

THE STORY OF AL RAYYAN

Those who think they know a story often only know its end. To get to the heart of it, however, you must start at the very beginning, therefore I will begin with the history of Al Rayyan.



HH The Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani



HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani



The Straight Egyptian Arabian Horse has had an extensive history of guardianship by Bedouin Sheikhs, Pashas, Ladies and Notables. Their dedication still inspires horse enthusiasts who seek a deeper meaning than can be gained from horse show competitions.

MOST STRAIGHT EGYPTIAN ARABIAN BREEDERS TRULY SEEK THE ESSENCE OF BREEDING FOR THE SAKE OF PRESERVING THIS UNIQUE GROUP OF ARABIAN HORSES.

Most Straight Egyptian Arabian breeders truly seek the essence of breeding for the sake of preserving this unique group of Arabian horses. This story highlights such a breeder and his farm that have been doing just that for over four decades. There have been ups and downs, but the Straight Egyptian Arabian horses of Al Rayyan are still safely holding their place in that handful of south wind from which legend says the Arabian horse was created.

Our tale begins in the late 1980's when a young man in love with Arabian horses began to travel.

His enthusiasm for horses was known by his brothers, nephews and friends, and his father, who certainly had different future and hopes for his son, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Khaled Bin Hamad Al Thani was born in the Old Rayyan district of Doha, Qatar. The young sheikh was literally at home in the riding school where each horse was known to him as well as nearly all the horses in Qatar. His passion for horses had no borders and soon he began traveling abroad to expand his knowledge.

It was my pleasure much later in life to talk to a few of the breeders he met in his early wandering days.

One of them was famed English opera singer Dame Josephine Anderson whom Sheikh Abdul Aziz had visited. She was so impressed by his love for horses that she cleared her busy schedule and went on a road trip with him looking at horses and meeting their breeders.

Another well-known enthusiast was the late Mrs. Wegdan El Barbary from Egypt who whispered to me with the brightest smile: "Sheikh Abdul Aziz is one of the most charming young men with a passion for horses that I ever met".

Only a few Arabian horse breeders know that his love and understanding for Straight Egyptian Arabian horses came after the start of his travels. Sheikh Abdul Aziz first owned just a few horses of mixed Arabian blood.



A VISIT TO EGYPT - AND BEYOND

It is my belief that his love for Straight Egyptian Arabian horses started in Egypt - the preserver of these bloodlines where he visited El Zahraa Stud, the Egyptian Agricultural Organization's state farm, the Al Badeia Stud of the late Dr. Nasr Marei, Shams El Asil Stud of the late Mrs. Wegdan El Barbary and other serious breeders.

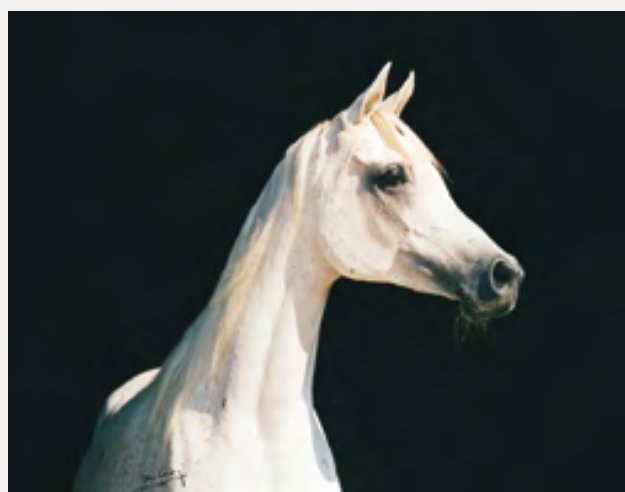
What he saw certainly must have made a huge influence on this young man whose mind could absorb every name in the pedigrees shown to him. And it was in Egypt that he made his first purchases of purebreds.

From Egypt Sheikh Abdul Aziz continued to Dr. Hans Nagel's Katharinenhof in Bremen, Germany, a breeder who had close ties with Egypt. Dr. Nagel was already renowned for his interesting imports, besides holding a good relationship with the Babolna State Stud in Hungary. While at Katharine Hof something happened: the young man had his first real revelation. Little did he know the impact it would have on the Arabian breed - even in today's world!

Sheikh Abdul Aziz's moment of enlightenment was bound to the beauty and balance of Dr. Nagel's Ansata Halim Shah daughters. He now realized exactly what it was he had been seeking. Unfortunately for him, Dr. Nagel was equally enlightened and not eager to sell such prized mares. However, as others have also experienced, Sheikh Abdul Aziz is quite convincing in getting his way! Several purchases were finally made, with the two daughters of Ansata Halim Shah gaining particular importance: Aisha, aka Bint Halim Shah (out of Ghazalla) and Amar (out of Ameera).



Aisha



Amar

Does anyone remember the beautiful photographs of these mares taken by Rik Van Lent Jr.? Those are the pictures that make me dream of Qatar and its long history with the breed.

Egypt and Germany were a good start, but more than they could offer was desired, so the next best step was to go to the source ... Ansata Arabian Stud in Mena, Arkansas, USA, home of Ansata Halim Shah himself.

Judith and Donald Forbis, the breeders and owners of Ansata Halim Shah, were impressed by Sheikh Abdul Aziz' knowledge of horses and pedigrees. A respectful friendship grew over the years and soon more Ansata-bred horses were transported to Qatar and Al Rayyan. A new era for the Straight Egyptian Arabian horse in the Middle East began to take serious root. The Sheikh added more Ansata Halim Shah daughters and granddaughters, among them Ansata Majesta, one of the most successful mares in Qatar until today, who was accompanied by her full sister, Ansata Magnifica. Added to the group was Bint Amal, who had been bred by Dr Nagel, sold to Robert Brunson in USA and shown by Ansata. Then some years later Ansata Selket arrived.

In life one can have the funds, the heart-felt desire and the ambition to start a new breeding program, but the truth is that in the end something special must happen - and in this case it was the Forbis's who provided Sheikh Abdul Aziz with the best opportunity to start his own breeding program. Master breeders understand each other; they know with whom to share, when to do it, and what is most important for the interests of continuity and preservation of the breed!

**A NEW ERA FOR THE STRAIGHT
EGYPTIAN ARABIAN HORSE IN THE
MIDDLE EAST BEGAN TO TAKE
SERIOUS ROOT.**

The foundation for Al Rayyan was laid mostly existing of Ansata Halim Shah daughters, a few daughters of Jamil (Madkour I x Hanan) and several mares sired by other famed stallions such as Prince Fa Moniet (The Egyptian Prince x FaMoniet).



Sheik Abdulaziz with Ansata Sharifa

INSPIRATION BORNE IN A BRIEFCASE



Ansata Halim Shah



Ansata Halim Shah



HH THE FATHER EMIR SHEIKH HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL THANI, WAS A KEEN ADMIRER OF ARABIAN HORSES AND FROM THE TIME HE WAS YOUNG HE HAD HIS OWN HORSES AND STABLE.

Do you remember the remarkable photographs of Ansata Halim Shah by American photographer Jerry Sparagowski? Especially the one with Halim Shah, tail up high, known as “The Fountain”. It set a new precedent for Arabian horse photographers.

Well, those photographs went around the world in the briefcase of Sheikh Abdulaziz. Wherever he went the briefcase, and the photos went with him... and perhaps to this day they are still there. These images were his inspiration before even seeing this horse in the flesh.

Logically Ansata Halim Shah himself became the desired objective. Over the years several stories have been told about how Ansata Halim Shah came to Qatar. Here is the one I relate to most.

HH The Father Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, was a keen admirer of Arabian horses and from the time he was young he had his own horses and stable. While he was the Heir Apparent in the early 1990's the gentleman in charge of his farm was Mr. Youssef Al Romaini. He was known to be a kind man with a love and passion for horses, especially those of Egyptian breeding. At the behest of HH The Father Emir Sheikh Hamad, Mr. Al Romaini was instrumental in importing several mares from Egypt to the farm that was soon to become known throughout the world as Al Shaqab Stud. HH The Father Emir Sheikh Hamad greatly appreciated the Straight Egyptian Arabian horses that were also acquired over the next few years. Mares like Meseda (Maher x Nagwa) from Egypt and the flea-bitten World Champion Imperial Phanilah (Ansata Imperial x Imperial Phanada) from the United States were among his favorite imports.

Mr. Al Romaini unfortunately passed away and Al Shaqab's management came into the hands of Sheikh Hamad Bin Ali Al Thani. Young, enthusiastic and ambitious, Sheikh Hamad Bin Ali Al Thani steered the farm's course towards shows and global competition at the highest level. He achieved many glorious show successes for Al Shaqab Stud and by breeding the stud's influential Arabians and world champions of purebred pedigree. Nevertheless, the appreciation for the Straight Egyptian Arabian horse by HH The Father Emir was still well known.

It so happened that when HH The Father Emir saw Ansata Majesta winning Champion junior mare at her first show in 1993; he was struck with admiration and inquired of Sheikh Abdulaziz about her breeding.

As fate would have it, she was by Ansata Halim Shah! A year later, shortly before HH The Father Emir became the newly crowned Emir of the State of Qatar, he received a gift worthy only for a statesman of his caliber. This legendary stallion, Ansata Halim Shah, was privately obtained and presented to him by Sheikh Abdul Aziz's brother HE Sheikh Abdullah Bin Khaled bin Hamad Al Thani, currently owner of Al Waab Stud.

Therefore, there is no doubt Sheikh Abdul Aziz played an important role in choosing that precious gift. Although Ansata Halim Shah's life in Qatar was unfortunately short, it nevertheless was highly significant. At Al Shaqab, he produced several beautiful daughters and a stallion second to none: World Champion Al Adeed Al Shaqab (x Sundar Alisayyah) Until today, Al Adeed Al Shaqab, who passed away in 2018, has had a significant influence at Al Shaqab and worldwide.



HH The Father Emir and Ansata Halim Shah



SOWING THE SEEDS

At Al Rayyan Ansata Halim Shah brought a decisive impetus for the future to the existing base. In 1995, some of the best foals by Ansata Halim Shah were born: RN Sultana, RN Azbah, RN Marwa and RN Dananeer. RN Sultana is still of significant influence through her daughter and granddaughter. Within the same year, several granddaughters of outstanding quality were born: RN Farida (Salaa El Dine x Noha) and RN Ajeeba (Ruminaja Ali x Bint Amal).

Meanwhile the Rayyan collection was impressive in total. Only 130 horses were bought and imported and approximately 150 foals were bred over the first decade. By the late 1990's, Sheikh Abdul Aziz had become a man with clear vision and determination of what he wanted. Now he made one of the most important decisions of his breeding career! He figuratively "cut the forest so he could see the trees within"! He reduced his herd of horses from three places to just one location, keeping only the best and focusing on those. While some good horses were sold, the vacated space meant Al Rayyan had room to grow!

Sheikh Abdul Aziz now aimed at bringing good conformation and beautiful big black eyes to be dominant traits in his program. He wanted bodies that were in balance: good shoulders, wide breast, defined withers, short back, muscular loins, long hip, high tail set with a thick tail bone carried high and straight. And once again I must mention beautiful big dark eyes! A trait somewhat elusive within the overall breed today.

Sheikh Abdul Aziz tried some outcrosses. However, he was not successful with most, probably because they changed the look he was concentrating on. Over the years, only three Alidaar daughters - Al Mansoura Al Rayyan, Al Aangha Al Rayyan and Dana Al Rayyan - found a place in the program. Ali Kamal left one daughter named RN Safia, likely kept because of the Sheikh's love and appreciation for RN Safia's dam Ansata Splendora, a beautiful chestnut Jamil daughter.

REAPING THE HARVEST



THE MOST CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS FOR THE BREEDING PROGRAM OVER THE FOLLOWING DECADE 2000 – 2012, WAS CROSSING BACK TO ANSATA HALIM SHAH WITH DIFFERENT DAM LINES.



Ashhal Al Rayyan

The most considerable success for the breeding program over the following decade 2000 – 2012, was crossing back to Ansata Halim Shah with different dam lines.

Safir sired by Salaa El Dine (by Ansata Halim Shah out of Aisha by Ansata Halim Shah) had a superbly successful cross with Ansata Majesta (by Ansata Halim Shah). This produced the pride and figurehead of Al Rayyan, the magnificent, white, Napoleonic stallion named Ashhal Al Rayyan. He was a splendid show horse and sire of exceptional quality and is still highly valued in the continuing generations of Al Rayyan.

Ashhal Al Rayyan's three crosses to Ansata Halim Shah made him a powerhouse sire: Safir Al Rayyan, Nadrah Al Rayyan, Noor Al Rayyan, Darine Al Rayyan, Salsabel Al Rayyan, Sulima Al Rayyan, Majdah Al Rayyan, Durra Al Rayyan, Farasha Al Rayyan, Ghuwa Al Rayyan are just a few examples of the excellent offspring bred and born at Al Rayyan.

Ashhal's influence wasn't limited to Al Rayyan: Bint Mesoudah M HP, Rayyana Al Alia, Barraaq Al Aliya, Jouna Al Naif, Ajmal Farasha, Noof Al Nasser, Ghalia Al Zobara is a few of his creations for other breeders.

Several of Ashhal's outcrosses achieved the highest accolades: namely World Champion Insh Allah, World Champion Anood Al Nasser, World Cup Champion Athenaa, Reserve World Champion Sundos Al Nasser. And there are more - such as the unforgettable horses Dorar, Hadeel Al Shaqab, Jamila Al Zobair and Remal Al Nasser. The achievements of Ashhal Al Rayyan can only be summarized here to a limited extent.

More of the Ansata Halim Shah blood was introduced to Al Rayyan via his sons: Salaa El Dine (Ansata Halim Shah x Hanan) sired Safir (out of Aisha) who was a foundation stallion to the program as mentioned before. Foundation mare RN Farida and the imported daughters of the mares Ansata Ken Ranya and Helala also brought forward the blood of Salaa El Dine. Al Adeed Al Shaqab (by Ansata Halim Shah) produced Jamila Al Rayyan (out of Ansata Selket by Ansata Halim Shah) and her sister Asrar Al Rayyan, the dam of previously mentioned Rayyana Al Alia and Barraaq Al Aliya, with five crosses to Ansata Halim Shah each. He also sired Selma Al Rayyan (out of G. Shafaria) who became the dam of Sulima Al Rayyan, a Champion Mare in her own right.

Ansata Hejazi (by Ansata Halim Shah) produced International Champion Jalila Al Rayyan and two full brothers. First son being Farres Al Rayyan who has two daughters of breeding age at Al Rayyan: Rubi Al Rayyan and Menouah Al Rayyan.



Al Adeed Al Shaqab

Second son being Ansata Selman left one good-producing daughter named Mamlukah Al Rayyan. Ansata Nile Echo (Ansata Hejazi x Ansata White Nile), owned by Al Naif Stud, sired Wadha Al Rayyan, Furat Al Rayyan and Lamaar Al Rayyan.



Fares Al Rayyan

Proof Positive: It is now proven that Sheikh Abdul Aziz's visionary use of Ansata Halim Shah, through his daughters and sons, granddaughters and grandsons, was indeed the essence of the Al Rayyan program.

THE MARES OF AL RAYYAN COMPLETING THE VISION

Nasser Al Rayyan



THE DAHMAN SHAHWAN STRAIN

Of course, a stallion cannot do his job without good mares, and those mares became the foundation of Al Rayyan by test, trial and error. The mares that most significantly defined stamped Al Rayyan are those from the Dahman Shahwan Strain; more specifically, descendants from the foundation mare Bukra (by Shahloul) through her daughter Ansata Bint Bukra (by Nazeer).

From this Bukra tail female lineage Ansata Sharifa (out of Ansata Samantha) was the most important. Ansata Sharifa had two valuable daughters for Al Rayyan. One was the imported G Shafaria, sired by Prince Fa Moniet, and second was the home bred Al Wajba Al Rayyan, sired by Safir. Both produced exceptionally well, and the branch is still within the farm. Today G Shafaria is represented by Selma Al Rayyan and five granddaughters and great-granddaughters, while the blood of her sons Farres Al Rayyan and Ansata Selman is woven throughout. Al Wajba Al Rayyan has only two daughters left, still, she is also well represented through her son Sinan Al Rayyan, sired by Ansata Sinan (Prince Fa Moniet x Ansata Nefara by Ansata Halim Shah), adding more influence of Ansata Bint Bukra. Three valuable Sinan Al Rayyan daughters were integrated into the breeding program. His most important contribution, however, is his son Nasser Al Rayyan (out of Nadrah Al Rayyan). He is the new chief sire at Al Rayyan with some outstanding upcoming young stock.



Another branch of the Ansata Bint Bukra family is represented by the full sisters Ansata Samarra and Ansata Samaria (Jamil x Ansata Samantha). From Ansata Samarra one daughter was imported: Ansata Selket, truly a queen in her own right and an excellent producer. She founded a fantastic family with exceptional beauty, strength and depth, including mares like Jamila Al Rayyan, Salsabel Al Rayyan and Rayyana Al Alia. Just two of this family are still present at Al Rayyan; one daughter from Rayyana Al Alia, named Eseilah Al Rayyan and one daughter from Salsabal Al Rayyan, named Batoul Al Rayyan.

Although prettier than her sister, Ansata Samaria was not an easy producer. She established a small branch thanks to her Alidaar daughter Dana Al Rayyan. Only Dana Al Rayyan's daughter Durra Al Rayyan and a granddaughter named Nadeema Al Rayyan remain at Al Rayyan.

Ansata Bint Bukra's daughter Ansata Rosetta not only made herself immortal through Ansata Halim Shah. But she also produced Ansata Prima Rose (Jamil), the dam of heart-stopping daughter Ansata KEN Ranya (Salaa El Dine), who belonged to Dr Nagel. Sheikh Abdul Aziz negotiated with Dr. Nagel for a long time to purchase Ansata KEN Ranya. Finally, in 2007 he managed to get Ansata Ken Ranya's daughter NK Rubba (by NK Hafid Jamil). She produced a daughter, Rubi Al Rayyan, and a granddaughter Al Zahira Al Rayyan for the farm.

However, The powerhouse broodmare from the Bukra family was Ansata Nefer Isis (Prince Fa Moniet x Ansata Nefertiti by Ansata Halim Shah). Ansata Nefer Isis was a rich producer of most excellent daughters during her life, a total of eleven, of which only three were born outside



Al Rayyan. She produced two stunning International Champions by Ashhal Al Rayyan. First came Nadrah Al Rayyan, who passed away young. Fortunately, she left the young stallion Nasser Al Rayyan and a unique daughter, Nawaal Al Rayyan (by Ansata Sokar). Nadrah's full sister Noor Al Rayyan is an internationally crowned superstar, now owned by Al Aliyah Stud in Qatar and building a beautiful family of her own. Ansata Nefer Isis also produced three stunning daughters by Sinan Al Rayyan.



The grand belle of the three is undoubtedly Nabila Al Rayyan, internationally crowned and owned by Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdul Aziz Al Thani, a son of Sheikh Abdul Aziz. From the two other sisters, Narjis Al Rayyan is at Al Waab Stud and Nafisa Al Rayyan, looking glorious at thirteen years old, still resides at Al Rayyan. Three other daughters out of Ansata Nefer Isis by different stallions were sold: Reem Al Rayyan, Alia Al Rayyan and Najlah Al Rayyan. The Ansata Nefer Isis family at Al Rayyan may be small with just four mares remaining, but they are intended to build upon and preserve their precious heritage.



FIRMILY ROOTED IN HISTORY



FABULOUS QUALITY WITHIN THIS LINEAGE HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED, ONES MORE PROVING THAT QUALITY CAN BE FOUND WITHIN.

Amani Al Rayyan



The Dahmah Shawanieh line has many valuable branches, one of which is the Malikah family, The Ghazal daughter Malikah (out of Malacha) became the foundation mare of German breeder Dr. Filsinger and her sire Ghazal (Nazeer x Bukra) was the full brother of Ansata Bint Bukra. This tail female line is represented at Al Rayyan by Ansata Majesta.

Let us take a small step back at this point! Aisha was out of Ghazala, one of the few Straight Egyptian Ghazal daughters ever produced. Aisha produced Safir who was bred to Ansata Majesta producing her crown jewel, Ashhal Al Rayyan. Fabulous quality within this lineage has been demonstrated, ones more proving that quality can be found within.

Today Ansata Majesta is spectacularly represented not only by all the offspring of Ashhal Al Rayyan but also by the produce of his full sister Naama Al Rayyan. Naama

Amjaad Al Rayyan



has three daughters at the farm: Marwa Al Rayyan (by Sinan Al Rayyan), Hilalah Al Rayyan (by Farhoud Al Shaqab) and Ameera Al Rayyan (by Al Adeed Al Shaqab), in addition to Marwa's daughter Amani Al Rayyan (by Farhoud Al Shaqab).

It was sometime around 2006 when Sheikh Abdul Aziz set his mind on the mare Maida Bint Mohssen, who was sired El Thay Shah Mabrouk - an Ansata Halim Shah grandson and out of the mare KP Bint Mohssen. Maida Bint Mohssen strengthens the Malikah family, and two of her daughters are being kept. The older one, Mamluka Al Rayyan (by Ansata Selman) is doing well with two producing daughters. My favorite, is Amjaad Al Rayyan (by Safir Al Rayyan). She is a truly complete and a stunning individual. Amjaad also has a younger half-sister, Shamaa Al Rayyan (by Farhoud Al Shaqab).



Of the two Maida Bint Bint Mohssen daughters, Majdah Al Rayyan (by Ashhal Al Rayyan) is the more prolific. So far, she has produced three remarkable daughters by different stallions, Hilal Al Nakeeb, Farhoud Al Shaqab and Ezz Al Danat. The fourth and youngest daughter, this year's filly by Fahad Al Rayyan, now outshines the other three. Sometimes you see that "special something" from birth! Without a doubt this combination is going to be repeated.

RN Farida represents the Dahmah Shawanieh line through the Nefisa branch at Al Rayyan. When a mare as exceptional as RN Farida is born, you know as a breeder that you must sit back patiently and wait a few generations for that particular type of individual to return. The waiting is on for a new RN Farida! One of her daughters is Noof Al Rayyan, sired by Ansata Nile Pasha, a unique stallion in some ways similar to RN Farida.

This combination seems to have worked well, as Noof is doing an excellent job for Al Rayyan. Her son Fahad Al Rayyan (by Sinan Al Rayyan) is again that extremely classic-looking stallion with that fabulous flea-bitten color and the much sought after beautiful black eyes! His first foals are on the ground now and they are promising. Fahad Al Rayyan also has a full sister named Fayruz Al Rayyan. Other daughters from RN Farida are Furat Al Rayyan (by Ansata Nile Echo) and Raneen Al Rayyan (by Al Adeed Al Shaqab).

Al Rayyan Farm no longer owns Safir Al Rayyan (Ashhal Al Rayyan x RN Farida), but his excellent career as a sire is worth noting. The already-mentioned Amjaad Al Rayyan attests this; however, many Straight Egyptian Arabian lovers' rate Obeyyah Al Rayyan, who now belongs to the Al Waab stud, even higher.



Fahad Al Rayyan

DECENDENTS OF THE NILE QUEEN

THE SAQLAWI JEDRAN STRAIN

Considering the different families within this strain, the most famous representative was the elegant chestnut mare, Moniet El Nefous (Shahloul x Wanisa), often referred to by her admirers as “Queen of the Nile”! Of course, this family is also represented by excellent horses at Al Rayyan. Bint Mesoudah M HP (by Ashhal Al Rayyan), bred by Mr. Horst Preuss in Germany, is prolific in building a beautiful family. She is a daughter of Mesoudah M, a full sister to the famed sire Imperial Madheen (Messaoud x Madinah). Bint Mesoudah M HP seems to be a filly producer with eleven daughters, from which six have been kept so far! Among these six mares, the famous Menouah Al Rayyan (by Fares Al Rayyan) is hailed as the International Champion Mare; she outshines the other sisters... for now! The full sisters Maisoon Al Rayyan and Mayada Al Rayyan are sired by Authentic Ibn Nawal, himself by Maysoun (by Ansata Halim Shah) out of the glorious AK Nawal. Mayada Al Rayyan could become a show mare and shine in her light! The other daughters



Sudari Al Rayyan

are Hessa Al Rayyan (by Al Adeed Al Shaqab), Kennoz Al Rayyan (by Al Rasheed Al Rayyan) and the youngest and promising Arkiyah Al Rayyan (by Ezz Al Danat).

Toya El Zahraa, the source of Straight Egyptians Arabians, came from the state stud farm El Zahraa, a Moniet El Nefous great-granddaughter through her acclaimed mother, Tee. Only a few individuals from this branch have been kept; however, this year a filly by Fahad Al Rayyan out of Toya El Zahraa might be the one to wait for. Another Toya daughter, Sudari Al Rayyan (by Shagran Al Nasser), is also a beautiful contribution to this family.

From the former Inshass Stud of King Fuad and Farouk of Egypt, Al Rayyan still has a few mares through the imported mare Rababa, tracing to Rayana. Rababa was one of Sheikh Abdul Aziz’s very early imports from Egypt. Blind on one eye but trusting and kind, she produced a beautiful daughter by Safir named Turkiya Al Rayyan. Two of her outstanding daughters ensure the heritage of this



Menouah Al Rayyan



line: the stunning Ghuwa Al Rayyan, sired by her half-brother Ashhal Al Rayyan, has five crosses to Ansata Halim Shah, while her half-sister Nawader Al Rayyan is by Egaab Al Rayyan (Ansata Nile Echo out of Nadrah Al Rayyan).

THE OBEYYAN OM GREES STRAIN

From the Obeyyan Om Grees strain, all Al Rayyan horses trace back to Dr. Nagel's foundation mare Hanan.

Aisha (by Ansata Halim Shah) was bred to her grandson Ashhal Al Rayyan, which resulted in the stunning mare Darine Al Rayyan. She was all you could want for in an excellent broodmare, influential, well-built and blessed with big dark eyes. Unfortunately, only one of her precious daughters still remains at the stud: Lamaar Al Rayyan, sired by Ansata Nile Echo. With just a little more presence than her dam, Lamaar has the same love of life and activity as her mother. With her filly Barraqah Al Rayyan (by Ezz AlDanat), Lamaar ensures the continuity of this branch.



The homebred Ansata Halim Shah daughter RN Sultana (out of Ameena by Jamil x Ken Amal), produced six daughters. Only the 17-year-old and still formidable Sundos Al Rayyan (by Ansata Hejazi) continues this family. Her daughter Sahla Al Rayyan is one of the few Ansata Sokar daughters kept at the farm, and she, in turn, has a daughter by Bahhei Ezzain.

RN Sultana's close relative is Bint Amal (by Ansata Halim Shah x Ken Amal). Bint Amal only produced two great daughters. The elder one is RN Ajeeba (by Ruminaja Ali), a stunning International Champion who unfortunately left no produce. Her full sister in blood, the younger and exotic snow white Al Mansoura Al Rayyan is by Alidaar the full brother to Ruminaja Ali. At a young age, Al Mansoura Al Rayyan produced the outstanding filly Obeyyah Al Rayyan (by Safir Al Rayyan). The cross was repeated, and another filly named Muhra Al Rayyan was born that has been kept. Honestly, Muhra Al Rayyan does not come close to her full sister. But as the saying goes, sometimes the lesser sister is the better producer. And above all, hope keeps you alive!

THE HADBAN ENZAH STRAIN

The Hadban Enzahi Strain has never been a primary focus at Al Rayyan. Just one mare came from this strain; Farasha Al Sharq, born and bred in Kuwait by a good friend of Al Rayyan, Mr. Talal Al Nisf of Al Sharq Stud. Ansata Al Murtajiz sired Farasha Al Sharq out of Farasha Al Rayyan by Ashhal Al Rayyan. This family traces back to Yosreia who achieved worldwide fame through her Nazeer son Aswan, an influential sire in the UdSSR. Thanks to Maymouna Al Rayyan (by Farhoud Al Shaqab), the Farasha Al Sharg family thrives.

CHANGES IN THE WIND - A BRAND NEW PHILOSOPHY

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF HH THE FATHER EMIR,
QATAR WAS UNDENIABLY THE FIRST TO INITIATE
THIS RENAISSANCE OF THE ARABIAN HORSE.

In the past six-to-seven years since Sheikh Abdul Aziz has not been present, several new mares and families have been added to the program. I have not mentioned them because they have not had any effect yet. Hopefully, this will happen, but one might wonder why they were added in the first place and why so many of the proven, strong lines were released before they were replaced to carry on!

Let's take another step back in history: We can justifiably say that HH The Father Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani was the first to show great interest in returning the Arabian horse to its region of origin. His Al Shaqab stud was one of the first major Arabian studs to be established in the Gulf States. Under his influence, other breeders and owners in Qatar followed so that for many years the nation was the true leader for the Arabian horse in the Gulf. Indeed, today it is being challenged by other Gulf states. Nevertheless, under the leadership of HH The Father Emir, Qatar was undeniably the first to initiate this renaissance of the Arabian horse.

HH The Father Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani inherited the fondness for Arabian horses from his late father, HH The late Emir Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani. He had a keen interest and maintained a beautiful stable near the sea with splendid Arabian horses. Of the five sons of HH The late Emir Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, four own Arabian horses and all enjoy competing with them, whether in races, endurance races or shows. The trend seems to continue in the Al Thani family as several sons of HH The Father Emir are also active with Arabian horses, as are uncles, cousins and nephews - all pursuing the sport. The passion for this homeland breed is now deeply rooted in Qatar's society and especially in the Al Thani family.

In 2012, HH The Father Emir bought Al Rayyan with the vision to continue Sheikh Abdul Aziz's breeding program. However, after a few years, a change in direction came in the form of Sheikh Hamad Bin Ali Al Thani who took over the breeding management of Al Rayyan.



THE PASSION FOR THIS HOMELAND BREED IS NOW DEEPLY ROOTED IN QATAR'S SOCIETY AND ESPECIALLY IN THE AL THANI FAMILY.

In Sheikh Hamad Bin Ali's own words, he once told me: "Always just one painter on the canvas!" Sheikh Abdul Aziz's and Hamad Bin Ali's visions and goals turned out to be different.

With the strong support of HE Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al Thani, son of HH The Father Emir, changes have been made and the director's position was recently given to Mr. Khalifa Bin Mohamed Al Attiyah who is the Director of Al Shaqab Stud and Al Shaqab Racing. Mr. Al Attiyah is known for leading with calm determination and keeping the big picture in mind to achieve the best interests and wishes of HH the Father Emir.

Mr. Al Attiyah, in turn, selected Mr. Fahad Bin Ali Al Sulaiti as General Manager for Al Rayyan. Mr. Al Sulaiti studied Archaeology, and it became evident that this is exactly how he approaches decision-making as he digs to find out what came before - what worked and what didn't. With his two supervisors' encouragement, he met with Sheikh Abdul Aziz and sought advice on how to proceed with the operation. He carefully studied all the Al Rayyan pedigrees and breeding records from the past 20 years and soon came to some proven conclusions that must be followed in order to bring Al Rayyan back to the level it had been under Sheikh Abdul Aziz, whose vision created the blueprint and foundation of the breeding program. You can not steadily build something new and worthwhile if you don't understand the structure upon which the original was created. A perfect lesson observed by Mr. Al Sulaiti was this: Be careful with extreme outcrossing because you may lose more than you gain. Stay with what you know and what has already been proven to work.

Mr. Al Sulaiti decided to give Nasser Al Rayyan and Fahad Al Rayyan most of the mares to breed in the coming season

- exactly continuing those ideas of Sheikh Abdul Aziz. A few other mares will be covered by Fares Al Rayyan and Safir Al Rayyan, thus a total of 90 percent will be bred within the program to preserve and bring back the type and look Al Rayyan stands for.

Another plan of action Mr. Al Sulaiti is preparing, is like that of Sheikh Abdul Aziz - to figuratively "cut down the forest once more", so the trees can be seen, keeping only the very best, giving them space to grow and form a strong foundation.



Nasser Al Rayyan



Fahad Al Rayyan





BREEDING VERSUS SHOWING

A good breeding horse is not always the same as a good show horse. Al Rayyan had several great breeding horses in the past that never performed in shows, and vice versa - good show horses that never produced in the breeding barn.

In Sheikh Abdul Aziz's own words: "Count on the blood, blood will tell, and blood always comes through. "At the same time, Mr. Fahad Al Sulaiti knows full well that Al Rayyan may not have the top winners now that it has possessed in the past. However, Al Rayyan still has the blood; it just needs to be given the chance. Like the trees, the soil and water are in place. Now they need tending and time to flourish.

The focus will currently be on the older mares to ensure everything is done to help them produce and continue the lines and families. However, at the same time, some younger mares will get an extra chance to come forward and fill in the gaps.