

INTERVIEW WITH

Koenraad Detailleur

by Talitha Bakker, photo by Henrike Hoermann

During the world championships in Paris, we had the opportunity to speak with Koenraad Detailleur. A well respected judge and enthusiastic breeder of Arabian Horses. We asked him a few questions.

TA: *Could you give us a small introduction on yourself, your lifestyle and family?*

KD: Born in 1960 in Ostend on the Belgian coast, I was fortunate to spend my youth in a fantastic family. My parents were fantastic people. My friends liked very much to spend time at the Detailleur family. Everyone was always welcome and they knew the food was always of a high standard and this is still very important to me. I like cooking very much and do it often, my friends know that. I am already 25 years married with Katrien, the mother of my children. I have three daughters; Louise, Marie & Esther and daddy is lucky because they adore the horses as well. We spend much time together with the horses. My profession is interior designer. I have a small company that creates special furniture & lightning objects.

TA: *How did you start with Arabian horses?*

KD: Already as a very young boy I was attracted to horses. I travelled with my small bicycle around my town to visit all the newborn foals. I learned a lot by follow them aging. In the beginning I loved them all, but slowly on I discovered the characteristics of a good foal. A true fact is that most of the foals are a copy of their mother. That's why I take care when using a stallion that behind that stallion there must be a nice female line.



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TA: What made you prefer the Arabian breed over all the other breeds?

KD: In my youth I had several warmbloods, the day I started with Arabians I realized there is no way back. They are smarter, elegant, more malignant sometimes it's difficult as well, because they never forget(trauma) and they are not ponderous like some other breeds.

TA: What is your ideal image of the Arabian horse?

KD: I'm very classic on the image of an Arabian, I mean you must feel and see dryness, large dark eyes, a thin skin, high tail set and some charisma as well. And of course movement, what to do with a horse without movement, as judge you must see also quality as a useful horse, you must put a saddle on it.

TA: If you could name one Arabian that would come the closest to your ideal, which one would that be?

KD: SA Misha Apal (A.S. Natsir Apal x Nyara JC)

TA: You are also a breeder. What goal do you want to achieve with your breeding program?

KD: Horses in extreme good balance, overall harmonious with as many type possible and very good movers. I would like breeding Paris floor quality, I mean horses who can compete at the highest level. I have managed several people (friends) with my breeding advice and we became with many champion. Now I want to do this for myself as well.

TA: Which bloodlines have your preference?

KD: I like all bloodlines. I take out what I need from a specific mare, see what she is missing and look for a stallion that is giving this specific point.

TA: You are also involved with the Belgian Arabian horse Registry. What is your involvement with this organization?

KD: I have been vice-president for many years and been delegate for my country at the ECAHO show commission.

TA: The Belgian Studbook is considered to be one of the active ones in Europe. Despite the size of the country, the Belgian breeders are breeding high quality horses, resulting in winning the All Nations Cup breeders trophy in 1996, 2003, 2004, 2009 and most recently in 2011. What do you think is the key to this continuing success of the Belgian breeders?

KD: Because Belgians are competitive people and in the past we were surrounded by countries who have fantastic stallions. I remember 30 years ago when we saw in the first international shows held in Belgium the class winners and the champions, we could not believe our eyes. The Belgian participants were last in the classes except Mr Demulder with the mare Saskia (former world champion and full sister of Warandes Plakat and warandes pacha, owned by Nedji Arabians) But we used in our neighbour countries the best stallions and refined the Belgian Arabian quality very fast, some members invested later on in good broodmares and stallions as well. Today we have an enormous quality of show horses. Mostly bred by small breeders.

TA: You are also a worldwide respected judge. When did you start judging?

KD: I started judging in 2001.

TA: What do you find interesting about judging the Arabian show horses of today?

KD: I love to see and to be critical of the new generations (yearlings) to see what the young new coming stallions are producing. And of course today don't forget that every international show is a mixture of horses from all over the world in fact it's always a world contest.

TA: Do you think there is a big difference in showing as it was 10 years ago?



KD: Like I wrote in the topic above, today we see only extraordinary quality in the show ring. It's hard to compete. That's one reason I believe that small breeders don't participate today and they learn to see their quality. So when at the moment they think their quality is not able to do something well, they prefer to stay at home. But contrary if they breed something very nice or they can sell it for a good price, they participate.

Of course everything becomes so professional that it is hard to compete as an amateur, but the amateur must handle like a professional today.

TA: What was the most memorable moment of your judging career?

KD: That I could judge my old friend, the stallion Natsir Apal. For me he's a special stallion, always trotting like hell, with charisma; a truly Classic Arabian.

TA: Which show is still on your list to judge?

KD: my next show is Kuwait, then Dubai, Tulip Cup, Wels, and many more..

TA: Since many years, you are also the organizer of the West coast cup in Koksijde, which is a national C-show and a well known international B-show. Where did you come up with the idea to organize the show and what is the key behind the shows' success?

KD: I'm organizing shows since 1991, starting with national C shows for many years, giving the small breeders the

opportunity to participating in a small show with a very familiar character . After many shows I decided to organize the same weekend both a national C following by an International B show.

This year we have an International C and an International B. We keep it in a very friendly atmosphere, the food on my show is more than excellent, there is even a Michelin star restaurant on the showground. For me good food is important.

TA: What would the show scene look like, five years from now?

KD: I think more and more professional, and we most take care to guide in a good and sportive way. Trying to keep it attractive for participants and visitors.

TA: How/Where would you see yourself, five years from now?

KD: With a stable (not to big) full of beautiful horses, good moving with a lot of type and charisma.

TA: Is there anything specific you want to add to this interview to tell to the readers?

KD: Breeding is an art, you must have it in your veins, breeding is a long term vision, with observing, observing, observing and see the faults in your own horses, don't be barn blind . Accepts some critics from horse people and try to accept. Then you set the first step in the good direction, you start to learn for the rest of your breeding carrier, because it's a never ending story. □