

Interviewed by: Sonja Smaldone

BARBARA Schwarz

Hello Barbara! Thank you very much for accepting our interview. Let's start from the very beginning.

Hi Sonja, thanks for the opportunity to tell you my ideas about Arabian horses.

When did you start taking an interest in the Arabian horse breed?

I am a horse lover as long as I can think and I started horse riding at the age of 10. As a teenager, I became interested in Arabian horses (I don't remember when and why exactly) and it was around this time, I visited Marbach state stud for the very first time. Since then, I read everything I could find about them.

What made you prefer the Arabian breed over all the other breeds? And how long have you been breeding it?

First of all, it is their personality and the sensitivity of the breed. This personality that they pay attention to you, that they always

AHM: What does the word 'breeding' mean to you? And which are your favorite bloodlines?

Breeding should mean improvement of the breed. And this is a very difficult aim. Every breeder has to decide what "improvement" means and what he or she is breeding for.

I started with Russian bloodlines and still love them very much, as I adore the typical power and movements of these horses. But, of course, I have used modern stallions on my mares, to improve and to breed for beauty, type and elegance by preserving the ability for performance.

Everybody inside the international Arabian Horse community knows you are the Manager and the owner of famous CaFra Arabians in Germany. What's your typical day at the breeding farm?

The daily routine depends on whether we are in winter or summer. Now in January, the horses are in the barn over night.



feel if you are happy or mad is something I never found in other breeds. And, on top of it, I love their beauty, even though "beauty" lies in the eyes of the beholder. Last but not least, I like the size of the Arabian horse. I started to ride on warm-bloods, as usual in Germany, but I never liked them because of their size and their behavior.

I bought my first Arabian in 1999. The first mares arrived in 2004 and I started breeding in 2005.

So we start in the morning by feeding them. After that, we decide which horses go in the walker, which will be lounged or ridden. They will be groomed and some need special care, need to be washed or clipped. If we need the vet, for example for insemination, we arrange that in the morning too. All the horses go out on a big paddock for the rest of the day. Hay and water is available for all as well as the place to move and run if they want to. While they are out, the stables are cleaned. In the evening we

Barbara with Majeedah CF
(WH Justice x Maharani CF)



Navodchik (Drug x Nutria)
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take them in for the night and feed them again. In summer all my horses are out on the pastures 24/7. We take them inside in the morning to feed them with what they need, minerals or other extras. Then the morning routine is the same as in winter: walker, l o u n g i n g , r i d i n g , whatever. In the evening, we take a late walk around, to check if everything is ok. So for us, the summer is much more comfortable as the winter, since there is less work and more time for riding and fun.

Are you also a Trainer?

No, I am not a trainer. Deep in my heart I am a horse rider, but, some years ago, I decided that I am too old to start young horses under saddle. But I sit on their back as soon as they have learned the essential basics to get an impression about their quality as a riding horse. Concerning show training, I know some very few basics. If I want to show a horse on Arabian horse shows, Johanna Ullström will train and show them for me.

If you could name one Arabian that would come the closest to your ideal, which one would that be today?

This is a very difficult question. One special mare comes to my mind: Amyra bint Khidar, bred and owned by Sax Arabians. She is just wonderful!

What's your relationship with your horses?

With most of my horses I have a very personal relationship. Of course not with all of them, you always have horses in the barn you like more or less. But I know all my horses very well and they know me. I know their strong and weak points, I know their personality and I always find a way to communicate.

Is there any horse holding a particular place in your heart? Why?

This horse is Menina 1990 by Menes x Nascha. I saw her at Sax Arabians in 2004 and I

immediately fell in love with her. She is my queen and the most beloved horse here at CaFra Arabians. It is her type and her special expression that I love the most. I always say: "She is her royal highness; you have to ask for an audience before you contact her". She is never angry. If she does not like you, she will not walk away, oh no! She just moves half a step out of your reach. Only one step. I love her. Menina will be 28 years old in May and is doing fine. I am very happy to have two of her granddaughters here at the farm, Al Janina CF (who resembles her personality a lot) and Medina CF.

In your opinion, what specific qualities or skills do you need to become a good breeder?

Beside knowledge about horses in general and Arabians in particular, a good breeder should have a certain instinct or feeling concerning breeding decisions. Sometimes I see a stallion and immediately see "this stallion will match with that certain mare". These breeding decisions brought me better foals than breeding only by brain.



Jaipur (WH Justice x Exotic Pure)
© Rika Kreinberg

How would you advise a young person eager to undertake a breeder career?
Here I am with the late Sheila Varian: "Before you buy an





Arabian learn the type and bloodlines YOU like. Don't be in a hurry. See as many horses as you can when you buy. (...) The perfect horse has not been born. Make up your mind where you will give and where you won't. The cheap horse is often as expensive an investment as the over-priced one. (...)". This is as important for buying horses for breeding as it is in general. In addition I suggest that you learn as much as you can about horses in general and make yourself an expert about conformation and type, before you start breeding.

Barbara, do you breed Purebred Arabians also for show purposes? If so, where did this passion for morphology contests arise from?

Yes I did and I was quite successful with some of my horses on shows. When I started to breed Arabians in 2004/2005 in the show world horses were successful when they were beautiful with good conformation and powerful movements. It was the end of what I call "the Russian era". Since then the show world has changed rapidly. Of course even today it is important, that the horse is beautiful. But nowadays it becomes more and more important, how the horse is trained, who is the trainer and who is the breeder and the owner. Conformation, correctness and movements have not that value any more in the show ring. I saw horses winning champion titles that I wouldn't even want for free.

How about your start on endurance rides?

Unfortunately, in the last years, I had not the time nor to train for or to ride endurance. But I like it very much and each year I swear to myself to restart! At least I was so lucky I could do some very nice trail rides over several days in the last years.

Barbara with Metallica (Khidar x Menina)
and her filly Medina CF by Stival



Al Janina CF (Jenisseij x Metallica)
© Rika Kreinberg

Do you miss the shows of the past or do you prefer the atmosphere of today's exhibitions?

As I visited my first shows around 2004, I am not familiar with the atmosphere of the shows before the year 2000. But I see a big difference concerning the atmosphere when I visit different shows today. At some of the shows (and I don't like them), people seem or want to be more important than the horses themselves. A nice show is one where the horses are more important than their owners, breeders or handlers. It should be all about horses, not about people.

In Germany we have the opportunity to show horses on breeding shows organized by the breeding society. On these shows you get another kind of evaluation. The judges don't want to see the "hard standup", they want to see the horse stand quiet and naturally. Walk is very important; you have to walk several rounds with your horse in hand. It is not significant that you yourself can run very well, as all the horses are presented in liberty too, so they can show all their movements in trot as well as in gallop. And all three gaits get points. Body and top-line as well as legs are judged fair and correct. And on top of that: if you do not understand the results, you can go to the judges afterwards and ask them for an explanation! These breeding shows are completely different from the modern shows organized by E.C.A.H.O. or A.H.O. and offer a great opportunity to an owner and breeder. Unfortunately the results have no impact on the horse's value in these modern times, so not a lot of people take

the opportunity to show their horses on these events. The modern show has ruined the real breeding show.

What's the most important breeding stallion in the barn and in what ways has he matched your expectations in terms of 'reproduction'?

Actually, I don't have a stallion in the barn and the stallions I had, I didn't use very much. Navodchik (he died much too early) has delivered two very good offspring for race / endurance and Jenisseij has left a premium mare for me. For most of my breedings I used outside stallions.

Which of your mares do you think is the most important?

The most important mare in my breeding program was Mara 2001 by Marsin x Marenga. She produced for me Maharani CF 2007 by Psytadel, who together with her daughter Majeedah CF 2011 by WH Justice had the most show successes for CaFra Arabians. Mara was ridden and performance tested under saddle and awarded the premium mare title. Due to the show results of Maharani CF she was awarded the title Elite mare. Also Maharani CF was awarded the premium mare title and because of Majeedah's show results she has all the requirements for the Elite title too.

Among the most 'recent births' in your herd, is there a little colt / filly who has truly embodied your 'vision' in terms of morphological standards?

By mischance I was not lucky in the last years concerning breeding, as my mares resorbed the last two years. So my youngest horse at the moment is the 3years black Borsalino K daughter Mumtaz mon Amour CF. This filly is of really high quality and I will be very curious about how she will produce.

What are the objectives you would like your breeding barn to reach in the future?

The most important to me at the moment is not only to get my mares in foal but that they may keep the embryo and will not resorb. For the rest time will tell...

To what extent is 'marketing' important in the Arabian horse industry?

Marketing is extremely important! Without a good marketing it is very difficult to sell horses. I see a problem that the marketing and sale of high priced horses nowadays only works via show results. Only few people take the time and visit a farm to see a breeding program. In my eyes, the Arabian horse business needs a marketing concept that not only relies on international shows.

Barbara, will you please leave a message to the readers of AHM?

Enjoy your life with Arabian horses! They are the most amazing breed in the world and one should enjoy every day the opportunity to be around them.

Thanks a lot for your interview Barbara! It was a great pleasure talking to you. On behalf of the entire Team of AHM, I wish you all the best in your future endeavors...