



AN INTERVIEW WITH

Ann NORDÉN

by Simone Leo ■ photos by Martin Larsson, Jan Khan



Ann Nordén

Summer at Lönhult Estate

*P*urebred Arabian horses have been bred at the Lönhult Arabian Stud and Swedish Warmbloods at the Lönhult Dressage Stable at Lönhult Farm in southern Sweden since 1975. At the farm, which covers about 900 hectares of land, the horses have access to vast pastures, winter paddocks and a completely new stable yard with specially-designed German interiors. The yard has 18 boxes, a shower stall, a tackroom and an FAI centre.

Horses have been important in the lives of the Nordén family for generations. Ann's husband William's ancestor is Mr. Klas-Adam Ehrengrenat, who initiated the breeding

of Swedish Warmbloods in Sweden in the 19th century. Mr. Ehrengrenat became Crown Equerry for HRH King Carl XIII, and manager of the famous Flyinge Royal Stud, the oldest national studs in the world.

Lönhult Arabian Stud's big breakthrough came with its stallion Ararat; this pure Polish stallion (by Darfas SE) was Reserve World Champion Junior Stallion at the World Cup in Stockholm in 1990. This prestigious title was followed by an even more prestigious one when the stallion Insh Allah was declared World Champion Junior Stallion at the World Championship in Paris.



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This straight Egyptian stallion (by Ashhal Al Rayyan QA x India SE) was sold in the same year to HRH Prince Khalid Bin Sultan Abdul Aziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In 2005, after Insh Allah won the Middle Eastern Championship in Jordan, he was given to HRH Abdullah II bin al-Hussein

al-Hashemi of Jordan by HRH Prince Khalid Bin Sultan Abdul Aziz Al Saud as a gift.

As for Swedish Warmbloods, the mare Diorissima F.2 (by Dardel 847 SE) won the Dressage Championship for four-year-olds in 2001. Diorissima F.2 was born at Flyinge Royal Stud.

As an A-list judge, Mrs. Ann Nordén is one of the world's most important judges of Arabian horses, working in Sweden and other European countries, the USA, Australia, South America and the Middle East. She spends one or two weekends a month judging horses all over the globe. Mrs. Ann Nordén was elected Boardmember of Executive Committee of the ECAHO (European Conference of Arab Horse Organizations) in 2007.

Horses have fascinated human beings for thousands of years. For the Nordén family, this fascination has been part of their family for centuries. Today, they focus on purebred Arabian horses and Swedish Warmblood horses, two breeds that have meant a great deal to the Nordén family. The Swedish Warmbloods are mainly produced for dressage and the Arabian horses for showing, endurance and general riding. Every horse is a unique individual, and has the potential to be trained for its intended task. In the years the Lönhult arabians influence increased worldwi-

16th century stable at Lönhult Estate.



Mares at Lönhult
Photo by
Martin Larsson





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de : Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Hungary, Israel, Jordan, United Kingdom, Holland, USA, Turkey, Germany are the countries where they sold horses to. For this years the program of breeding season start with straight egyptian mare Salma (by Majd Al Rayyan - Isah) in foal to Turki Al Rayyan QA.

We spoke with Ann during the Qatar International Show where she had time to answer at our question.

TuttoArabi: Dear Ann you are friendly and extrovert ladies who always welcomes discussion, is it because of all your talent and your passion that you have been chosen more and more often to judge internationally- renowned shows?

Ann Nordén: Those of you who know me I am a very outspoken person. When asked my opinion - like in a show ring- I give my honest opinion. My so called talent - which I would never use myself - might come from being a former dressagerider and also breeder.

The knowledge I have about horsemanship and dressage come from my mentor -the late Oleg Fabergèe, grandson of the Tsar Crownjewellar from old Russia. He was a Olympic dressage

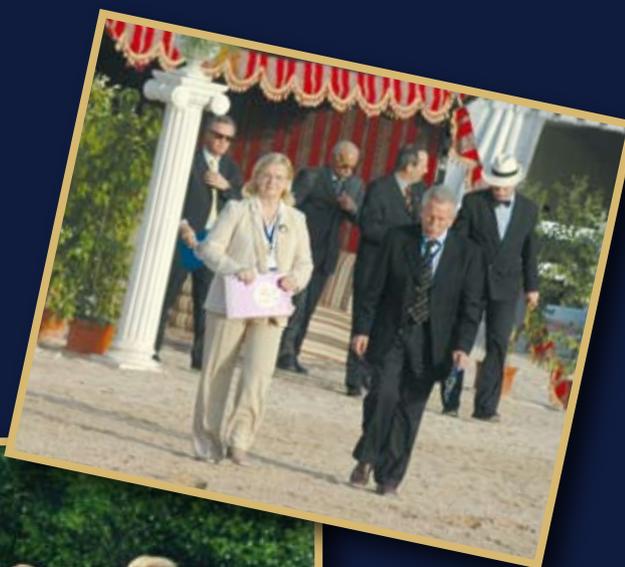
judge and rode dressage - piaff and passage - without a bridle ! And without a whip.

When judging arabian shows you get so close to these fabulous horses, so much more beautiful than anything else.

I have my taste and my criteria of a perfect arabian horse and do not care who handles the horse.

If it is correctly handled. I just hate a abuse of these creatures and have a hard time to look at overtrained and scared animals.

I feel deeply grateful and humble whenever asked to judge and really try to find the best horse to win.



Ann Nordén

Fara and Charlotte
higpoint score and
Reserve Champion Mare
Blommeröd Show 1992.





Ann NORDÉN



Ararat by Darfas SE - Amurath Ghazia By Bibars.
Stockholm World Cup Reserve Winner.

perfect in your knowledge. The most important is to be fair. Every show has its difficulties and it varies extremely much from class to class, from horse to horse.

I think it is very important to be extremely alert and openminded, humble and quick.

As we sometimes show our own horses I will be reminded over and over again how difficult it is to show a horse. I value the judges opinion and respect a handler showing a horse in a nice way.

TuttoArabi: Some people think that there are not enough judges. Do you agree?

Ann Nordén: I feel ECAHO now has the tool to teach new and old judges in a very good way. This has been made possible by ECAHO's effort to make a Judges Syllabus and a teaching in four different levels. The coordinator of this work has been Sylvie Eberhardt and her team of senior judges and will start as of this spring.

TuttoArabi: Which was the first show that you judged?

Ann Nordén: The first show was actually a show in Germany when my dear friend and mentor in arabian judging- late Mrs Birgitta Foch from Sweden could not attend a show and asked the organizer if she could send me as replacement. I am so grateful to her. May she rest in peace.

TuttoArabi: A new season started, and it is full of appointments. Many shows will take place in Europe America and Middle East.. Will your presence as a judge be as assiduous as it was last year?

Ann Nordén: This year I have turned down a lot of shows because I will judge the Dubai show and also World Championship in Paris - Salon du Cheval. Because of these important shows I try not to judge too many of the other shows. I think it is nicer to be "fit for fight" and only take some other shows that will not interfere.

TuttoArabi: For your point of view, what is the most difficult criterion to judge?

Ann Nordén: With more and more years of judging you get more and more humble and you know you will never be





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Also judges Workshops will be mandatoty - ECAHO will arrange two every year. One in the spring and the other in the fall. The subjects will be fo example etical issues, conformation , you name it.

This will be a very good forum for judges to meet - to really discuss problems ,future a s o.

In teaching the new judges in a much more serene way we can find new judges who will be very useful and it will make it much more easy to use new judges in the future.

TuttoArabi: Can you tell us if show have changed over the last few years ? If so what has changed?

Ann Nordén: The shows have changed immensely in the last few years. With more and more pressure from horse-owners and also the high value of the horses in the top, the handlers have too often I am afraid, the pressure to make horses perform in a way that is totally against good training, good horsemanship, good sportmanship and ac-



Insh Allah
photo by Jan Khan
year 2003.



Insh Allah and dam India
at Lönhult Estate.



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tually some times abuse of the horse. You can actually see horses so scared in the ring it makes you very unhappy.

I am talking about the really bad examples- I also see many good handlers with good horsemanship and good way of handling the horses. I have full respect of these professional handlers - doing a very good job.

The problem is the bad guys are so obvious, they spoil so much.

With the new ECAHO BB and the Handlers Licence the DCs can start to use the yellow and red cards in order to stop this nonsense when trying to force the horses to perform. ECAHO has worked with this for some years now and I would like to send a grateful thought to Hanni Webekamp, Marianne Tengstedt and Dr Santoro for this work.

We have to remember that - one of the reasons why ECAHO was founded, was to prevent horse cruelty and to have the chance to enjoy these extremely beautiful animals. I just wish - for the horses sake- that organizers will use DCs who are brave enough to use their powers to protect the horses.

I am totally sure we will all benefit from this.

Unfortunately we have come to the end of our pleasant chat with Ann. The time seems to have flown and we certainly felt enriched by the great experience of Ann that was able to breed two World Champion, visit Lönhult Arabians is the must for arabian lovers. □

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Summer at Lönhult.

