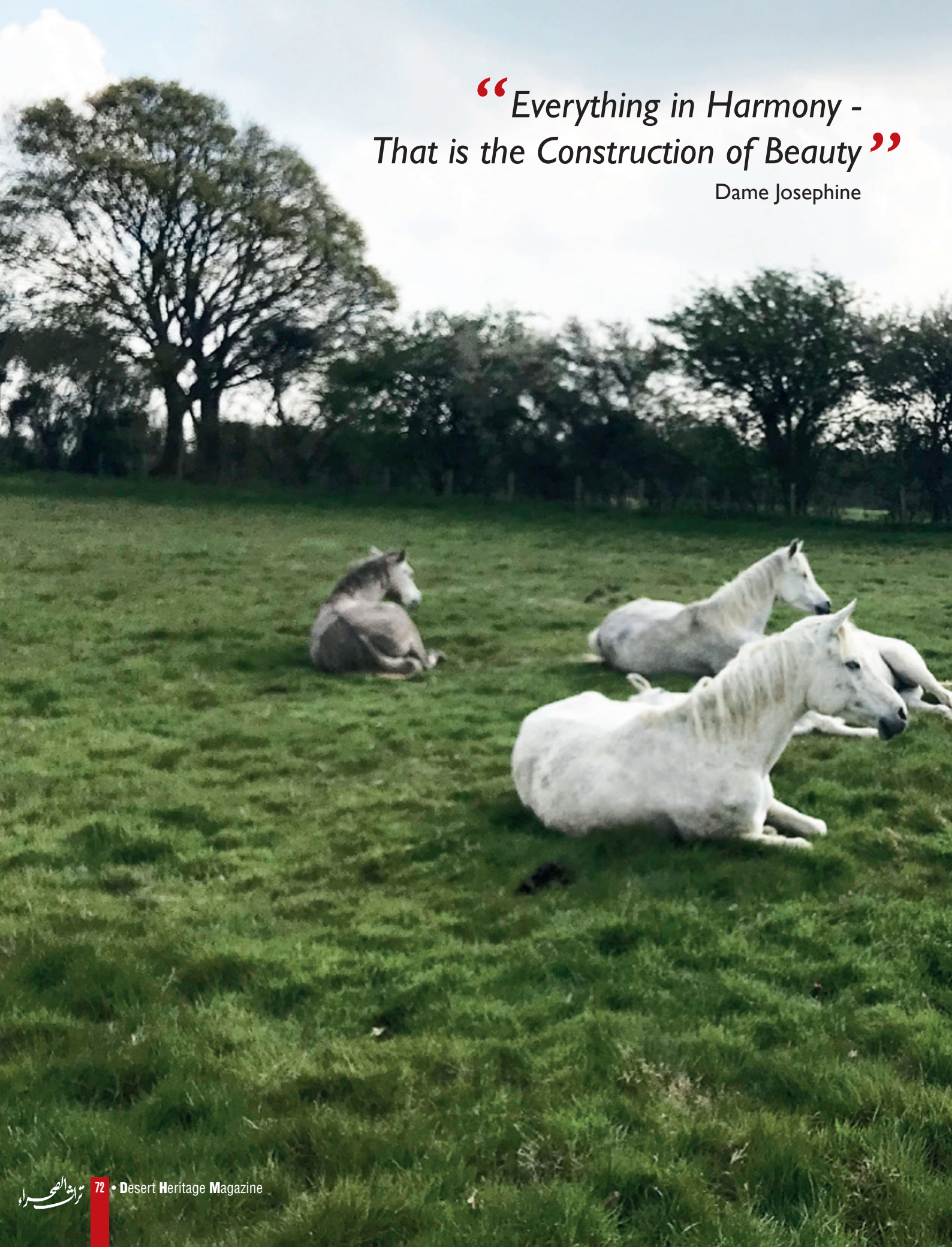


*“Everything in Harmony -
That is the Construction of Beauty”*

Dame Josephine



MH

MH ARABIANS

Outstanding Straight Egyptians in England



by Monika Savier

Straight Egyptians have always been the bloodline of choice for people who don't just prefer beautiful Arabian horses, but also see them as an integral part of the culture of the Orient that spans millennia. More than any of the other types within the breed, the Straight Egyptians attest to the rich past of the Arabian Peninsula, as horses who up to today live not only as a breed, but play important roles in the arts, poetry, and history of their countries of origin. It is not accidental that people with a passion for the Straight Egyptians are often themselves involved in arts, music, archaeology, research, and cultural proceedings, even if it's often just a hobby.

The two key players of MH Arabians, however, are professionals indeed. Both Dame Josephine Barstow and Jihoon Kim are opera singers on the highest level. The two of them could hardly be more different with respect to their ages and ethnic backgrounds, but in music and in horse breeding, they have found not just one but two common denominators. And their combined „double dynamite“ effect lends wings to the stud.

MH Arabians raises the claim of breeding spectacular horses



of historic value. Arabian horses who do more than just carry a long history along due to their genetic makeup: Arabians who combine their cultural heritage with the requirements and aims of today's Arabian horse breeding for both show and riding.

For 30 years by now, great horses have been and still are created from the stock at MH Arabians. Dame Josephine used all her know-how and passion to lay the foundations; young Jihoon Kim has been introducing new ideas to breeding and implementing them in creative ways for a few years now.

Arabian horses have been an integral part of England's history for three centuries. As war horses and as noble riding horses, both of whom required a combination of qualities such as plain courage, outspoken

heroism, and horsemanship, they made history, but simultaneously, during colonial as well as post-colonial times, this country's main interest was in breeding and improving their native horse breeds on the basis of Arabian bloodlines. Their main project was the English Thoroughbred. Hardly anybody was interested in keeping the imports from the Orient pure, although breeders in England, courtesy of their compatriot adventurer Lady Ann Blunt, had been able to make use of the first imports from Greater Arabia 150 years ago. However, even here they produced a new bloodline of Arabian horses, the Crabbet Arabians, who are to be found all over Great Britain and the Commonwealth today and still play a distinct role in sports and riding.

Dame Josephine, on the other hand, dedicated herself to the preservation of Authenticity. She has been taking loving care of her Straight Egyptians in England all along, just like you would do with delicate desert flowers. As Arabian horses are citizens of the world, it is hardly surprising that her stud has been able to maintain international contacts even without any neighbors also getting involved in breeding Straight Egyptians. Now, after the Brexit has become reality, organizing an analogous world of interchange has gotten even harder, and the digital world of communication is not an adequate alternative by far. Which is why it is all the more important that the international community of breeders should not lose sight of England. It is worth the effort, for the horses of MH Arabians are an exciting reality we should take to heart and keep an interested eye on.



MH

MH ARABIANS

The foundations of the breeding programme of MH Arabians were laid very many years ago.

In the early 1980's, opera singer Dame Josephine Barstow and her opera and theatre director husband Ande Anderson bought a farm, Malthouse Farm, in Sussex, England.

Jo, who had always loved horses, now had somewhere of her own to keep them. She decided to breed one of her mares. On a silent February night, with snow softly falling outside the stable, an exquisite colt arrived into her waiting arms. Jo was hooked!

After much study and research, Jo made the decision to breed Straight Egyptian Arabians.

At this time she was singing frequently in the United States and in her free time she would drive round, wherever she found herself, looking for her perfect foundation mare. The search proved long and Jo must have seen perhaps thousands of horses.

That search ended in 1988 in San Luis Obispo when Jo found an exquisite six month old filly MAARTRABBI by Al Metrabbi out of the legendary RDM Maar Hala.

The following year she bought a young colt KERIM SHAH (Prince Ibn Shaikh x Siralima), a grand son of Maar Hala. (His first foal Kazim Shah at the age of only four became the youngest ever British National Champion Stallion in 1997.)

From Maartrabbi and Kerim are descended the majority



of the beautiful horses forming the current herd of MH Arabians. The MH being a tribute to Maar Hala.

In 2008 another colt was introduced to the herd: MUHANED AL RAYYAN (Ashhal Al Rayyan x Al Wajba Al Rayyan). Purchased as a small foal, Muhaned has matured into a ravishingly beautiful, kind, highly intelligent stallion with spectacular movements. His foals are a delight!

photo by Robert Workman



Jihoon Kim
2016, Opera 'Tosca'

photo by Donald Southern



Dame Josephine Barstow
1973, Opera 'La Traviata'



Muhaned's son MH MAARIUS 1 out of MAARTINE (Kerim Shah x Mahalia Bint Maartrabbi) was Bronze Champion at the 2019 Egyptian World Championships in Milan. The only European horse to receive a medal and without one scrap of promotion.

After the death of her husband Ande, Jo moved the stud to Devon. However she has now returned to Sussex to a lovely farm with 122 acres of pasture on which she has built a beautiful new facility for the herd. Trainer Miles Buckley loved the place and now is also based there.

Yet more exciting new blood has come into MH Arabians more recently, in the shape of another opera singer! A fine bass from South Korea, Jihoon Kim. Jo met him at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where she has been teaching. Jihoon was one of her star pupils.

Jo and Jihoon are now partners in the business of MH Arabians.

From never having had any experience of horses just a few

years ago, Jihoon has developed spectacularly. Since August 2020 he has been looking after all of the horses entirely on his own. The horses have never been so well cared for and they all love him. In his determination to give them the very best possible attention, he has even trained under a master of foot trimming and developed the skill to a very high level.

He has also brought new energy and enthusiasm into the running of the business.

Last year he introduced the pedigrees of some of the late Count Zichy-Thyssen's horses to Jo, full of the names of the wonderful Arabians she saw in the States in the 1980ies. Tail female lines to mares like the amazing Serenity Sonbolah, a mare Jo saw just before she died and has revered ever since. Unsurprisingly some of those mares are now members of the herd, thus widening excitingly the spectrum of the breeding programme.



Stand by for fireworks!

Italian breeder and horse journalist Monika Savier met with Dame Josephine Barstow and Jihoon Kim of MH Arabians for an interview.

Monika Savier: Although Lady Blunt played an important role in the emergence of straight Egyptians world-wide, there are hardly any straight Egyptians in England. How has breeding developed there historically? How could your breeding develop without other SE breeders in the area - or do they exist? Have you only been able to use your own stallions for breeding, or have you imported semen or leased stallions? Which ones?

Dame Josephine: The breeding programme was started with imported stock from the United States, however Straight Egyptians in this country, owned by different studs, have occasionally been used. Twenty years ago, NAAZIM (Nabiel x Norra) owned

at the time by Donald Duke, provided us with a daughter MAHALIA BINT MAARTRABBI whose blood is still strong in the herd. When bred to our original imported stallion KERIM SHAH (Prince Ibn Shaikh x Siralima) she produced one stallion and three daughters, all still with us and breeding. Likewise, in 1997 we bred to SIMEON SADIK (Asfour x Simeon Safanad) owned by Shirley Watts and have a gorgeous old lady MAARAA still producing now.

For several years we were able to carry on breeding using only the horses we had. Eventually of course one arrives into a corner. That is when I went shopping to Qatar and came home with our wonderful MUHANED AL RAYYAN.

Maartrabbi (1988-2018)
(Al Metrabbi x RDM Maar Hala) yearling

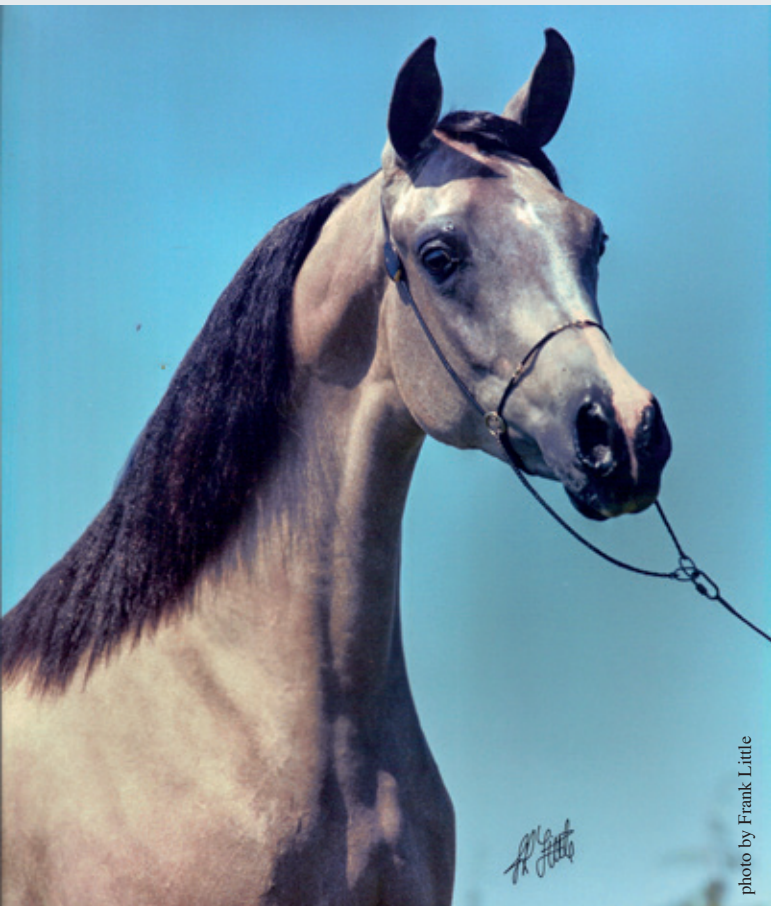


photo by Frank Little

Kerim Shah (1989-2016)
Prince Ibn Shaikh x Siralima



photo by Emma Maxwell



Muhaned Al Rayyan, 2007, Stallion
(Ashhal Al Rayyan x Al Wajba Al Rayyan)



photo by Glenn Jacobs

Jihoon Kim: There are few straight Egyptians in the UK, but you are right about breeding, we are definitely the source of SE in the UK unless people want to import or lease the stallions. For the last few years, we haven't bred many horses as we had to move the farm from Devon to East Sussex in the South of England where we have built a brand-new farm. This was a big project. We have 2020 foals, but our previous breeding was 2016 foals. So, we didn't need to think about the stallions much before as we have our own good stallions as well as Muhaned Al Rayyan with all new blood. We have several different bloodlines so



photo by Alessio Azzali

MH Maarius I, 2016, Stallion
Muhaned Al Rayyan x Maartine
(Kerim Shah x Mahalia Bint Maartrabbi)
2018 Silver Champion Egyptian Event Europe
2019 Bronze Champion Stright Egyptian
World Championship

we still can use our own stallions. From now on as we have started to breed the mares by Muhaned, we have to seriously consider outside stallions to introduce to our herd. We can import semen or lease a stallion, but sometimes Dame Josephine and I are talking to have a colt from outside as well. People think having too many stallions is not a good idea but Dame Josephine and I love keeping the boys as well. So, it is not a big problem for us. The most important thing is to have the right one for our herd whom potentially many UK SE breeders can use as well. We have provided stallions in this country many times.

Monika Savier: What is the breeding goal of the stud? What role did beauty play? What role does functionality play? Both of you are musicians, and arts and beauty are important to you. How can you realize that with your horses?

Dame Josephine: For me, there is little more exquisite in nature than a good Arabian horse with proud, flowing movement and presence. When setting out to breed, of course an aim is Beauty. But in Beauty there is Harmony.



photo by Alessio Azzali

photo by David Saunders



MH Maarlon - Mahmoud Shah x Maaralisa (Crusader x Maartrabbi)

photo by Jihoon Kim



**MH Maaralec, 2020, Colt
Muhaned Al Rayyan x Maarina
(Kerim Shah x Mahalia Bint Maartrabbi)**



**Jo is leading 2 pregnant mares.
Maarina (left), MH Aisha (right)**



**MH Maarvana, 2011, Mare - Muhaned Al Rayyan x Maarlene
(Kerim Shah x Mahalia Bint Maartrabbi)**

This wonderful species of animal that we can see pictured on the temples of Egypt, harnessed to chariots, three thousand years ago was not bred by man. It arose in the desert and became the friend of man. In the hands of men, it has since influenced every breed of horse in the world. It is the source of all warm blood.

The good Arabian horse is an athlete. It has balance, it's a machine that functions naturally. It has bone that matches the scale of the animal, it can move freely, joyfully but also usefully. It has speed, it has stamina. Get the conformation right, without losing elegance and refinement. Nothing stressed, everything in harmony - that is the construction of Beauty.

The good Arabian enjoys its relationship with us. It enjoys being challenged physically and mentally. The eyes reflect intelligence, kindness, caring, understanding. The good Arabian horse knows and

understands still mysteries we have forgotten. This amazing creature is our responsibility.

Jihoon Kim: Firstly, I started to live with Dame Josephine after a long time having singing lessons. I knew Dame Josephine has horses but never met them before. And I haven't had any experience with any horses in my life. I started to live in this current farm before the new farm buildings went up. Finally, one day, all the horses arrived while I was rehearsing in London. When I got home, I went out to the field to meet the mares, and they were galloping down towards us. I was so scared and jumped out through the gate. That was in 2018 and now I am dealing with all the horses, as with this Covid I have a lot of time to stay at home. I have learned trimming the feet, I have helped foaling and handling all the foals, treating injuries and making a feeding program etc. Now I am

involved in the breeding program as well. With my short experience in horses, I completely fell in love with our horses. With their beauty of looks, good temperament, individual personality. I know Dame Josephine has done a lot already for our breeding program for more than 30 years and I do love what Dame Josephine has achieved with our herd. Natural beauty, good temperament, good conformation. Our horses have our own herd look. And everyone can tell this is one person's herd. Probably for me, keeping this is going to be more challenging rather than having a goal of the stud. But if I have to define the goal of the stud, I would hope we can breed a literally breathtaking horse. So that everyone who meets that horse is bowled over by it and is rendered speechless in its presence! I have heard a lot of stories from Dame Josephine about when she met certain horses and felt she had nothing to say but the tears running down her cheeks spoke for her. I think this is not only beauty of the looks, this is a spiritual connection which Arabian horses can easily make happen. I am trying to show the horses whenever we can, as we have to say to the world we are here.

Monika Savier: Tell us about the horse lovers in England: what do they do with Arabians? Do they go to shows or attend Foxhunts? Is there a passion for riding Arabians? I think on the continent, people know very little about the Arabian horses

on the British Isles, although there were and are famous breeders there. But this post-colonial phase seems to be over, doesn't it?

Dame Josephine: I fear that the Arabian horse has lost favour somewhat among general horse people in England. This is a great sadness to me. The popularity of Arabian racing for example has waned. Some time ago, a horse I bred won a race. It was one of the most exciting moments in my life.

Endurance riding is going well and we have sold several horses for that. It is great to see them competing without fear and loving it.

I have always thought it vital to encourage the riding of Arabians. In the past I broke and rode some of our horses myself including stallions. There is nothing like the pleasure of riding out on a horse one has bred and backed and loved.

Our lovely MAARIUS 1 (Muhaned Al Rayyan x Maartine) who was a Bronze Champion at the 2019 Straight Egyptian World Championships in Milan is now being backed and we hope to compete him under saddle this season if things open up.

Jihoon Kim: I haven't got much experience in the horse world. So, I cannot say much. What I can tell is that England has really good support for the horses. There are a lot of horse yards, and people are enjoying having the horses and riding them. I know a lot of people ride Arabian horses for endurance in the UK. But I do believe the Arabian horses could do more under saddle. We need to see more and more Arabians doing everything a horse can do, with happy people on their back!

Monika Savier: What is the role of today's reproductive technology in your country? Do you do embryo transfer, ovum pick-up or some such? Does natural breeding still play a role on your farm?

Dame Josephine: I must admit that personally I am old fashioned in my views on this subject. My preference is absolutely for natural covering. I have always wanted my stallions in particular to enjoy their covering duties. Jihoon however belongs to the modern world. I cannot stand in the way ...

Jihoon Kim: I think in England, the breeding



Maartrabbi with MH Maarbeau



photo by Alessio Azzali

**MH Maarbeau, 2012, Stallion
(Muhaned Al Rayyan x Maartrabbi)**



photo by Jihoon Kim

**MH Maarangelo, 2020, Colt
MH Maarbeau x MH Aisha
(Mahmoud Shah x My Lady Anne)**

technology is well developed. But I do believe it is best if we do as much, we can do naturally. Maybe this well-developed technology is killing the horse world, as we have a lot of offspring from the same sire/dam every year. Too many foals are born, the gene pool is getting smaller as a lot of people consider using famous stallions from all over the world. On the other hand, this technology offers more chances to approach the outside blood more easily, efficiently and economically. We haven't done any of the mare side technology yet. But if we have good reasons, we will definitely consider using the technology available.

Monika Savier: How is the market for straight Egyptians in England today? What impact does the Brexit have on globalization now? What advantages or disadvantages does it have for you?

Dame Josephine: At the moment Covid and Brexit have collided together in such a way that as yet,



photo by Alessie Azzali

**MH Maalik, 2006, Stallion - Mahmoud Shah x My Lady Anne
(Hadaya El Tareef x Fatima Sharaf)**



photo by Steven Bond

**Mahmoud Shah, 2000, Stallion
(Kerim Shah x Mahalia Bint Maartrabbi)**

the influence of each is unclear. We can only hope for clarification on all fronts to emerge as quickly as possible.

We would love for our beloved chief stallion Muhaned Al Rayyan to have an opportunity to breed more and varied mares. So, we are considering leasing opportunities in Europe for the season.

Jihoon Kim: With the Brexit on top of the Covid situation, we don't know where we are going yet. For sure it will be very difficult for the time being until all the rules are settled and clearer. A lot of people wanted to use our stallions from outside of the UK. But we were not ready for that, and while we are planning to do that, all this happened. For the time being, if there are many requests for using our stallions, we will consider letting them stand in Europe or lease them out to give good influence to the horse world from our stallions.



photo by Alessio Azzali

MH Maaria, (Mahmoud Shah x Maaraa)
2009, Mare

MH Maarbiel, 2007, Stallion
Mahmoud Shah x Maaralisa (Crusader x Maartrabbi)



photo by Gregor Aymar

Monika Savier: How do you plan the future of the stable? What is your breeding strategy? And which role are the social media playing in that context?

Jihoon Kim: We have a lot of plans with our horses now. Breeding, showing etc, as we have settled in the new farm. We will keep breeding what we believe is a good horse. I think that is the beauty of breeding animals as everyone has a different taste and use of the animal. But if we can be accepted by more people with our horses, that could be wonderful. We cannot satisfy every single person in the audience from the stage, but if the majority of the audience appreciates our performances, that is the goal of the performing arts. I do believe breeding animals is the same. But definitely we have to have individual ideas for that. Otherwise, it is going to be the same performance whoever plays the role.

Monika Savier: What do you think of alternatives to the Show Business, such as the Noble Festival or Open House activities?

Jihoon Kim: I think this show and presentation are

different and are not an alternative for each other. In the opera world, we have competitions too, to see the potential of young opera singers. But it does not follow that the winner will become a good performer in the future and doesn't mean who didn't win the competition cannot do well in the performance. The competition result can be different all the time dependent on the judges, their personal taste, the participants' condition on the day of the competition and so on ... I am sure the horse show is like a music competition. Presentation is more likely to make clear the potential of the horses as we can see in a group of horses what the sire and dam have done for the breeding program and what they passed on to the next generation.

Dame Josephine: We look forward to the possibility of welcoming visitors from everywhere to share for a moment our lovely green farm and our beautiful happy horses.

Monika Savier: Josephine and Jihoon, thank you very much for this interesting discussion!



photo by Alessio Azzali

Miles Buckley, Josephine Barstow, Jihoon Kim with Muahned Al Rayyan

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