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IRINA STIGLER

The Favourite Judge of the Year



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READERS CHOICE

The Readers' Choice Awards of Arabian Horse Times magazine

"The only way to do a great work is to love what you do" said Steve Jobs and it is also one of the favorite sayings of Irina Stigler, a known worldwide breeder, Arabian horse enthusiast and most of all judge. Irina comes from Russia, but has been living in Italy for more than 20 years, near Lake Como, where she runs her Stigler Stud, successful both on home soil and abroad.



Irina Stigler with Lara Ames
(Arabian Horse Times)



In February of this year we met in Monterra at WestWorld in Scottsdale, Arizona during an evening gala which accompanies the nearly two week long Scottsdale All-Arabian Horse Show and serves as a formal ending to The Readers' Choice Awards of Arabian Horse Times magazine. The plebiscite was created to recognize leaders in the Arabian horse community.

Arabian Horse Times readers nominate their peers based on 40 categories such as: magazine ads, articles, covers and calendar; those who service the community; winning horses, riders, judges, caretakers, youth exhibitors and trainers in all purebred and Half-Arabian divisions, and those who breed, among others. But most importantly it was an evening built by and for people with immense passion for the Arabian horse. The top six nominated per category are then voted on by the readers for a winner. The Readers' Choice is an annual awards event since its inception in 2009. It is held every February. This year the event had over 520 attendees at the evening gala dinner what certainly honored the passion shared between gathered guests.

Among many world famous people involved in a business with Arabian horses was such a breeder as Howard Kale Jr. who was inducted into the Hall of Fame for his dedication to the breed and was recognized for introducing and breeding the Russian Arabians in the US and worldwide.

Of course for us, lovers of halter horses, we were mostly focused on some of the categories, like the Favourite Horse Event, Trainer or the Judge. A huge surprise and success was the victory of Irina Stigler in the Favourite Judge of the Year 2014 category, where she was the only European judge among those nominated. In recent years more than three thousand people from all over the world have placed their votes (one person can only vote once). The evening in the Monterra arena at WestWorld was special, touching and full of positive emotions. I know Irina very well, because we have been cooperating together and been friends for years, so I can really say I saw an honest astonishment on her face when the gala's announcer, Terry Holmes, read out her name. Irina fought back tears when she said: "Just to be nominated among six judges was a huge success for me and the victory is an even huger, special achievement in my life. Thank to everybody who believed in me". It was difficult to predict a victory on a foreign continent, especially knowing that it was mainly Americans that cast their votes – it is after all "their" plebiscite, their awards. Among all the categories we had only three European accents: one show (category: event), one training center and Irina (category: judge). Irina has won what is also worth to mention as the very first European to win Favorite Judge of the Year since its inception. □

Text by: Mateusz Jaworski

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