



Al Rayyan

■ by **Simone Leo**

photos by Erwin Escher (www.ErwinEscher.com), Gigi Grasso, Monika Luft, Santiago Fornieles, Al Rayyan Archive, Henrike Hoermann

During our visit in Qatar in February we had the chance to visit one of the oldest and most famous farms in the world: Al Rayyan Farm, run by Sheikh Hamad Ali Al Thani.

Sheikh Hamad Ali Al Thani is well known by the Arabian Horse community, however we would like to spend a few words about him. Sheikh Hamad Bin Ali Al Thani spent his entire life among horses: he began with his own small stud in Egypt and in 1992 he was elected by HH The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalif Al Thani, as the director of Al Shaqab Stud. Sheikh Hamad was one of the main contributors of the greatness of Al Shaqab. For 17 years he was the main breeder and manager of the stud which brought to the world three of the most famous Arabian sires – Gazal Al Shaqab, his son Marwan Al Shaqab and Al Adeed Al Shaqab. Today it is difficult to imagine the modern breeding without these three champions which have become living legends.

Al Rayyan was founded by Sheikh Abdulaziz Bin Khaled Bin Hamad Al Thani in 1980.

After two decades of successes, thanks to a careful selection of the foundation and smart breeding, the farm produced some of the best straight Egyptians in the world. As the time passed Al Rayyan's activities gradually decreased and the stud lost its leadership.

In 2014 Al Rayyan was subjected to some changes as HH Sheikh

Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir Father, took over the ownership of the stud.

In order to put Al Rayyan back in his place, HH The Emir asked Sheikh Hamad Ali Al Thani to be the new Director of Al Rayyan as he had the right skills to take Al Rayyan to the level that the farm deserved.

In the last years, Sheikh Hamad had a break from arabian horses due to health reasons. So when the call from the Emir came, he accepted with enthusiasm to go back to his passion, and in February of 2015 the new adventure of Sh Hamad begun with this new chapter of Al Rayyan and a new team to back him up.

In just one year the farm gave impressive results at the shows, in breeding and in renewing its facilities.

Sheikh Hamad's passion for Arabian horses makes everything possible.

For the management, Sheikh Hamad chose Mr. Santiago Fornieles. Santiago comes from both the endurance and halter world back in his home country Argentina, and before accepting the manager position at Al Rayyan he worked on his own small arabian breeding farm in Argentina. He arrived to Qatar with plenty of energy and good ideas. He was the perfect person at the right moment. He was exactly the person that Sheikh Hamad was looking for to give a rebirth to Al Rayyan. Together with him Sheikh Hamad also took



SHEIKH HAMAD BIN ALI AL THANI AT THE 5TH QATAR INT. ARABIAN HORSE SHOW, STRAIGHT EGYPTIANS, 2015

on board Santiago's wife Dr. Milagros Badaraco as a vet with a valuable experience in breeding. After entering Al Rayyan Milagros immediately proved her vet breeding skills and managed to get an impressive number of mares pregnant after the period of stuck. Some months later Dr. Matias Freije also came along to reinforce the veterinary team with the vision of Sh. Hamad to help small farms in Qatar with their breeding programs.

Finally, the last key element of the puzzle came into place when Sheikh Hamad hired Alessio Scaramella as leading trainer at the farm and with the help of Sh Hamad's long time friend Michael Byatt and Luca Oberli as handlers the results started to come: in 2015 Al Rayyan achieved successes at the Egyptian Event in Lexington where in the fillies classes Narwaal Al Rayyan (Ansata Sokar x Nadrah Al Rayyan) was nominated Gold Champion and Sabla Al Rayyan (Ansata Sokar x Sundos Al Rayyan) was Bronze Champion. Plus, Narwaal Al Rayyan was also chosen Most Classic Head Fillies. In the mares class Rayyana Al Alya (Ashbal Al Rayyan x Asrar Al Rayyan By Al Adeed Al Shaqab) was named Gold Champion Mare and Most Classic Head Mare.

At the Egyptian Event Europe Raya Al Rayyan (Ansata Sokar x Nadrah Al Rayyan) was chosen 2015 Bronze Champion Yearling Filly, while Darine Al Rayyan (Ashbal Al Rayyan by Safir to Ansata Halim Shah x Aisha by Ansata Halim Shah and Ghazala

from Hanan by Alaa El Din) was chosen 2015 Silver Champion Mare with the same score of the Gold Champion.

At the Qatar National Al Rayyan continued his success once again with Darine Al Rayyan (Ashbal Al Rayyan by Safir to Ansata Halim Shah x Aisha by Ansata Halim Shah and Ghazala from Hanan by Alaa El Din) who was chosen 2015 Gold Qatar Champion Mare and highest points of the show. Menouah Al Rayyan (Fares Al Rayyan x Bint Messoudah M HP) was chosen 2015 Gold Qatar Champion Filly and Majdah Al Rayyan (Ashbal Al Rayyan x Maida Bint Bint Mohssen) was chosen Silver Champion Mare.

The 2016 show season started with a lot of success. At the Qatar International Straight Egyptian Show, Al Rayyan achieved great results: Gold Medal Mares Rayyana Al Aliya (Ashbal Al Rayyan x Asrar Al Rayyan), Silver Medal Mares Darine Al Rayyan (Ashbal Al Rayyan x Aisha), Bronze Medal Fillies Narwaal Al Rayyan (Ansata Sokar x Nadrah Al Rayyan) and Silver Medal Stallions Safir Al Rayyan (Ashbal Al Rayyan x RN Farida).

During our visit we witnessed how well are all the horses being looked after at Al Rayyan. We walked through the stables of Al Rayyan and felt the love and the heritage at every step we took. It is hard to describe in words the feeling prompted by Al Rayyan mares.



Al Rayyan



SHEIKH HAMAD BIN ALI AL THANI
WITH MUNIRA AL RAYYAN (ANSATA SOKAR X BINT MESOUDAH M HP), AL RAYYAN FARM 2015



PHOTO: MONIKA LUFT

In every box there is an icon of the straight Egyptian breeding program that is cherished and taken care as their royal pedigrees demand.

The breeding program that Sheikh Hamad is carrying on is just incredible. He decided to mostly use Al Adeed Al Shaqab (Ansata Halim Shab x Sundar Ahsayya) for the exceptional features he can pass on, and Hilal Al Nakeeb (Nk Hafid Jamil x Bint Bint Hammanaa) that he imported in leasing from Mr. Hassanain Al Nakeeb.

The dream of Sheikh Hamad is to breed the perfect straight Egyptian stallion since he already has an incredible collection of mares. The list of great mares at Al Rayyan is seemingly endless. He knows their pedigrees very well, he knows all their faults and good points and how they produce.

For sure, thanks to the love Sheikh Hamad gives to his mares, they give him back their best.

In one year Al Rayyan has completely changed its face and everything is working smoothly from all points of view: at the shows, with the the breeding program and in being able to refreshing the farm without changing its traditions and its heritage.

Sheikh Hamad's objectives have always been to promote arabian horses and give support to the people involved in the field. This is why now Al Rayyan is open to small Qatari farms that need help with their own breeding programs through breeding by frozen semen, fresh semen and embryos.

We had the pleasure to meet Sheikh Hamad at the beginning of our magazine's adventure with TuttoArabi and the Desert Heritage, 18 years ago. For him the love for Arabian horses has always came first. (Not many knows that Sheikh Hamad loves to ride and does it anytime he can). Sheikh Hamad has a vision of the world that we have always appreciated: he sees two types of people living on this planet – horse people and not horse people – and of course we are the Arabian horse people!

He loves Arabian horses so much that he would make any kind of effort to ensure them the best possible life. Sometimes when a horse is sick and his life in danger he can even spend the all night reading him the Coran.

"When you give, God gives you", he always says.

Over the years we have seen how his successes could be considered as the outcome of his philosophy applied to the breeding and to the life.

At the end of our visit at the Stud Sheikh Hamad gave us his farewell with this words: "I think horses are a gift from God to the people." He believes that the horses are able to create a special relationship with humans. "They can feel people's feelings, they know from one's step who the person is. If you don't believe in horses and don't love them this gift goes to waste" he said.

We left Al Rayyan very emotional and wish all our readers to have the chance once in a life to visit this stunning straight Egyptian stud.

Enjoy some pictures of the pearls of Al Rayyan that we had the pleasure to admire, taken from Al Rayyan Archive. □



SIMONE AND GIORGIA LEO OF TUTTOARABI WITH SANTIAGO FORNIELES, MANAGER OF AL RAYYAN FARM



FARIDDA



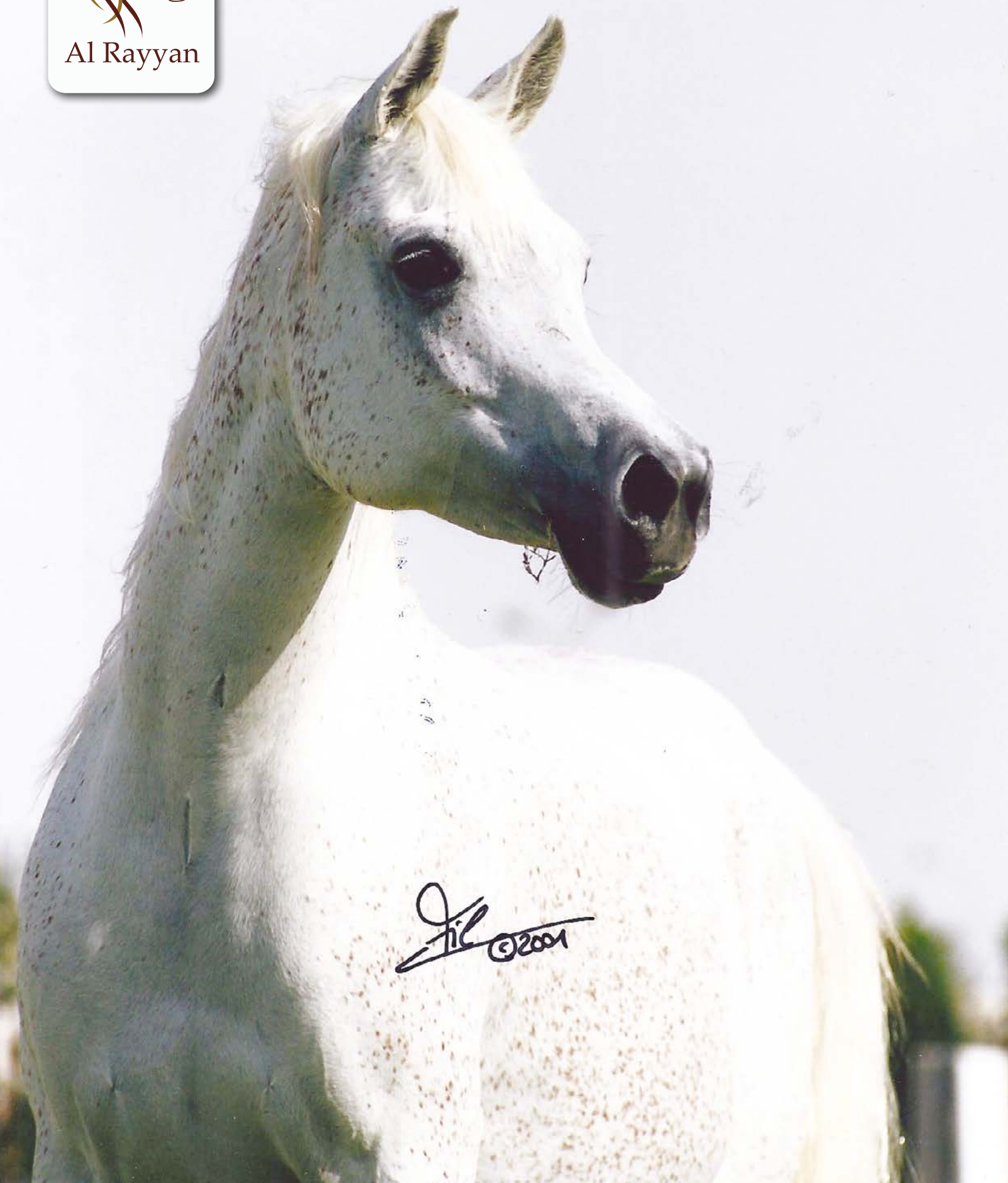
Al Rayyan

DARINE AL RAYYAN





Al Rayyan



Jil ©2001



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Al Rayyan

QATAR INTERNATIONAL STRAIGHT EGYPTIAN SHOW 2016 SUCCESS



RAYYANA AL ALIYA (ASHHAL AL RAYYAN X ASRAR AL RAYYAN)
GOLD MEDAL MARES



Photo: www.ErwinEscher.com ©

DARINE AL RAYYAN (ASHHAL AL RAYYAN X AISHA)
SILVER MEDAL MARES

QATAR INTERNATIONAL STRAIGHT EGYPTIAN SHOW 2016 SUCCESS



NAWAAL AL RAYYAN (ANSATA SOKAR X NADRAH AL RAYYAN)
BRONZE MEDAL FILLIES



SAFIR AL RAYYAN (ASHHAL AL RAYYAN X RN FARIDA)
SILVER MEDAL STALLIONS



Al Rayyan



QATAR INTERNATIONAL STRAIGHT EGYPTIAN SHOW 2016



AMIRA AL SHAQAB IN DUBAI



MICHAŁÓW STATE STUD, POLAND, 1994



POLAND 1994

PHOTO: MONIKA LUFT



SAFI R AL RAYYAN (ASHHAL AL RAYYAN - RN FARIDA), AL RAYYAN FARM 2015



QATAR INTERNATIONAL STRAIGHT EGYPTIAN SHOW 2016



JORDAN 1993



JORDAN



PHOTO: MONIKA LUFT

SHEIKH HAMAD BIN ALI AL THANI AT AL RAYYAN FARM, 2015



RUBI



Al Rayyan

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