



SHAPING A NEW GENERATION


by Nancy C. Ryan



The automobile was like a bullet, piercing a path along the Autobahn. Walls of forest on either side of the highway were nothing more than a deep green blur. The faster the car went, the more she buried her head in the horse magazines and brochures she clenched in a white-knuckled grip. It seemed as if they had been driving this way for a thousand miles, since they met her at the Frankfurt airport. By now she was even beginning to doubt she would ever find what she had been searching far and wide for these five years past. She glanced again at a picture in one of the brochures. “These European photographers are so good,” she thought, “that there can’t be a stallion here that really looks like this.” Still afraid to look up, she took a breath and remarked to the driver, “If you can find me a horse that reflects the quality of these photos, I’m interested.” He turned around and gave a quick smile — then gunned the gas a little more.



*Mishaal HP
(Ansata Sinan x Mesoudah M).



*“Time is
the lens
through which
dreams are
measured.”*

– Francis Ford Coppola

The pressure had been on Shawn Crews for quite some time. It was her job as manager of Arabians Ltd. in Waco, Texas, to find just the right straight Egyptian outcross stallion for the mares at her farm, as well as for the mares owned by dozens of Arabians Ltd. clients throughout North America. Thee Desperado (The Minstril x AK Amiri Asmarr) had created a dynasty since he was named U.S. National Reserve Champion Stallion in 1994. The Arabians Ltd. program included the stallion's sons Thee Infidel (x Bint Magidaa), a National Top Ten Stallion and Futurity Colt; Pimlico RCA (x Bint Bint Jamil), 2004 Egyptian Event Supreme Champion Stallion; and Thee Asil (x Alia Barakaa), a Regional winner. Arabians Ltd. had recently purchased another Desperado son named The Sequel RCA, who is out of Thee Desperado's full sister La Marsala. Alixir (The Elixir x The Prevue), a grandson of The Minstril, rounded out the program.

"As Pimlico and Asil started breeding more mares I realized that we were going to be in deep trouble here if we didn't get something to outcross," observes Shawn. "In the meantime, we had our young stallion Alixir breeding. He is heavy Ibn El Mareekh and *Ansata Ibn Halima, and that started working. So I felt less pressure. Alixir is about 65 percent outcross blood to our program, but he still looks like our horses — he's big and bay."

"We had been looking for an outcross stallion for a number of years," recalls Arabians, Ltd. owner Judy Sirabasku. "You can't keep inbreeding. What we needed was a stallion to sire daughters that we could breed to our stallions, or the goal might even be to get a top notch colt by him. I was hoping for either one."

"Jim Sirabasku told me that if I could spend the money here in the United States, then that's what we would do," recalls Shawn. "He really had wanted to work with the Forbis's on an outcross, so I went there first. They had some terrific horses at Ansata, but they weren't offered at the time," says Shawn. She scoured the nation. "I researched everything there was to be found here in the States. Not to say the right horse wasn't here, but if it was, it wasn't available."

"I know that our bloodlines have always crossed well with Ansata blood, with heavy Halima breeding. In Australia, I looked at an Imperial Madheen son that I really wanted to buy, but the timing was a little off between buyer and seller so it didn't come to fruition. Imperial Madheen is the kind of horse that makes you happy to be involved with Arabians. The couple of times I saw him I was just drawn to him."

Right: Judy Sirabasku with Thee Desperado (The Minstril x AK Amiri Asmarr).

Below, left to right: Shawn Crews, Minstrils Kiss (The Minstril x Princess Salam), Judy and Jim Sirabasku.





He was all macho and everything, but I was particularly drawn to his eyes and his ears. He always seemed to have such a ‘happy-go-lucky’ demeanor.”

With that trail cold, and knowing that Ansata Sinan had spent a considerable amount of time in Europe, she headed for that continent. “I looked at one horse and turned around and came back. On the short trip to Belgium I figured while I was there I would get Frank Spönle on the phone and see if I should extend my trip. Frank said that a man in Germany named Mr. Horst Preuss had some awesome horses, but he didn’t need to sell any of them, so that kind of discouraged me.” Shawn would have to wait. So would the clients back home.

Shawn’s passport and patience were wearing thin. “Then I was asked to judge the Egyptian Event in Italy in July of 2003, so I thought, OK, I’ll take one last look around while I’m over here and see what’s out there. So after my judging job, I flew to Frankfurt. We just drove and drove and drove and ended up at Spönle’s place where they had put together a nice group of stallions and colts — most of them were in that four- to seven-year-old age range, which was what I was looking for. “

Shawn’s focus completely shifted when a tall grey was led out. He was the last horse presented. “When I saw Mishaal, I knew this was it. I really liked this horse,” says Shawn. “I was definitely impressed. He was the most expensive horse I ever looked at in my life. They took tons of video for me and I asked them to pull

**Mishaal HP*

Mishaal out one more time. I came home carrying information on horses from Italy and all over Europe.”

But it was Mishaal’s information that was on the top of that heap. He was shown only once at the German Arabian Breeding Society’s rigorous National Stallion Licensing competition in Aachen. All stallions are shown three times in a two-day period, in hand and at liberty. Only the best get a gold medal. Mishaal topped the group, which earned him a platinum medal, the best rating possible. The judges characterized him as the stallion with the most exceptional head and Arabian type. His younger full brother, Mutair HP, was the German Junior National Champion before he was sold to Saudi Arabia.

Back home in the States, Shawn held her breath as she pulled out the video to show Arabians Ltd. owners Judy and Jim Sirbasku. “I made it a point NOT to tell them which horse I had in mind,” insists Shawn. Judy remembers the day vividly. “Shawn brought home a video of Mishaal and of course it was one of those funny videos they take over there with those little tiny cassettes, so converting it to VHS made it kind of jumpy. Even so, when I saw him on the video, he took my breath away — he really truly did. Not only did I think he was beautiful and I loved his pedigree, but he just really reminded me of Ruminaja Ali. He has beautiful dappling and that wavy mane that Ali had. The way he prances is just exactly the way Ali did.”

Everyone involved agreed that Mishaal backed up his appearance with a nearly perfect outcross pedigree. “One of the things that is so interesting about this horse is his breeding,” explains Shawn. “He is sired by Ansata Sinan. One of Sinan’s sons won the world championship this year and he is a very highly regarded sire. His mother is a full sister to Imperial Madheen. So there is no question that that is what first drew me to him.”

“Imperial Madheen was another part of the pedigree that was pretty important too,” says Gary Kenworthy. “So when news of Mishaal’s existence got to us, we were pretty excited about that. The blend of those two very exact bloodlines made sense. Shawn brought me Mishaal’s video, but in spite of the poor quality pictures, I was in awe and could see how well he could move. It was pretty special and he had that beautiful head that is so important to us. He was also grey, and we thought that was important too. I am kind of in Judy Forbis’s camp and think grey is the archetypical color of the Arabian horse.”



**Mishaal HP was awarded a Platinum rating at the European Stallion Licensing, the highest rating a horse can get.*



Horst Preuss, left, owner of Mishaal HP with trainer Frank Spönle and the mare The Princess Of Egypt (Orayan x Shabneekha US).

Now that it looked like they had their horse, the next step was crafting the deal. “And all I could think of was what everyone in the beginning had told me about Mr. Preuss, the owner, and how he didn’t need to sell his horses and how it might be a difficult deal,” remembers Shawn. “Frank Spönle talked to the owner and said they would not come down one penny on the purchase price, he was somehow able to work out a three-year lease with an option to buy the horse at the agreed-upon price. When Mr. Preuss agreed to that, we were just thrilled. Jim Sirbasku and Mr. Preuss worked out the contract.”

Back in Germany, Mishaal’s owner Horst Preuss was just as pleased with the outcome of the arrangement. “It was not difficult for me to give Mishaal HP to Judy and Jim Sirbasku of Arabians Ltd. because I have heard and read about them,” he explains. “This is a place where excellent Arabians are bred and there is a top group of people to manage and take care of them. A main point for me was that Mishaal should get very good mares for breeding. That gives the stallion a great opportunity to show his breeding potential. The distance is not important, but the quality of the stud and the quality of the mares he breeds is.”

Mr. Preuss is well aware of Mishaal’s breeding potential. “Mishaal’s offspring are standing in several countries in Europe,” he says. “Mishaalah Madheen, out of Mahlaha by Salaa El Dine, is a very typey filly. She was the Champion and Reserve Grand Champion in Germany. The filly Bahrija Bint Bukra, out of Bukra Bint Salaam by Ansata El Salaam, was Champion in Italy, and JK Bint Dirah, out of Mindirah by Imperial Madheen, was a Champion foal in Holland.” There are some Mishaal foals Preuss will never let go of. “The young mare Sahra Madheen, out of Shahneekha US by Anaza Bay Shah shall be kept for breeding at my Madheen Arabian Stud,” offers Preuss. “She is an exceptional filly with good size, long neck, very good topline and outstanding movement with high tail carriage. I plan to breed her this year to my stallion Maydan Madheen, another son of Masoudah M.”

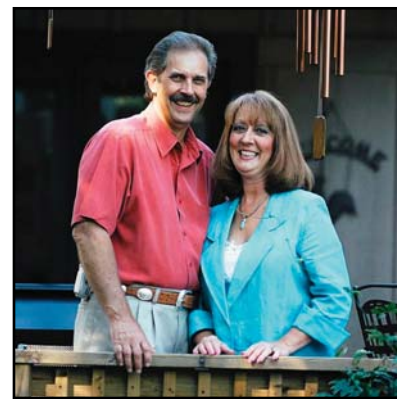
The time soon came for Mishaal to be transported to the U.S. “So we arranged to bring the horse over and I started to worry about the logistics,” recalls Shawn. “I told Frank Spönle I was going to order Mishaal his own crate and Frank told me he had already set up space for Mishaal to travel with two geldings they were also shipping to the United States. Frank had told me the horse had a good



Breeding manager at Arabians Ltd. Stephane Rollibiard.



*Mishaal HP and John Neyer, Marketing Director.



Gary and Wanda Kenworthy of Paradise Arabians.

Near right: Arabians Ltd.'s recently acquired stallion The Sequel RCA (Thee Desperado x La Marsala).

Far right: Senior stallion Thee Desperado (The Minstril x AK Amiri Asmarr).



temperament, but that really confirmed it for me. So, Mishaal rode all the way from Germany in the same crate with two geldings!”

Mishaal was quarantined 30 days on the East Coast before arriving in Waco at Arabians Ltd. “The greatest moment was when the rig pulled in from Maryland. It was one of those huge 18-horse big rigs — lots of chrome. When he came off that truck I knew I’d made the right decision. He was even better than I remembered, with all that white mane and tail and those big black eyes. For me it was scary to look at a horse thousands of miles away and envision how he is going to fit in back home. But when he got off that rig, it was clear to me that he would fit in just fine.”

Judy couldn’t wait to see Mishaal. “It just so happens that the day Mishaal was arriving we were leaving to go to Europe. So I had to stop by the farm. I was not going to wait ten days or two weeks after having waited for him all this time. I could not wait to see him in person and touch him and pet him.”

Was Mishaal worth the wait? Arabians Ltd. Marketing Director and horseman John Neyer sure thinks so. “I have been involved with three generations of horses by Thee Desperado, Thee Infidel, Thee Asil, and Pimlico here at Arabians Ltd. We have always talked about horses to breed to the next generation,” says John. “This horse Mishaal had the exact blood we were looking for and we all liked. The horse himself is magnificent. Shawn is really attached to Thee Desperado, so when she brought Mishaal in, I kind of buddied up with him and learned a few German phrases. He has a little bit different attitude, and acts very regal, yet he is kind and nice to be around. He has nice motion, substantial croup and hip, and is shorter in the back. I think he is going to be a great sire. Mishaal is very showy and has a good show mentality to pass on. He should cross over great with Thee Desperado horses.”

“There hasn’t been this much excitement for a while,” observes Gary Kenworthy. “There is so much riding on this horse, but I have never seen an attempt for an outcross that has been met with so much positive energy on the part of the clients. This guy Mishaal has just really energized everybody. We are all so excited.”

Judy is so confident in Mishaal’s ability as a sire, that she has bred some of her best mares to him. “One of my top mares is Maali RCA, who is a Ruminaja Ali daughter. She has produced wonderfully for me with the other stallions that we’ve had. One of her sons by The Minstril, The Makers Mark, went to South Africa. Another, Thee Makers Mark, by Thee Desperado, went to Saudi Arabia. I also have bred a cute little mare by Thee Desperado. Her mother Faliha is an Alidaar daughter



and her name is My Shooting Star. Then I have another special mare, Abriel RCA. She is a Minstril daughter, black, and out of one of my all-time favorite Ruminaja Ali mares whom I lost a couple of years ago named Aliashahm RA. She is in foal to Mishaal as well.

Mike Cimino and Marc Kisner of Colthill Crescent Arabians in Folsom, Louisiana have also bred one of their favorite mares, the beautiful black Thee Ananda (Thee Desperado x AK Shawra) to Mishaal. “We are so anxious and can hardly wait to see what comes of this breeding,” says Mike.

Gary Kenworthy has three mares due to deliver Mishaal foals this spring. “To demonstrate our confidence, we bred our best mare, Alia Riyala (The Minstril x Aliala) to Mishaal. I had to do a lot of soul-searching to decide whether or not to breed her to a stallion other than Thee Desperado. But Mishaal is incredible and I am really pleased. We think that his phenotype and his genotype are both going to blend very well with our program and I think it is going to be a match made in heaven.”

“I hope for the very best for Mishaal HP,” remarks Horst Preuss. “This includes that he stays healthy and does a good job of breeding at Arabians Ltd. My wish is that Mishaal will sire very good foals. With his breeding potential and with the high quality mares he is breeding, he should get a group of typey, showy straight Egyptian Arabians and hopefully some will be exceptional. I wish the Sirabaskus all the best results with what Mishaal can offer.” Those results should be in soon, as all eyes will be on the first of more than 40 Mishaal foals due to arrive mid March.