



IRAN



Ancient TAGHEH BOSTAN
in Kermanshah



the roundup
Asil Iran Stud farm in
Kordan area



the barn inside Asil Iran
Stud farm in Kordan area



Ancient TAGHEH BOSTAN
in Kermanshah



Studfarm and training
center in Kerman area

TRAVELLING to the ORIGINS of EQUESTRIAN ART

by Urszula Leczycka ■ photos by Urszula Leczycka, Iran Horse Promotion Archives

After few months of careful preparations our exciting trip to Iran took place, being postponed for few times, mostly due to the difficult political circumstances in Iran during 2009 when even the very young activity on Iranian breeding scene – the ECAHO affiliated show in SHIRAZ had to be delayed for another year. Finally the year 2010 brought more peaceful atmosphere and the highly awaited trip to the exotic and quite mysterious for Western community country of Iran came through. Despite many doubts and so many imaginations about Iran we arrived being totally and positively shocked. Once you enter Iran – the country of many cultures and climate regions across its big territory, you are under the overwhelming charm of very friendly, well mannered and well educated people willing to get to know you but without any tagging along, the people of the great sense of humor. All in all – Iran is a country of over 3000 years of well documented and great ancient culture from which the very first proofs of the equestrian art tracks. The people of Iran are very proud of their culture and what is even more impressive – they cultivate their knowledge about horse breeding with masterful pietism. The variety of horses within Iran includes few most popular breeds of: Turkmen, Akhal-Teke, Kurdish breed, Dareshuri and Asil Arabian horse mostly known as “pure Iranian”. Their pure and cross-bred horse population varies depending on the region of Iran. The studbook of Iranian Arabian horse – being on our focus during this trip, is officially acknowledged by WAHO. The Iranian Arabian in its pure version that is usually kept in several breeding areas across the country is a horse of big frames, very strong, usually extremely correct in conformation. The breeding recognizes several most important male and female strains (with dam lines being much more important for the breeders), some of them like Obeya or few sub-lines of Kubailan seems familiar to our modern European breeding as well., plus some strains that were never introduced outside Middle East. Because horse riding is a must in almost every stud farm the pure bred horses of Iran are mostly of strong bone, correct leg and bodies, slightly sloping croup enabling them for a long distance riding across usually mountain areas. Besides some few exceptions the type of this horse is rather far from the show Arabian that we recognize nowadays but without a doubt it’s a very elegant horse of dry tissue and lot of performance abilities. Very few males, even if only used for riding not breeding, are gelded because of Iranian people’s love for a lively and playful horse that they usually teach to “dance” – the way we also know from some other Middle Eastern style of riding. The most popular

disciplines in which many Iranian horses used to compete at are endurance riding and races – usually on the distances shorter than 1600 meters. This is why almost every main city of the regions gathering the breeders in Iran so: Kerman, Ahwaz, Yazd, Tehran and Gonbad has its own racetrack.

Due to some restrictions for horse import and especially – export due to the lack of necessary vet control on government stage it’s very hard to import a horse from Iran nowadays. It’s such a shame that the outside countries can’t share and learn from the wisdom and knowledge of such experienced and clever breeders of Iran whose breeding achievements especially in regards to the outstandingly correct sport horses could be so important to enrich our Western breeding. Hopefully the number of local breeders and horse enthusiasts are open to the dialog even despite these difficulties. It was probably at the time of late 90-ties when Iran has opened for the first time for introducing the fresh, more showy blood of Arabian horse. In 1974 three horses: Aegian Rose, Aegian Rinuba and Aegian Rosan with Polish blood in the pedigrees were imported to Iran from the US. Later, in 1992 It was a time when Mary Gharagozlou – the biggest authority of Iranian breeding who introduced the idea of establishing the studbook of the country has imported Straight Egyptian Stallion of undoubted high quality, beautiful type and well conformation – Mobarak (by Salaa el Dine) from Dr Nagel’s farm in Germany. Nowadays Mobarak – being still in good shape in the age of 21 is probably the sire most often appearing in the modern bred Arabian horse across whole Iran. For sure he has add a lot of exotic, modern type to the crowds of his progeny and his get, grand get and great grand get is taking most of the champion places at the Iranian shows nowadays. It’s not a long time since the country is a member of ECAHO but once it happened, the group of enthusiasts started their efforts to organize the ECAHO affiliated show in Iran to gather and push its breeders to friendly competition and comparison of the breeding results from all over the country. With the great help of Sbarzad Amir Aslani – the international judge and WAHO delegate of Iran that we had a great pleasure to meet during our trip, the first ECAHO show in Yazd took place in 2008 gathering good number of 120 horses. It showed the big potential but also a big variety of Arabian horse population in Iran. The panel of judges had an extremely difficult task to elect the champions from both pure Iranian – very correct and strong horse but not very resembling the modern champions, and those of more modern bred hor-



Show training classes in Ahwaz



Studfarm and training center in Kerman area



Kurd horse rider



The Harandi Family in Sirjan

ses, usually Egyptian related ones. Is any of those types better than the other? How should they be kept – crossed or should the purity of Iranian Arabian be preserved? During almost two weeks long trip we have been guests of several extremely friendly families of horse breeders. The same as in the whole world those people focused on the serious breeding are mostly rich people – rich enough to buy a land that in Iran reaches extremely enormous prices! These families are mostly of long and deep traditions, many of them tracking back to the nomadic Arabian tribes. The pleasant, wise and long lasting discussions with these very open minded and full of fresh ideas people was the biggest pleasure. Some of them are very fanatic about their national treasure that pure Iranian horse undoubtedly is, so probably the question coming back in our talks most often was that doubt if the purity of the Iranian Arabian wouldn't be interrupted while introducing the international show breeding into Iran. It seems the answer most satisfying in every corner of Iran was the one that the purity of the Iranian Asil horse should surely be preserved as a separate, national treasure. For sure the Iranian bred horse out crossed with the strange blood can result in the extremely valuable generations next so for sure the pure roots of this type of the horse should be safe kept as a base to refresh the breeding every time needed. For sure it wouldn't make any sense trying to change this population into the modern show Arabian horse – as it was once made in the other countries and took so many years. Iranian breeders interested in shows and show breeding may already dig into the various possibilities of imported horses from valuable show lines so they don't need to open the doors that is already opened by someone else and they don't need to make their Asil horse the modern show horse wasting number of years and their national treasure that can be preserved as a natural gene pool to enrich the other breeding – either sport or show one in the future.

For sure it is very important that the number of Iranian breeders want to stay conservative and keep the purity of their Iranian horse. On the other hand we have met several horse breeders, the careful readers of international literature including Tutto Arabi, aware of what's going on at the international show scene and goal-oriented to join that foreign competition one day. They are very open for international imports and introducing the blood of world's leading sires into Iran. Very active on the field of helping these people is Iran Horse Promotion – the activity being introduced by the young Arabian horse enthusiast Farhang Fazeli who – using his well international contacts, local possibilities and well English language skills introduces the modern show and race Arabian horse into the Iranian stage. It was Iran Horse Promotion who kindly arranged our trip combined with Arabian horse breeding seminars conducted by the national level judge Urszula Leczycka (Arab Horse Promotion) and certified show training classes in Ahwaz and Kerman – by ECAHO-licensed handler Szymon Głowacki, the breeder and trainer of 2009 Polish National Reserve Jr Champion Stallion – Eternal (by FS Bengali), the popular handler across Poland successfully cooperating with Qatar Race Club in Doha as well. What a great and incentive surprise was the number of over 50 participants (including several woman) attending the classes and introducing the interesting and wise discussion regarding Arabian horse shows after! This trip was not only a possibility for Iranian breeders to learn from our European experience but also our pleasure to learn and exchange the passion and knowledge with those traditional Iranian families that tracks from the very first horse breeders in the world. The results of this trip are very promising – showing Iran as a new coming and very talented future competitor at the international stage. Hopefully the horse breeding passion exists behind the political differences!

FARHANG FAZELI

Interview



Iran Horse Promotion team from the left: Mahdijeh Ashjari, Negar Foroutan, Mostafa Salemi, Farhang Fazeli with race mare Morska Ton (bred in Poland)

Interview with Farhang Fazeli, Iran Horse Promotion:

TUTTO ARABI: What is the story of your Arabian horse activity – how and when it began?

FARHANG FAZELI: To answer this question I would like to let you know that the only imported stallion that has been used in our Iranian breeding program during the last 20 years is a very nice grey stallion called Mobarak bred at Dr. Nagel's farm sired by Salaa el Dine. It is not difficult to guess that in consequence during these years the inbreeding problems appeared commonly in our horses. In 2007 I had a chance to introduce and promote new bloods by very kind help of Arab Horse Promotion in Iran. It was started by purchasing two stallions from Poland – Tullamore by Harbin (Eukaliptus) out of Balaton daughter and Faronn – sired by Triplecrowned Ekstern. After that I registered my company as Iran Horse Promotion to introduce and import carefully selected bloods to Iran.

TA: What are main activities of Iran Horse Promotion currently?

FF: Mainly concentrated on introducing new blood lines from different part of world by importing frozen semen and Arabian horses with careful selection. To support our business technically we also published our first magazine in late 2009 by very kind assistance of Simone Leo and his team of Tutto Arabi – the next issue will be available within few weeks. Iran Horse Promotion is also active in organizing training classes. The first one was held on 26–27 Feb 2010 conducted by Szymon Glowacki from Poland that included a se-

minar concerning Arabian horses by Urszula Leczycka – or the best known in our community just as ULA. Our team is also working hard to be known as event organizers inside Iran so we are currently working also to organize and support the Arabian horse show in the near future.

TA: What are the biggest needs of Iranian show scene and Iranian breeders nowadays in your opinion?

FF: For sure information, our breeders still need to learn more and more. That is why I am trying hard to give them information as much as possible which is our main goal these days. Publication, seminars, training classes would be very vital to us.

TA: What are the best features of Iranian breeding that could be useful for the foreign breeding and in turn – which new things could be worth to be introduced in Iran from the other countries in the future?

FF: If you are talking about the best feature of our horses – for sure the strength of legs among our horses is exceptional in whole world, It is very common to see very strong and correct legs in our horses which is a feature spread inside Iran. To answer the second part I think artificial insemination is what we need to become an usual matter to our breeders Unfortunately it is not regular to do AI in our breeding program so far, and all the mares are being get in foal by natural covering.

TA: Do you think Iran can be a successful competitor at international show and breeding in the future? What do you do to reach this goal?

FF: It is hard to say yes or no, it strongly depends on our target. The majority of our breeders are still in baffle to choose if they want to breed horses for sport or shows. Mostly our breeders would like to breed a horse which has both aspects – so sport ability and beauty. For those who would like to compete in shows we have few steps to be paced. We need to import high quality blood to promote our horses to a higher level. In total I am optimist since we have many experienced, serious and excited breeders.

TA: How do you think the Iranian breeding will look like in the future?

FF: In my opinion, as in many countries before, the market will divide into the breeders who would like



photo by Tomasz Tarczynski

the stallions we brought from abroad are already well known throughout all the country, most of them have between 30 up to 50 breedings sold just in the first year of their use here which is a huge number considering the fact that we don't use artificial insemination! And the first foals being born out of the mares or by the stallions we imported are certainly outstanding that shows a good job that was done to improve the Arabian type. I'm most satisfied with still growing number of breeders – the beginners and the experienced ones who trust in our service and enjoy it every year more.

TA: *Your biggest Arabian horse dream still to be realized is...*

FF: *To organize an A show in Iran one day. □*

One of the latest Iran Horse Promotion imports from Poland: the mare Simea (Magnum Psyche x Sinamai by Senador)

to keep our native Iranian bloodlines as a kind of national treasure while the others will follow the foreign fashion of breeding either show or performance horses and I think this would be the development satisfying everybody as well as rising up our market – inside one and also the import-export to the other countries in the future.

TA: *Your personal biggest success in the Arabian horse industry so far?*

FF: *Iran Horse Promotion is proud of horses imported so far, all of them one by one. Hopefully we have selected the horses very carefully and we are sure we did a great job to purchase and import horses in high quality. All*



photo by Iran Horse Promotion

Pure Iranian Arabian horse



Show training classes organized by Arab Horse Promotion & Iran Horse Promotion in Kerman



Polish trainer Szymon Glowacki working with Polish National Reserve Champion & World Top Ten Stallion Lord Bey Shah



Inside the beautiful barns of Studfarm and training center in Kerman



Urszula Leczycka
(Arab Horse Promotion)
in Kerman



The colt Tawab (by Ghajariy) imported from UAE by Harandi Family

