secret knowledge and her gaze seeking the far reaches of the horizon.



Pikieta (Probat x Platyna) 1982 Grey Mare

Shadra NA



Shadra NA (El Shaklan x Hal Sheena NA) 1991 Grey Mare

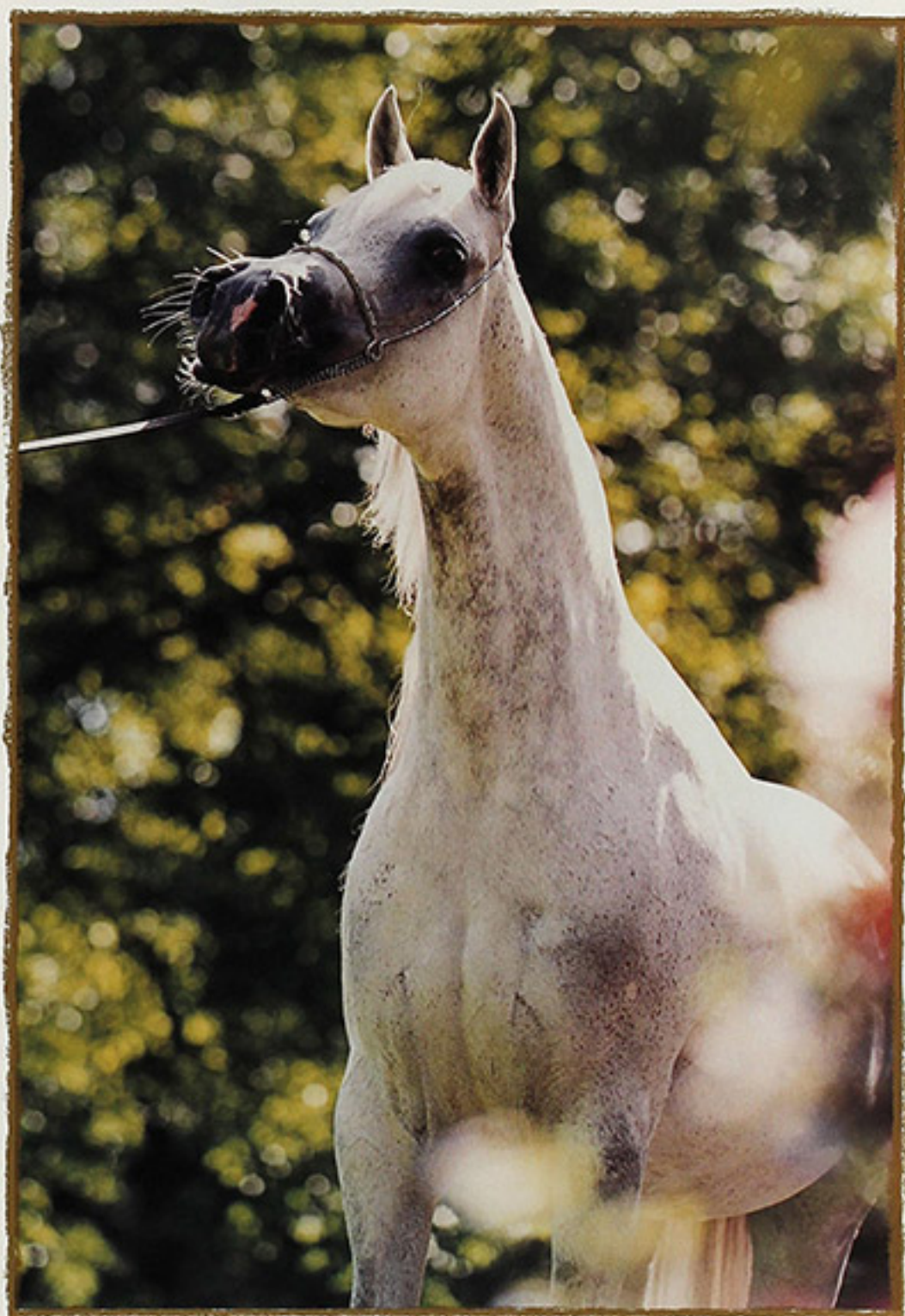


To behold the lovely Shadra NA is to be filled with awe. How can there be a mare so exquisite, so feminine, so refined? Yet she exists, the incarnation of sublime grace. In pedigree she is an exceptional

blend of the best Arab horses of many nations. Her sire, the great El Shaklan, represents Egyptian and Spanish breeding. On her dam's side is a trio of alabaster Polish stallions who found fame in the United States: *Eleuzis, *Naborr, and *Aramus, as well as the post-World War II Polish import, *Witez II. Renowned American breeding programmes such as Gainey, Selby, and Harris are prominent in her dam line and in tail female she traces to the legendary Saqlawiyah Jidraniyah mare Ghazala of Ali Pasha Sherif. Shadra wins championships effortlessly, but winning her heart requires patience and sensitivity. First you must slowly and lovingly find your way to her, and then you must wait patiently for her to give herself to you. The reward of the effort, however, is heavenly.

*The grey mare the renowned,
in the world there is none like her...
...her neck curved like a palm branch...
...her hooves fly forward faster ever than
flies the whirlwind...*

From the "Stealing of the Mare" by Salame Abu Zaid

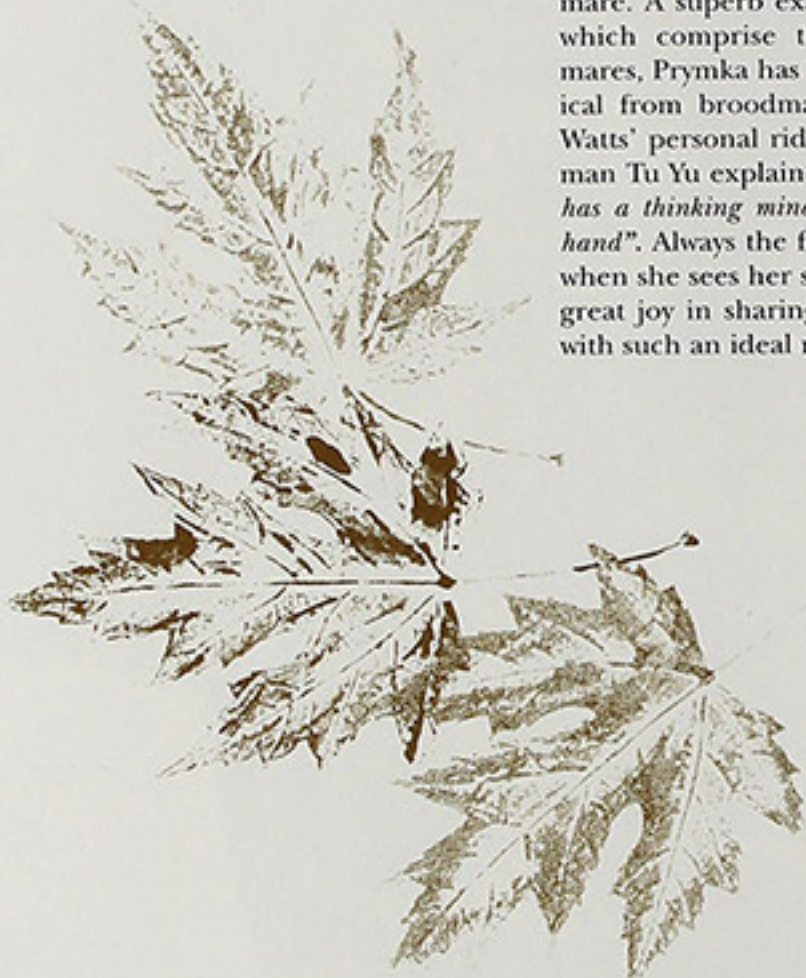


Prymka



Prymka, a lovely grey Palas granddaughter, is sired by the 1991 Polish National Champion Stallion, Wojslaw, out of Premia, herself a Polish Reserve Senior Champion

mare. A superb example of the athletic beauties which comprise the Halsdon band of Polish mares, Prymka has been selected to take a sabbatical from broodmare duties to become Shirley Watts' personal riding mare. The Chinese horseman Tu Yu explained in 72 B.C. that "a good rider has a thinking mind, fine emotions, and a sensitive hand". Always the first to gallop in from the field when she sees her special friend, Prymka will find great joy in sharing the winding lanes of Devon with such an ideal riding companion.

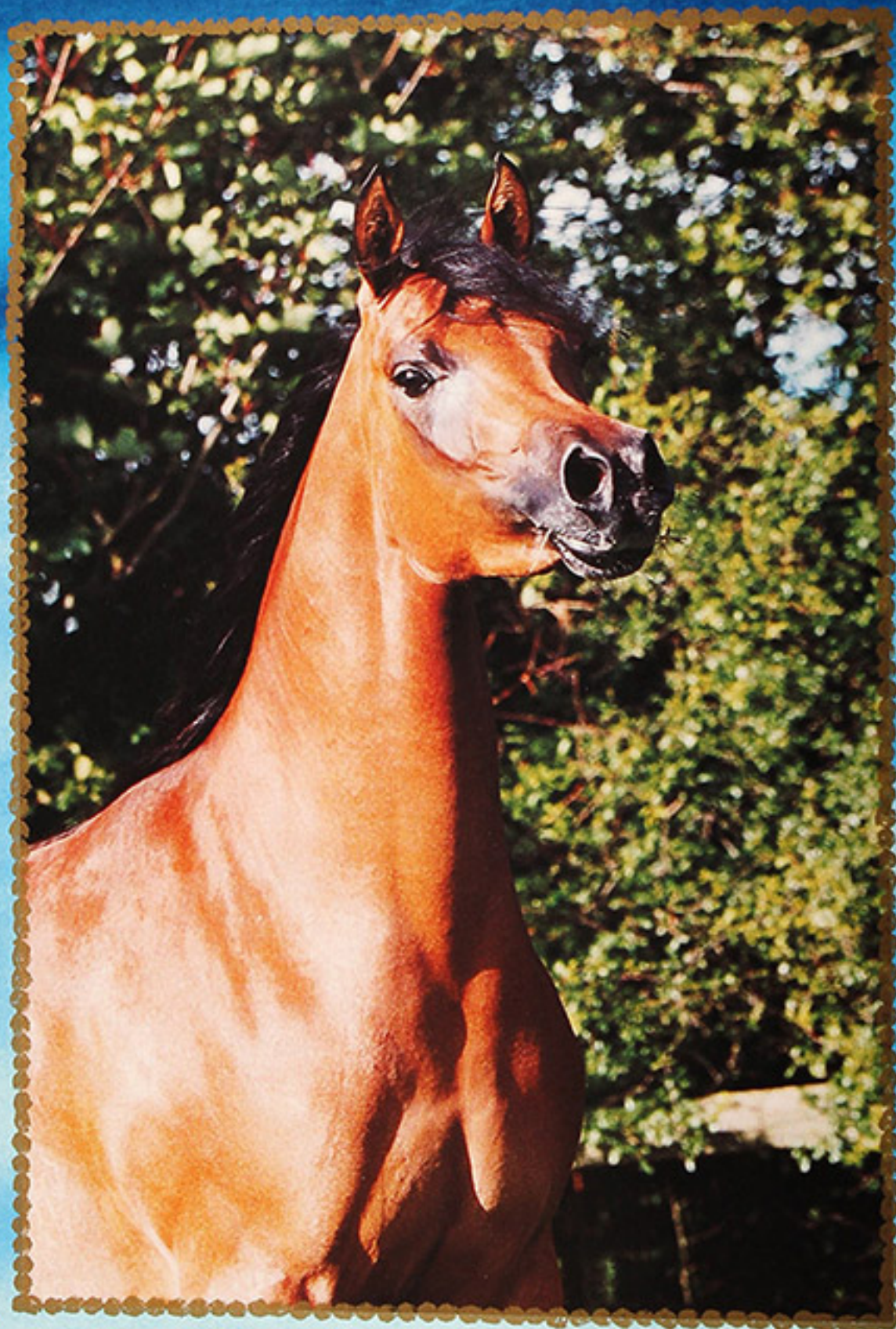


*And the mares who are ridden by women
are not afraid when they see a raid coming upon them
and this shows the courage of the women who are riding
And when the Arabs knew they were going to be attacked,
they would beat the drums as a warning,
And the eyes of the mares sparkled,
because they were excited about the coming battle.*

Mani's poem about a woman and her Hadbah mare



Prymka (Wojślaw x Premia) 1993 Grey Mare



HS Serenissima (Gai Radiant x Focus Seneca) 2000 Bay Mare



HS Serenissima



A stylish bay daughter of Gai Radiant, HS Serenissima is capturing hearts and ribbons in the show rings of Europe and the UK, including victories in her classes at the Tulip Cup in Holland and the British Nationals at

Malvern. Her dam, Focus Seneca is a daughter of the highly successful pure Russian sire Padron's Psyche, and the distaff side of her pedigree also features such luminaries as Ruminaja Ali and Khemosabi. Along with HS Jasirah, Serenissima brought great honour to her sire, Gai Radiant, in winning the Produce of Sire championship at Malvern.

*...A mare long of body, short of hair, whose spirit is unfailing,
compactly and firmly built, slender as a staff...*

A bay, with her back strongly-knit...

her sires have lifted her line to the best of strains...

From the Muzzarid of Yazid





Baja is the hidden mare, a treasure from Poland whose modest demeanor and quiescent femininity somewhat obscured her true potential as a younger mare. Thankfully, her impending greatness was recognised, and she now adorns the pastures of Halsdon where her grace and beauty, like the petals of a delicate flower, have unfurled to reveal a young queen. The supreme sires of Poland are found in her pedigree, including Probat, Aswan, Bandos, and Comet, and she should prove to be a stellar contributor to the Halsdon broodmare band. Yet Baja remains a somewhat reserved mare, exhibiting a quiet beauty in her stables. In motion, however, she is bold and exciting, an authentic "daughter of the wind".



Baja (Pamir x Bajeczka) 1996 Grey Mare



*...purebred mares, whose ancestors were numbered among our tribes from ancient times...
One would say they were like gazelles grazing in the valleys...
To see them is to forget the authors of one's days!*

Ancient Arabic Song

Baja



Egna



Egna (Eukaliptus x Egzotyka) 1992 Grey Mare



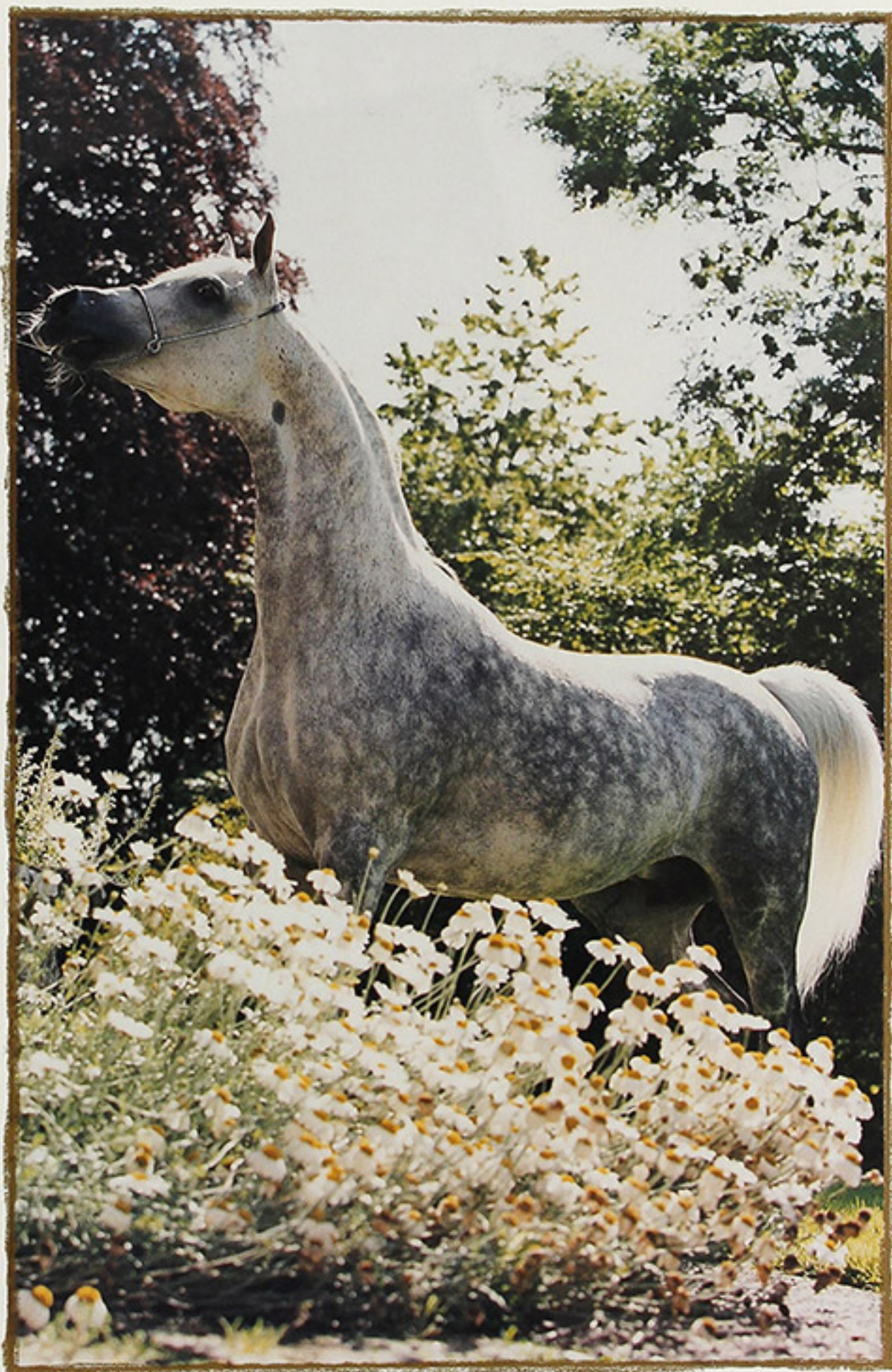
It seems rather presumptuous to describe a mare such as Egna, as her beauty and charisma so eloquently speaks for itself. The undisputed star of the 2001 Polish Pres-

tige auction, she is a daughter of the celebrated sire of champions, Eukaliptus, and hails from the prestigious Saqlawi dam line of Milordka, meticulously preserved by the Michalów Stud. Egna, representing yet another jewel in the crown of Halsdon's Polish beauties, has already dazzled audiences and judges alike, and now shines brightly as a prized addition to the broodmare band at Halsdon.



*And I came down riding,
my mare's neck held loftily
as a palm fruit-laden:
woe to the gatherer!
Swift was she...galloped
she how wrathfully...
Thrusteth her neck forward,
shaketh her reins galloping;
flieth as the doves fly bound
for the water-springs.*

The Golden Ode of Labid, translated
by Sir Wilfrid Blunt after Lady Anne Blunt





Gai Radiant Hope, a daughter of the U.S. National Futurity Champion, Gai Anastashah, is a magnificent example of the highly successful use of U.S. National Reserve Champion

Bey Shah as an outcross for intensely Gainey-bred mares. But a closer look at her lineage reveals a fascinating saga of Arabian horse history. In 1893, 45 Arabian horses came from Syria by arrangement of Abdul Hamid II, the reigning Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, to participate in the Chicago World's Fair. A tragic fire led to the financial ruin of the endeavour and the surviving horses were sold in America, never to return to their desert homeland. In her tail female line, Gai Radiant Hope traces to the mare Nejdme, a Kuhailah Ajuz from the Anazeh tribe who was part of this group of horses, as well as the first Arabian to be registered in the United States.



*My very own queen...
my beloved, my bright moon;
My intimate companion, my one and all,
sovereign of all beauties...
My spring, my joy, my glittering day,
my exquisite one...*

Poem of the Ottoman Sultan, Süleyman the Magnificent



Gai Radiant Hope



Gai Radiant Hope (Gai Radiant x Gai Anastashah) 1993 Grey Mare



Maesta (Partner x Maskotka) 1990 Grey Mare



Maesta is a sensitive mare, and responds best to those with a quiet, gentle nature who understand the subtleties of gaining her confidence. However she also craves attention, and knows exactly how to draw the eye of potential admirers. Proud and beautiful, Maesta was named Reserve in Poland's most prestigious championship for mares in 1997. Her sire, Partner, was Reserve National Champion Stallion of Poland and Europe, and her dam, Maskota, is a treasured Bandos daughter. In her tail female line she represents the breeding of Count Dzieduszycki's Jezupol Stud, from which Janów Podlaski acquired several prominent foundation mares. Maesta's family traces to the mare Sahara, imported to Poland from Arabia in 1845.

Maesta

*...her noble endurance and her impetuosity...
carry her to the front of the dash of the galloping steeds...
When she has been fined down by training, she is like a young gazelle...
With her muscles and upper parts firmly knit,
And her lower limbs made nimble and light...*

From the Muzarrid of Yazid, 7th century A.D.



Leila, a tall, striking grey mare with an exceptionally long neck and smooth body, is sired by the American-bred Monogram, a Negatraz son out of the queen of Russian

mares, Monogramma. Leased by the Michalów Stud in Poland, Monogram marked the return of the blood of Bask to his homeland, and the results were truly spectacular. In the year 2000, four of the World Champions at Paris, all bred in Poland, were sired by Monogram, an unprecedented accomplishment. Leila's dam, the Palas daughter Linda, is also the dam of Larissa, a Reserve Senior Champion in Poland, and her pedigree features two crosses to Negativ through his celebrated sons Salon and Nabor.

Leila



"Because the Arabian horse is so honourable, they were chosen to be ridden by angels. It is said that when the angel Gabriel was sent to Moses to tell him that he would be inspired by God after forty days, Gabriel was riding a horse called 'life.' In fact, any divine personification of life shall be moulded in the shape of a horse, the reasons being numerous..."

Sheikh Mohammad al-Bakhsi Al Halabi in his 11th century work entitled, "Sketches on Coursers of the Highest Breeding."



Leila (Monogramm x Linda) 1995 Grey Mare

Emilda



Emilda, as imperious as she is wonderful, is the quintessential Polish Saqlawi mare. The queen of the 1998 Polish Prestige Sale at Janów Podlaski, she was bred at Michalów

and was twice Reserve National Champion Mare of Poland. Sired by the Probat son, Pamir, a superb racehorse, World Cup and Polish National Champion, Emilda represents the famous "E" line through her dam Emanacja, herself a World Junior Champion and Polish Reserve National Champion. Emilda is a mare of such quality it seems impossible to imagine one could ever improve upon her; a single foal equal to her own magnificence would be a worthy dream.

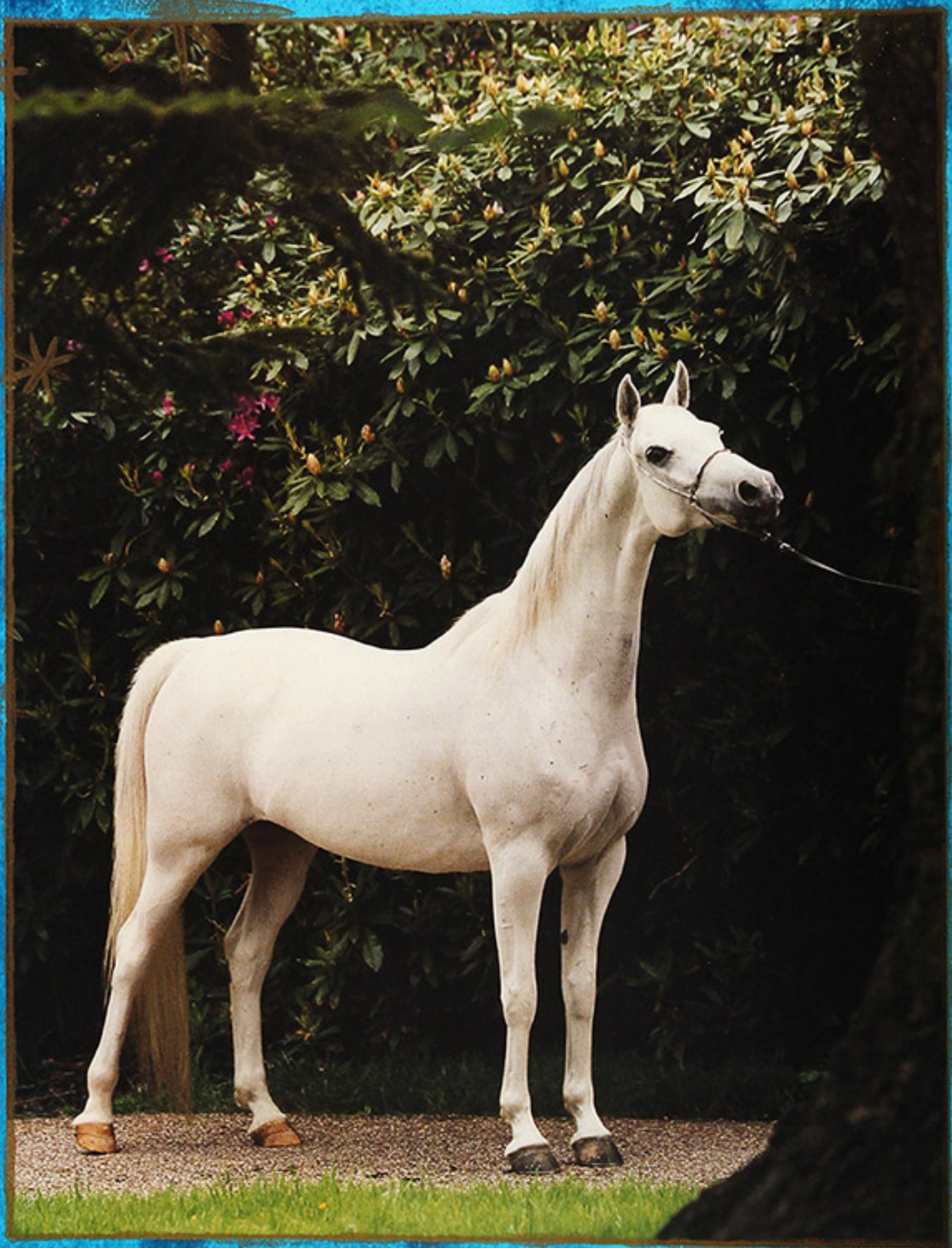


Emilda (Pamir x Emanacja) 1990 Grey Mare

*"Your eyes are the mystery...
your hair full of forgetfulness,
your face pure praise."*

Jelaluddin Rumi





Estradamura (Falsyfikat x Esmeralda) 1990 Grey Mare

Estradamura



Estradamura is a mare who likes to keep to herself and simply enjoy a quiet life in the pastures of Halsdon. A champion mare of pure Polish Saqlawi bloodlines,

she is by Falsyfikat, senior sire at Michalów for two years, and a son of Argo out of the Palas daughter Fantaska. Estradamura's dam, Esmeralda, is a Bandos daughter with two crosses to Negativ, tracing in tail female to Milordka.

*"Pastures of the moon, keep my Beloved,
Keep the Joyful, the Playful, the Brave.
Voice of the Earth, and Song of the Stars
Unite in my heart and carry its echo
Through the voiceless night..."*

The Poem of Shaikh Bsyas



Epruwetka, an exceptionally pretty mare and champion in the show ring, is a granddaughter of Penitent, the World Champion stallion whose beauty and quality led Shirley

and Charlie Watts to travel to Poland in search of horses. Bred by Janów Podlaski, Epruwetka's dam, Euzebia, is a daughter of Palas out of Europa, full sister to Eukalipthus, and daughter of one of Poland's most famous broodmatrons, Eunice.



Epruwetka (Eldon x Euzebia) 1993 Grey Mare

*"...all in front of the wind,
and scattering clouds around her...
her mane like trees in a tempest..."*

R.D. Blackmoore

Epruwetka





The bay beauty Marguerita HS boasts a lineage of Egyptian luminaries. Sired by the peerless Simeon Sadik, her dam, Maartrabbi, is a daughter of the leading Egyptian dam of champions and legendary beauty, RDM Maar Hala. This Koheilah Jellibiyah mare line is famed throughout the world for large, beautiful eyes, smooth bodies, and loving dispositions. Marguerita's grandsire, Al Metrabbi, bred by the famous Gleannloch stud in America, was the only son of the ethereal *Morafic out of a *Morafic daughter. His progeny were also well known for their superb dispositions as well as athletic abilities in a variety of disciplines.



HS Marguerita



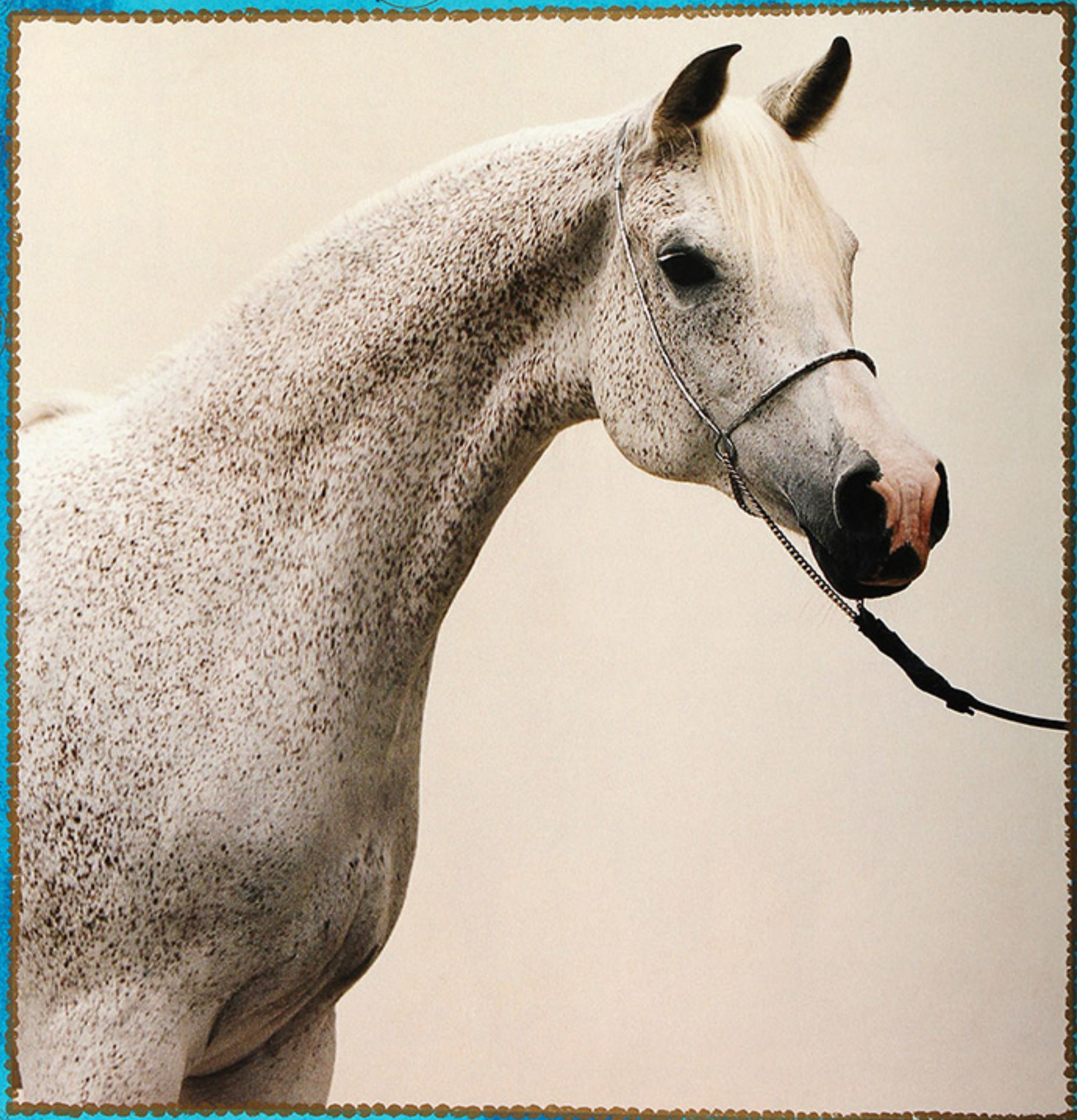
*The path of purple, sprinkled with dew...
... mated to the strength of thy youth
Watering by the pool above the thundercloud
And lying down beside the shadow of the great rock
In the pasture of camomile, smelling of milk.
Dream in thy sleep...*

The Poem of Shaikh Bays





HS Marquerita (Simeon Sadik x Maartrabbi) 2000 Bay Mare

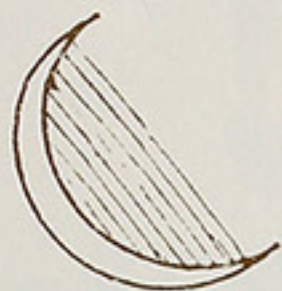


Wioleta (Palas x Wendeta) 1984 Grey Mare

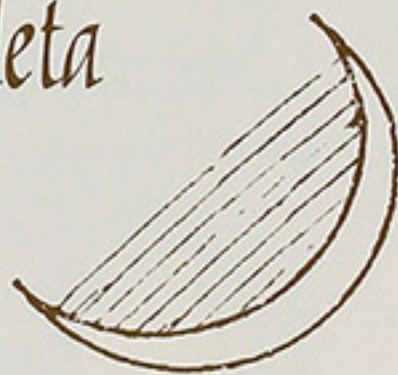


The flea-bitten grey is favoured by the Arabs, who say that horses blessed with this colour possess exceptional qualities. The Palas daughter Wioleta is a living testa-

ment to this belief. An extremely feminine and graceful mare, she is a superb example of why Polish mares are prized throughout the world. Wioleta's dam, Wendeta, was a winner at the European championships as well as the dam of national champions in Italy and Argentina. In tail female, Wioleta traces to Lezginka, bred at the famed Antoniny stud, and sired by a stallion imported to Poland by Count Potocki.



Wioleta



"God has gifted man with coursers of the highest breeding...and made horses the most beautiful means of riding, the beauty of pageants, the most splendid gifts, and the most desirable possessions..."

From the 11th century manuscript
of Sheikh Mohammad al-Bakhsi Al Halabi

Espiacja



Monogramm daughters bred by Michalów, her dam Estradamura also resides at Halsdon.

Espiacja, with her powerful trot and commanding presence, exhibits the charisma which made her sire Monogramm an unforgettable presence in the show ring.

One of many fine



If someone assures you that a horse flew, ask what colour she was, and if you are told chestnut, then believe it. When she flies under the sun, she is the wind....

Arab Proverb





Espiacja (Monogramm x Estradamura) 1996 Chestnut Mare

Gai Radiant Dream



Gai Radiant Dream is a daughter of U.S. and Canadian National Champion mare, Gaishea and three-quarter sister to Canadian National Champion and U.S. Top Ten, Gai Monarch.

A class winner at the British Nationals, she is a beautiful reflection of the acclaimed American breeding programs of Gainey and Varian Arabians.



The Arabian horse, having been originally created out of the wind, reflects the supremacy of the element of air over the other three elements of nature: fire, earth, and water...

From the 11th century manuscript of Sheikh Mohammad al-Bakhsi Al Halabi



Gai Radiant Dream (Gai Radiant x Gaishea) 1993 Grey Mare

SHF Pearlie Mae



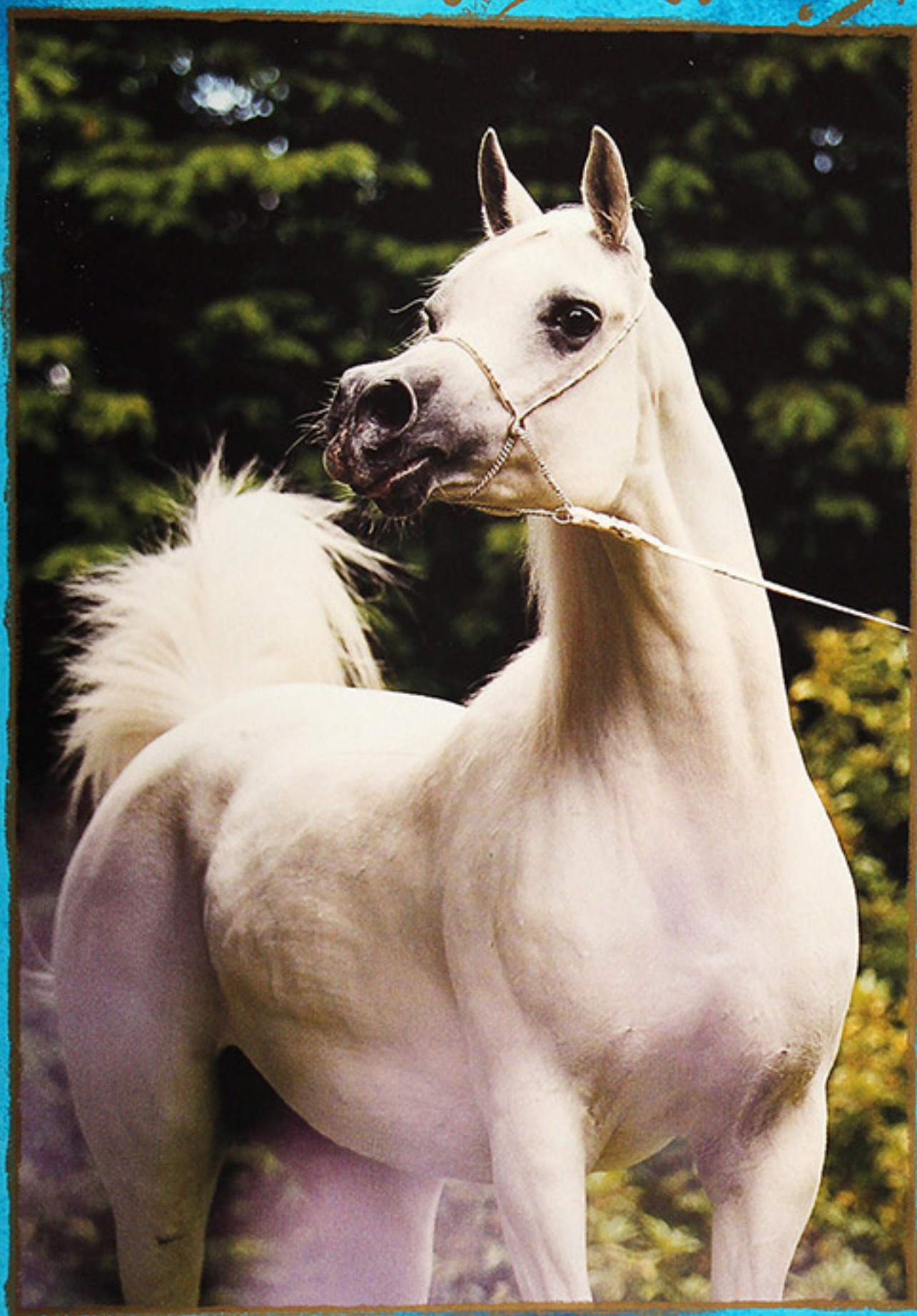
The expression in the eyes of SHF Pearlie Mae is a balm for the soul, and while her exotic loveliness may be the initial attraction, it is her amazingly sweet character which is truly

bewitching. A vision of beauty, type, and femininity, Pearlie Mae captured many of the greatest show honours in the Arabian breed, including British National Champion, European Champion, and World Champion mare. Like any regal monarch, she enjoys holding court, and has a magical way of summoning people to her stall. Yet she also has tremendous strength of character and is decisive about doing things her own way in her own time. If any human behaviour should ever drop below her standard of dignity, she simply turns away and refuses to look in the direction of the offender. SHF Pearlie Mae is the embodiment of the ideal Arabian mare.



*"...free of the desert born...
her whiteness shimmering cool as the pearls,
at whose step the very earth will light..."*

Farazdaq



SHF Pearlle Mae (SHF Southern Whiz x Citona) 1990 Grey Mare



Palastrina (Monogramm x Palba) 1995 Grey Mare

Palastrina

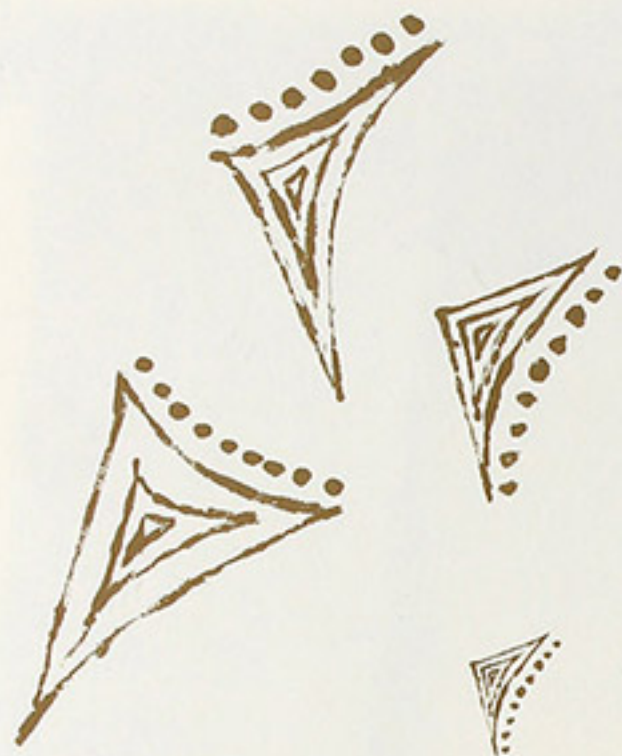


Palastrina has the aura of a classic movie star: poise, elegance, beauty, charisma, and an ability to attract loyal fans the moment she steps into the spotlight. Her dam, Palba, a sale-

topping mare at the Polish Prestige sale and an international champion, is a Penitent daughter who traces in tail female to the Janów Podlaski foundation mare, Gazella II. Bred by Count Dzieduszycki and the foundress of several great sire lines, the story of Gazella II would make a fascinating movie itself, culminating with her dramatic march from Poland to Russia at the age of 25.

*"And make imaginary puissance;
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth*

William Shakespeare



HS Jasirah (Gai Radiant x SF Hidden Jewel) 2001 Grey Mare



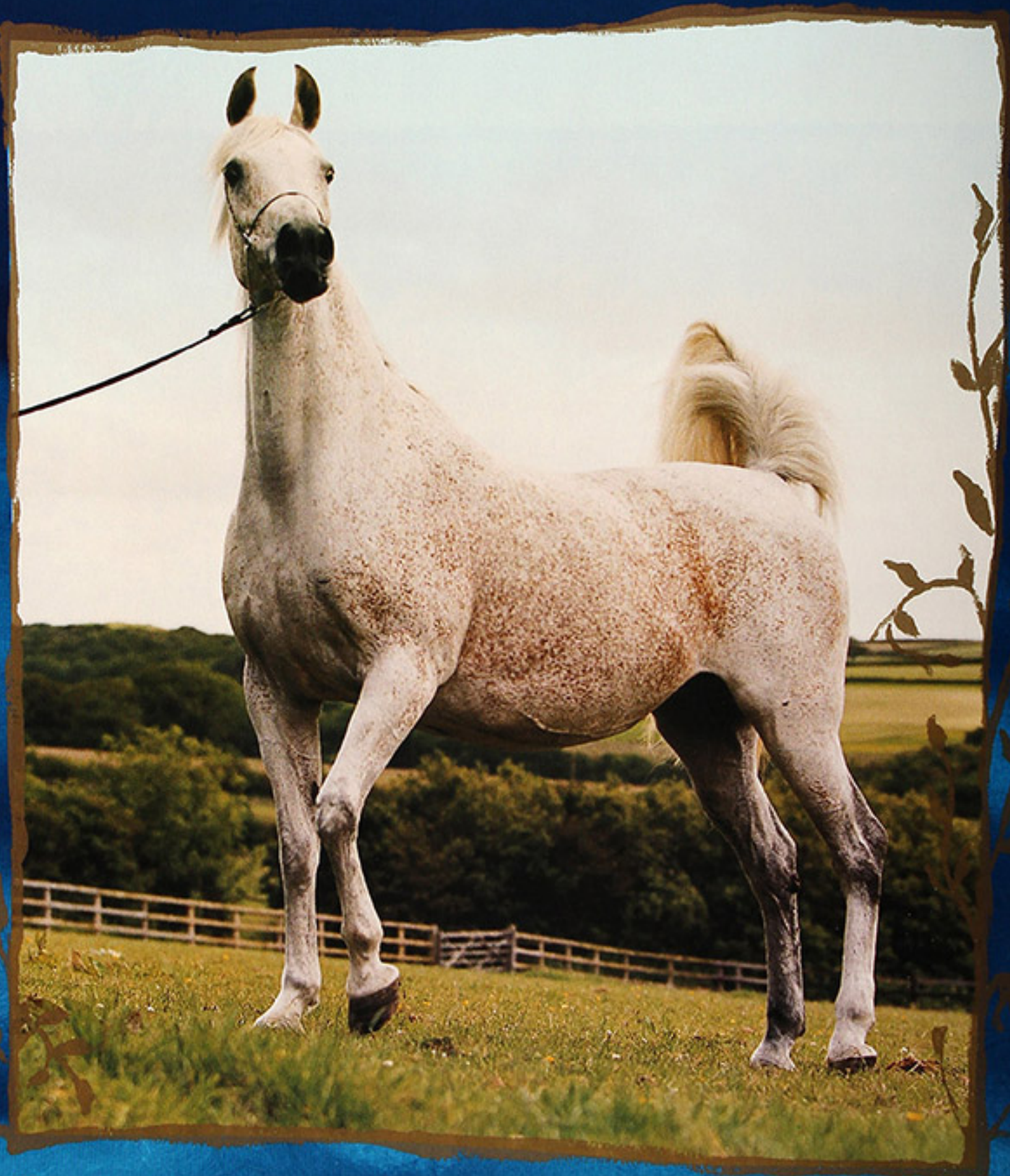
Already a Junior Champion, Supreme Champion and British Nationals winner as a yearling, Jasirah is a charming filly of great promise. Her sire is Gai Radiant, and her dam, SF Hidden Jewel, is an American-bred mare of

primarily Russian and Polish lines from one of the greatest champion-producing dam lines in the United States.

HS Jasirah



MA Tatia



MA Tatia (Imperial Emperor x AK Tatima) 1990 Grey Mare



MA Tatia is an Egyptian queen hailing from the Dahmah Shahwaniah family, the favoured strain of the celebrated breeder Abbas Pasha I of Egypt. Her sire, Imperi-

al Imperor, represents the bloodlines of the world-renowned Ansata Stud, and his pedigree features two of the most beautiful stallions ever to leave the land of the Pyramids: *Morafic and *Ansata Ibn Halima. Her dam, AK Tatima, is a daughter of Moniet el Sharaf, a stallion intensely linebred to the infamous Moniet el Nefous. Elegant and proud, MA Tatia is a beautifully balanced mare who was named a Scottsdale Top Ten yearling filly before her departure from the United States.

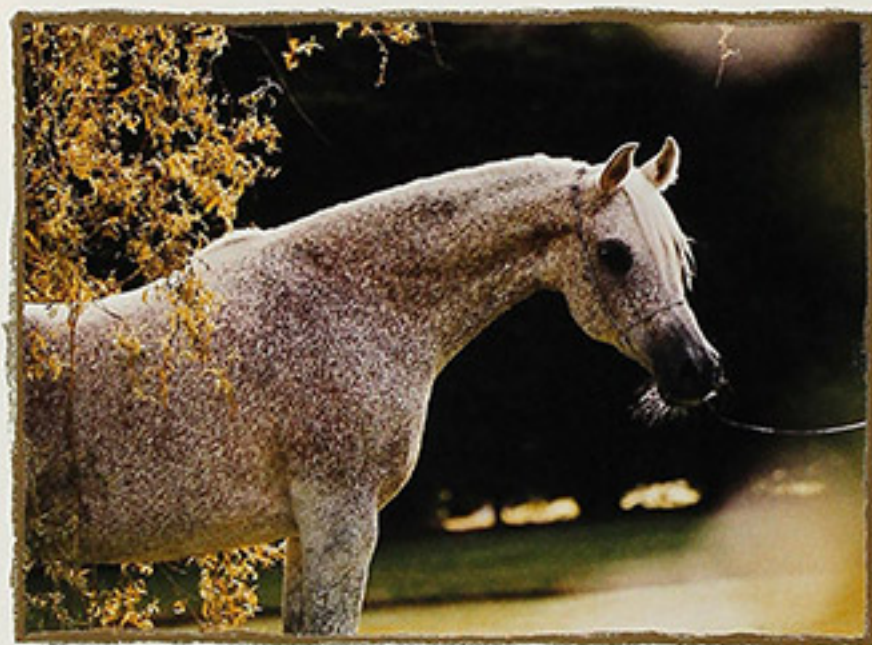
*"I am blessed with Al Dahma
because she creates a void
between her and the horses
who are racing with her.
And the star has given her its light".*

The Poem of Shahwan about his Dahmah mare



Tiffaha was yet another Halsdon mare whose grace, femininity, and beauty was simply beyond compare. A product of one of the finest Egyptian breeding programmes in the world, Katharinen-

hof owned by Dr. Hans Nagel, Tiffaha was a daughter of his famous stallion, Jamil, out of the beautiful imported Egyptian mare, Taghreed. Like her dam, she possessed a beautifully chiselled face with large, expressive eyes, and her elegance and quality earned her the honour of both European and World Champion mare. A kind and gracious mare, Tiffaha was the epitome of her kind, both in appearance and character. With the pressures of the show ring relegated to a distant past, Tiffaha spent the last years of her life grazing peacefully in the pastures of Halsdon, a vision of grace.



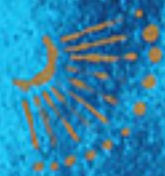
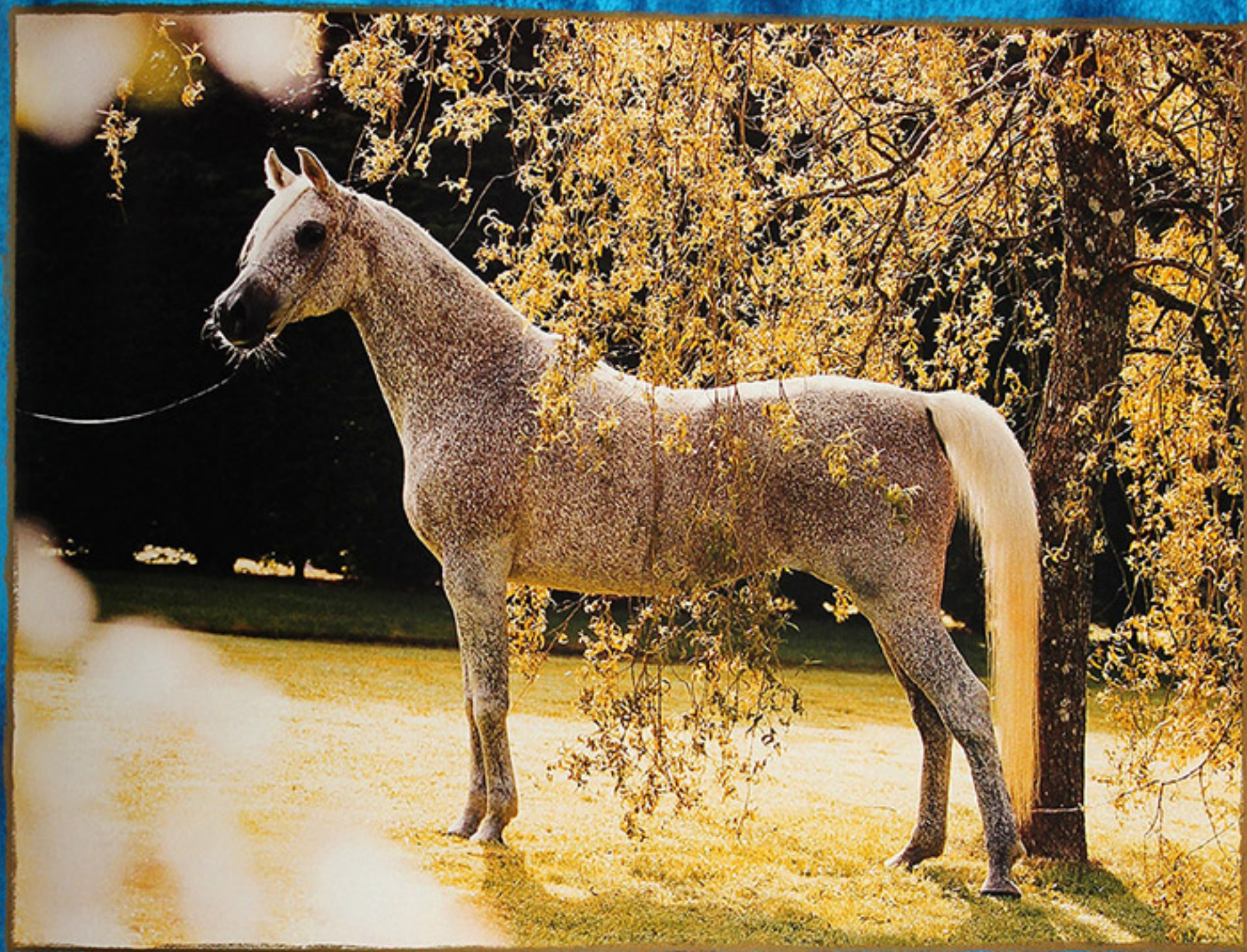
Tiffaha (Jamil x Taghreed) 1981 Grey Mare



*"Thou appearest beautifully on the horizon of heaven,
...Thou hast filled every land with thy beauty.
Thou art gracious, great, glistening, and high over every land...
no one knows thy going..."*

from Akhenaten's Great Hymn to the Aten

Tiffaha





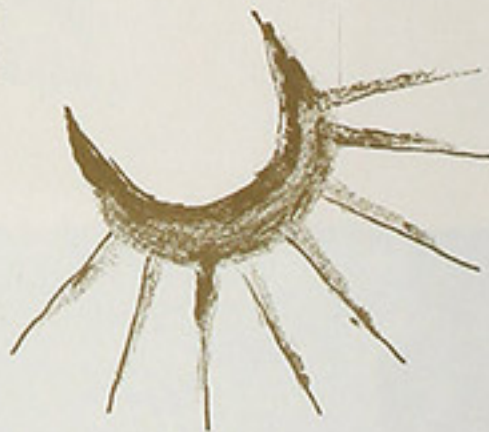
Like the ancient peoples of the region for which Illyria is named, the Arabian horse has travelled many lands and listened to the melodies of many languages. Illyria's heritage is that of

the rare Egyptian Arabian; her ancestors selected by the Pashas of Egypt from the finest horses of Najd in the Arabian peninsula. Her sire, Simeon Sadik, is arguably the most beautiful black Arabian the world has ever known. Her dam, Imperial Imphayana, is a daughter of Ansata Imperial out of Imperial Phanadah, whose dam was the incomparable *Pharrah. Like many young Arabians, particularly those of Egyptian bloodlines, Illyria is a filly who is destined to gracefully mature into the full promise of the beauty proclaimed by her heritage.



*"... there is no one like her.
She is more beautiful than any other.
Look, she is like a star goddess arising
at the beginning of a happy new year;
brilliantly white, bright skinned;
One looks at her passing by..."*

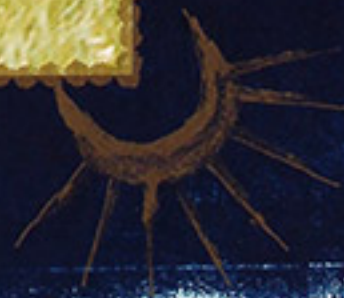
Love Poem from a 3,000 year-old Egyptian Papyrus



HS Illyria



HS Illyria (Simeon Sadik x Imperial Imphanaya)





There is an old Polish saying that states, "A man without a horse is like a body without a soul". As trade flourished during the Middle Ages, Poland

learned that equine treasures from the East were the finest enlightenment for a man's soul. Further contact with Arabian horses came about in the mid-16th century when the existing Polish-Lithuanian government reached a treaty with the Sultans of the Ottoman empire. Soon the aristocracy of Poland began to collect and breed Arabian horses, and dissatisfied with those animals acquired through existing trade routes, began their own treks to the deserts of the Middle East.

*"Take upon you the mares!
Their backs are a sanctuary,
and their wombs are a treasure."*

A hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The Polish



Heritage at Halsdon







Poland, of all European nations, was the first to recognise the superior qualities of the Arabian. More importantly, however, they were not content with simply improving native

bloodstock through use of desert blood, but sought to preserve the genetic strength of the best *kuhailan* horses, as they were known, by selectively breeding these purebreds. Few countries have endured more political upheaval than Poland, yet amazingly, descendants from several of the original stud farms still exist today in the pedigrees of Polish Arabians.

The Slawuta stud, which is Poland's oldest, traces its written history to Prince Sanguszko whose horses won international awards as early as the 1867 World Exhibition in Paris. Prince Sanguszko's enthusiasm for the Arab breed also inspired another Polish nobleman, Count Rzewuski, to mount his own expedition to the desert in the early 1800s. An accomplished Arabist, the Count meticulously recorded Bedouin lore, including pedigrees and strains of their horses, as well as training and breeding methodology. Although the Arabians of the great stud which Count Rzewuski founded were lost to modern breeding, his poetry and travel accounts influenced the

young Count Dzieduszycki to continue his own family tradition of breeding Arabians. The resulting Jezupol Stud became very influential, and many of the best Polish Arabians are descendants of three of his most celebrated mares: Sahara, Mlecha, and Gazella. Modern Polish pedigrees may also be traced to the Bialocerkiew Stud, owned by Count Branicki, then commander-in-chief of the Polish Army, whose horses were so superior that an Ottoman sultan once selected steeds from amongst them. Count Potocki of the Antoniny Stud was also an influential breeder who established both male and female lines which have bred on in modern stock.

The Polish state stud of Janów Podlaski was founded in 1817, and later studs such as Michalów, Bialka, and Kurozweki were also dedicated to breeding the finest Arabian horses. In recent history there is no story more dramatic than the survival of Arabian horse breeding in Poland despite the catastrophes wrought by two World Wars. The dedication of the Polish people ensured that not only did the breeding programmes survive after losing nearly 90 per cent of their precious bloodstock, but flourished in the aftermath. Today, horses of Polish breeding win countless championships around the world and are treasured for their beauty, quality and athleticism. The superb collection of Polish Arabians at Halsdon, representing both *Kuhailan* and *Saqlawi* types, are the backbone of the stud.

*He swims in the desert sea, my stallion
Carving the waves of sand.
Snowy peaks he ploughs
As a dolphin ploughs the breakers.
Ever faster, still faster...
Higher, still higher,
He soars from the dust like a cloud...*

Adam Mickiewicz, 19th Century Polish Poet

The Egyptian Heritage at Halsdon

*Shining black in the shining light,
Inky black in the golden sun,
Graceful as the swallow's flight,
Light as swallow, winged one,
Swift as driven hurricane...*

Julian Grenfell



From the introduction of the horse into ancient Egypt by the Hyksos, to the Islamic conquest, the slave dynasties of the Mamelukes, and the Egyptian renaissance under Mohammad Ali the

Great, the Arabian horse has shaped the fabric of Egyptian history. The Egyptians, like the Poles, consistently turned to the desert peoples of the east to obtain the horses that would define their most glorious moments.

The origin of the modern Egyptian Arabian horse traces to the purest of the pure of the Arabian desert. When Ibrahim Pasha succeeded in capturing the al-Saud capital of Diri'yah in 1813, his spoils of war included the fabled Arabians of Najd, of whom the European explorer Palgrave wrote, "Never had I seen or imagined so lovely a collection... Their appearance justified all reputation, all value, all poetry..." Abbas Pasha, grandson of the great reformer Mohammed Ali of Egypt, greatly admired the Bedouins, and even lived among them for a time, absorbing their passion for the Arabian horse. Before his life was over, he would become the greatest collector of Arabian bloodstock since the time of King Solomon.

Ali Pasha Sherif was the next member of the Egyptian aristocracy to devote his life to Arabian horses, preserving the finest remnants of the historic collection of Abbas Pasha. Then in 1908, a group of royal and titled families formed the Royal Agricultural Society to protect what remained of this precious bloodstock, and the Society later evolved into the present state stud, the Egyptian Agricultural Organization.

Today, the Egyptian Arabian, less than three per cent of all purebred Arabians, is an unrivalled source of type, refinement, and elegance influential far beyond their scarce numbers. The Arabian herd at Halsdon features a select group of these treasured horses, which are bred both within their own lines, and utilised as a valuable outcross.





Love and Compassion for the Horse



Thy companions will feel compassion for thee."

Compassion for the horse is a recurrent theme in the lore of the Bedouin. Like the intricate patterns of an oriental rug, this essential folklore

is said that when God spoke to the Arab horse newly created from the South Wind, he decreed, "I have privileged thee over the rest of the beasts, and I make thee master over them.

is woven across the centuries, preserved in a colourful pattern of poetry, tribal history, and Islamic tradition. The early European travellers to the Arab lands observed this compassion first hand. "The Arabs never hit their horses," Arvieux wrote, "but treat them with gentleness, pet and caress them, talk to them and care for them in the most extraordinary way." Lady Anne Blunt lauded the merits of the Bedouin as trainers, noting their steadfast patience with their horses. "Loss of temper with a beast is not in their nature, and I have never seen them strike or ill-use their mares in any way", she wrote. Instead, the Bedouins believed that words or gestures were always sufficient to discipline or animate a horse.

*Love horses, care for them,
Do not grudge giving them attention.
For them honour and for them beauty.
If the horses are abandoned by men
I shall make them enter my house;
I shall share with them my children's bread.
My wives will dress them with their veils
And will shelter them with their covers...*

Ben al Abbas



"The eyes, circled by this sad and beautiful darkness, were so sorrowful, lonely, gentle, and nobly tragic, that they killed all other emotions except love."

T.H. White



In contrast to the Europeans of that period, who often perceived their horses as simply beasts of burden, the Arabs thought of their horses as family friends.

Women and children lovingly reared the foals, socialising them within a human "herd" and in turn, these horses gave their best to their masters. It was not uncommon for an Arab mare to be seen defending her fallen rider during a raid – kicking, striking and biting to ensure his enemies could do no further harm.

During the Islamic conquest, two-thirds of the known world was conquered on the backs of the noble Arabian, and their riders gave lavish credit to their mounts, whom they believed to be rational beings with an innate understanding of morality. Many sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) reflect the importance of compassion and respect for horses. Abi Huraya related that the Prophet advised, "Whoever keeps a horse for the sake of God, faithfully believing in the promise of God, then the feeding of it, the watering of it, even its urine and drop-

pings, are advantages in his weight on the Day of Judgement". Conversely it was said that those who use their horses "in a wild and reckless way" are hypocrites to their people, and "those who do not fulfil the rights of the horses' backs and stomachs" will find their omissions a source of regret on the Day of Judgement.

It is important to remember that the characteristics prized in the Arabian are a gift from the Bedouin breeders of centuries past. They have given us a perfect horse, whose beauty and endearing character have miraculously engendered devoted guardians to perpetuate their kind in every horse-breeding country in the world. Today, where the show ring has in many respects taken the place of the battlefield, it is particularly important to remember that the Arabian horse is not merely an object of beauty, but a horse of great utility and stamina, being loyal, generous, and kind. All horses deserve respect and compassion, but the sensitive nature of the Arabian requires a special level of responsible stewardship. The rewards of such devotion, however, may be eternal, for Amru Ibn Abi Ans related that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) once advised his followers, "Keep your mares, and breed them to stallions, and keep the mares that result from this, and you shall rise to the highest levels of heaven".



For does not the Arabian horse fly? ... Can one not feel the sculptor's thumb-mark of God along that line which runs from eye to nostril? Is it not innocence that animates the face of the Arabian horse? However that may be, there was a time when one of the most graceful Arabian horses bore a horn on its forehead. I have no doubt: my heraldic beast, the unicorn, is descended from an Arabian stallion.

Wolfdietrich Schnurre



Dark clouds heavy with the scent of the sea glide across the sun, heralding the coming darkness. Brightly coloured pheasants dart to and fro, seeking the sweet sanctuary of the woodland. On

the horizon, mares and foals graze peacefully, yet the distance between them slowly closes; foals drawing nearer their dams, mares seeking each other's company. Nightfall is coming, and the horses respond to an ancient rhythm which demands a subtle apprehension of darkness.

Adjacent to Halsdon Manor, just across the garden, is a small stable yard, purposely placed near the house so that Shirley and Charlie Watts may enjoy the comforting presence of their horses. Shirley ensures that different horses have the

opportunity to reside here in order to receive an added allotment of her care and devotion. On this evening, just as usual, she does the night stables herself, visiting each of the mares and foals to dispense caresses and treats in equal measure. It is a quiet time. The horses understand that they are deeply loved, and in turn bequeath a perfect sense of grace and tranquility to their admirer.

Unexpectedly the light of the moon penetrates an angry cloud, and a slice of molten silver illuminates a graceful creature of a similar hue at the edge of the wood. The heads of the mares rise in unison, nostrils flaring, and just before the cloud obscures the light, a singular horn is revealed, pointing heavenward in a shape of remarkable perfection.

The horses, suffused with a sense of love, soon relax, munching their hay in a comforting cadence. Shirley Watts simply smiles, for all is as it should be.

This is Halsdon, the story of a dream come true.

*The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me...*

From the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam



Twilight at Halsdon



Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges Judith E. Forbis for the use of selections of poetry from two of her many fine books on the Arabian horse:

The Classic Arabian Horse, Liveright, New York, 1976

The Abbas Pasha Manuscript, Ansata Publications, Arkansas, 1993

Other references include:

Al-Andalusi, Ali Ibn Abd Al Rahman, *The Embellishment of the Horsemen and the Badge of the Courageous*, 14th Century Manuscript, translations by the author

Ammon, K.W., *Historical Reports on Arab Horse Breeding*, Olms Presse, Hildesheim, 1993

Asil Arabians II - The Noble Arabian Horse, Georg Olms, Hildesheim, Zurich, New York

Daumas, E., *The Horses of the Sahara* (9th edition translated by S.M. Ohlendorf), University of Texas Press, Austin, 1968

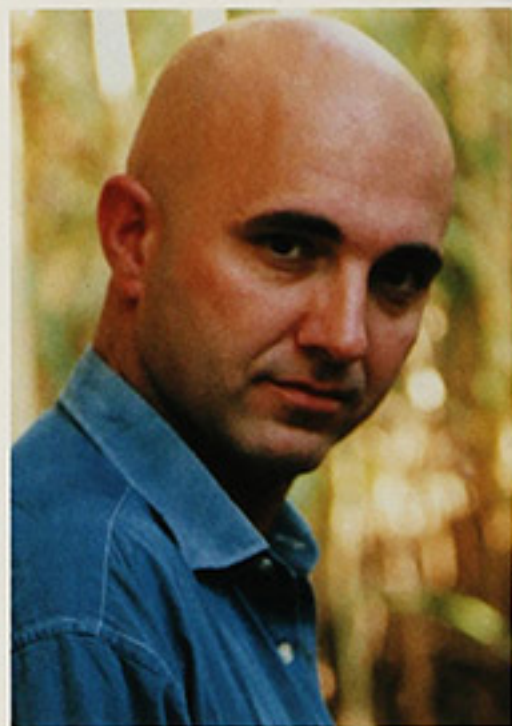
Harrigan, Peter "The Polish Quest for Arabian Horses", *Aramco World*, November-December 2001

Night & Horses & The Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature, Edited by Robert Irwin, The Overlook Press, Woodstock & New York, 1999

Kalbi, Ibn Al, *Origin and Strains of Horses during Pre-Islamic and Islamic Eras*, 9th Century Manuscript; translations by the author

Palgrave, W.G., *A Personal Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia*, MacMillan Ltd., London, 1965

Photograph of Author by Richard T. Bryant



The Photographer

Gigi Grasso is the world's premier photographer of Arabian horses. "*Spellbound Horses*" is his seventh book portraying this legendary breed, and is yet another example of his unrivaled rapport with his subjects. A native of Italy, Gigi has the soul of an artist and the savvy of an experienced horseman, both of which en-

hance his ability to capture the distinct character of every horse he photographs. His extensive experience in the realm of documentary filmmaking and graphic design also ensure that his books are visual extravaganzas. An Arab mystic once told his protégé, "See not the horse; but the essence of the horse." Through the lens of Gigi Grasso, the world truly experiences the joyful essence of the Arabian horse.



The Author

Cynthia Culbertson has been fascinated by the Arabian horse since childhood. As a young girl she successfully trained and showed her own Arabians, and was a member of the U.S. National Champion Team in Youth Judging. She holds a degree in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, specialising in the

Arabic language and Islamic religion, and resided for several years in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Cynthia frequently lectures on the history and folklore of the Arabian horse, as well as contributing to several magazines and periodicals. A member of the board of directors of two foundations devoted to the Arabian horse, Cynthia lives on a ranch in New Mexico with her treasured "gifts of the desert": her Arabian horses, Salukis, and a camel. *"Spellbound Horses"* is her second collaboration with Gigi Grasso.

