



ANSATA HEJAZI

Born to Rule

- A Book Review by Judith Wich-Wenning -

A new book by Judith Forbis is always something very special. Her latest work “Ansata Hejazi – Born to Rule” is no exception. Eagerly awaited by many, it topped all expectations. Legendary Arabian horse connoisseur, breeder and author since almost 60 years, Judith Forbis’ role is unique. Together with her late husband Don, she founded Ansata Arabian Stud, a straight Egyptian breeding program with vast global influence. Arabian horses from Ansata are highly appreciated worldwide. Many extraordinary horses were born at Ansata Arabian Stud, one of the most prominent was for sure unforgettable Ansata Hejazi (Ansata Halim Shah x Ansata Sudurra). Judith Forbis dedicated an impressive book to this extremely influential stallion who lived from 1992 to 2015. In February 2017 Judith Forbis’ new masterwork “Ansata Hejazi – Born to Rule” was presented to the public during a magnificent book launch at Bait Al Arab Kuwait State Stud. It is an eye-catching volume, printed as a limited first edition and comprising 288 pages, full color illustrations and a hardcover sleeve. The lavish layout matches perfectly and underlines the value of the book.



*Judith Forbis signing
"Ansata Hejzi – Born to Rule"
photo: Suzanne*



Ansata Hejzi

The decision to write this book came easily, explains Judith Forbis: "After breeding Arabian horses for more than 50 years, it occurred to me that although certain horses had immeasurable influence – such as Nazeer, Ansata Ibn Halima, Morafic, Ansata Halim Shah and others, none that I could think of had almost singlehandedly contributed to the renaissance and rebuilding of the breeding programs in a country whose Arabian horse population had been totally decimated by war. Ansata Hejazi was unquestionably one of Ansata's superior individuals and breeding stallions, yet he alone was fatefully designated to inspire a renaissance and the rebuilding of one country's Arabian horse heritage – namely, Kuwait after the Gulf War. He became so beloved that his patriotic breeders and admirers bestowed on him the title, "King of Kuwait." No other horse that I know of has been given such an honor in any country. There have been many horse heroes in fiction, but Hejazi's is a true story. Therefore, I felt he deserved a book that placed him firmly in the pages of history."

"The idea of writing a book about Ansata Hejazi was not mine, it was Judith Forbis, the breeder of Ansata Hejazi, who felt that considering Hejazi's influence and position, it was the time to make a book about him", adds Mohammed Al Marzouq, owner of the famous Ajmal Stud, Kuwait and of Ansata Hejazi since 1999. Starting from a first idea, the project continued steadily. "First of all, I received encouragement from Mohammed Jassim Al Marzouq", remembers Judith Forbis. "Hejazi's influence wouldn't have happened if Mohammed hadn't realized his potential, purchased him for his own Ajmal Arabian Stud, and shared him freely with other breeders. An admirer of Hejazi, my long-time friend Cynthia Culbertson and I had been in Kuwait together during Hejazi's final days. I told her my idea about a book and asked if she would become the managing editor in developing it. A fine writer, she had lived in Saudi Arabia for a decade, knew the language, and was dedicated to the Arabian breed. An additional plus was that she had known the Ansata horses since the late 1970s when we had the farm in Lufkin,



A view of Bait Al Arab, Kuwait State Stud

Ansata Hejazi wearing the original halter of Nazeer



Mohammed Al-Marzouk and Ansata Hejazi



Group of admirers of Ansata Hejazi at Ajmal Stud

Texas, and we had worked together on various projects over the years. She agreed to take on the job, and we began interviewing breeders and admirers of Hejazi in Kuwait, Qatar and elsewhere.

Writing an outline for the book took place at my home in Arkansas and we also worked on it at Cynthia's ranch in New Mexico. We determined the story needed to cover various aspects of Hejazi's life, his human and horse family, where he grew up, and how he came to Kuwait, and to include contributions by those who admired or used him and his descendants in their breeding programs. Furthermore, it needed to have historical references to and illustrations of Hejazi's ancestors. I realized while writing his pedigree that, if turned vertically, Hejazi was at the top of a pyramid. So I used a step pyramid illustration as a new way of looking at and pictorially illustrating his – and any other pedigree – as a very useful tool for breeders. Art was included as it relates to the “art of breeding”, and a history of the Arabian horse in Kuwait, with the eventual realization of the new Bait Al Arab Kuwait State Stud and Hejazi's influence there, concluded the story. Finally we divided the book in three sections: 1) The Story of Ansata Hejazi, 2) Lessons in the Art of Breeding, and 3) Art, History and Heritage. Extensive chapters were developed under each section.”

Cynthia Culbertson remarks: “It was a great honor and pleasure to work with Judith Forbis to help make her vision of the book a reality. A book is a tremendous amount of work, and it is so important that everyone involved, from editors to designers, work as a team. I believe this book was a superb example of that team effort and Judi was an inspiration to all who contributed to her book. She is simply a master -- combining unparalleled knowledge with creativity and innovation, all with the finest aesthetic eye. You cannot work side by side with her and not be filled with admiration for her contributions to the Arabian horse.”

Asked about her feelings while writing the book, Judith Forbis remembers: “Of course it brought back many memories and the thousands of hours that went into studying the breed in various Arab countries, time spent in Egypt, the importation of our first Egyptian horses in 1959, building the farms in Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Kentucky, and the many people we met over the years as a result of our travels as well as breeding and showing horses. This covered a broad range – from Bedouins to kings, sheikhs, presidents, and individuals of diverse occupations. Various challenges and joys of a lifetime with horses since I was three years old kept hovering into view as well as the countless adventures my husband Don and I shared in developing the breeding program.”

Writing the book about Ansata Hejazi was very thought provoking for Judith Forbis. She ponders: "I learned that time is very fleeting. One must learn to enjoy the moment! We must appreciate the beauty of life as it is presented to us, as it can all too soon disappear. It seemed like yesterday that we had been inspired by the horses in Egypt and began our Ansata program. Creating the Pyramid Society in 1969 and how it influenced Egyptian Arabian horse breeding around the world came to mind frequently. This led to thinking about many of my peers who were instrumental in bringing the Egyptian horse to the fore in America at the time we began our Egyptian Arabian journey: Carl Raswan, Henry Babson, Richard Pritzlaff, Doug and Margaret Marshall, Jim and Eloise Kline, Willis and Jimmie Flick, Martin Loeber, Jarrell McCracken, Walter Schimanski, Bill and Pat Trapp among others - and the many legendary horses that have also passed away since then. It is hard for me to realize that breeders today never saw Nazeer, Morafic, Ansata Ibn Halima, Alaa El Din, Ansata Halim Shah, Bukra, Moniet El Nefous, Mona, Ibn Moniet El Nefous, Maisa, Bint Maisa El Saghira, Sakr, etc. and many of the highly influential stallions and mares of yesteryear which I see in my mind's eye every time I look at a pedigree, write an article, or give a lecture. More than ever, writing the book reinforced my understanding and appreciation that life is a journey, not a destination."



The author Judith Wich-Wenning with Judith Forbis during the Egyptian Event Europe 2017

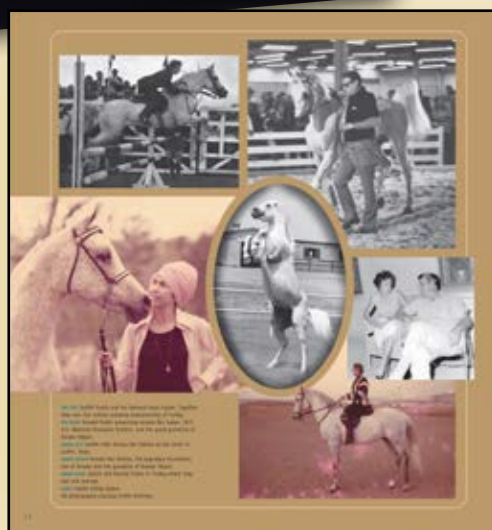
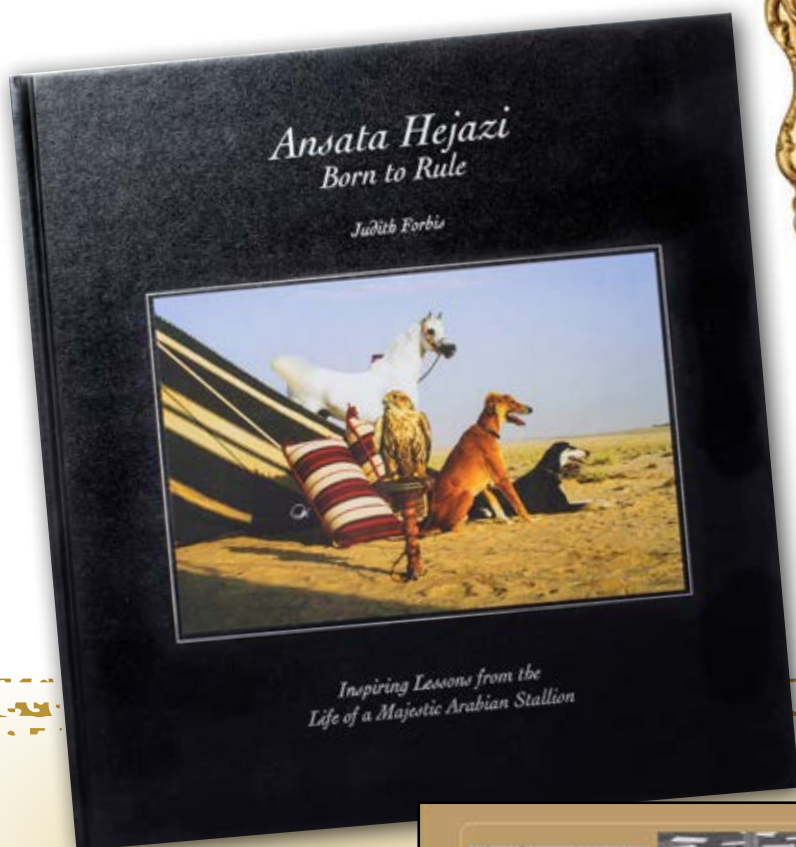


Ansata Malik Bey (Ansata Malik Shah x MB Moneena), a grandson of Ansata Hejazi.

*"The Pharaoh's Horses",
one of the most beautiful works
of art regarding Arabian horses,
painted by John Frederick Herring.
Collection of Ajmal Stud,
Mohammed Al Marzouq*

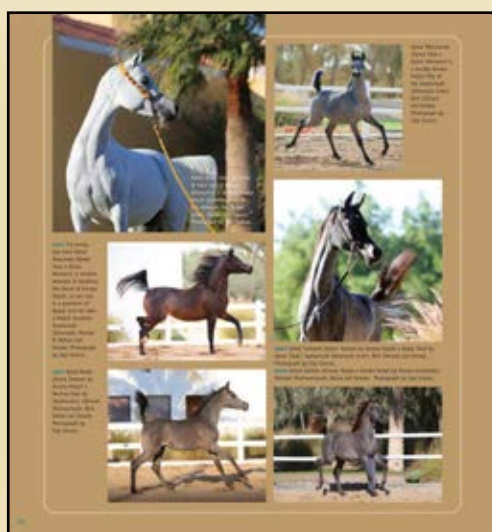


Book cover of "Ansata Hejazi – Born to Rule"





Ansata Hejazi as a young stallion with Judith & Don Forbis



Judith Forbis, Karen Kasper and Mohammed Al Marzouq with the bronze statue of Ansata Hejazi

Judith Forbis during the book launch explaining the new way to look at a pedigree



Judith Forbis and the statue of Ansata Hejazi created by Karen Kasper

At Bait Al Arab, Kuwait State Stud





A scene from the book launch at Bait al Arab in February 2017

Cynthia Culbertson points out: "I think it is important for readers to understand that this book was meant to be much more than a "coffee table" decoration about a famous horse. Judi's vision was to enlighten readers on multiple subjects relating to the Arabian breed – history, art and breeding – through the amazing story of one great Arabian stallion. If you look at her special comments throughout the book – we referred to them as Judi's "Words of Wisdom" – there are so many insights to be gained. The book also emphasized that a stallion cannot achieve immortality without great owners, and Ansata Hejazi was blessed indeed to have Mohammad Al Marzouq as his owner."

Ansata Hejazi has influenced the lives of so many Arabian horse breeders and enthusiasts. Already from birth, he was one of a kind. "Each of the Hejazi-related chapters included the word 'stars'", explains Judith Forbis. "Hejazi's story, Chapter III, is titled A Star is Born. It begins: "On May 8, 1992, under a starry night sky, a newborn bay colt announced his presence in the Ansata foaling barn. The birth heralded a day to rejoice and reflect on the astonishing gift presented. His forehead was illumined by a fortuitous white star; silver hairs surrounding his

eyes proclaimed he would become white, a color symbolic of victory and success. As the Arabs said: 'This is the mount of kings, because it brings good fortune and luck, and with it you are able to obtain what is necessary.'" For the sub-title of this Chapter, I chose: "The brightest stars are those who shine for the benefit of others." Both the title and sub-title fit Hejazi perfectly."

Ansata Hejazi played a significant role for the Ansata breeding program. Judith Forbis relates: "Ansata Halim Shah, Hejazi's sire, was exported to Qatar during the mid-1990s. Hejazi then followed as chief sire at Ansata and became outstanding and dominant breeding stallion during the years he was with us. We also enjoyed showing Hejazi in the American show ring and he won significant championships. His beauty and big trot endeared Hejazi to everyone. It was not an easy decision to sell him, but we were reaching the age in our lives that time to slow down was coming. It was obvious he was needed in Kuwait, but little did we realize in making the sacrifice to let him go, that he would almost single-handedly inspire and rejuvenate Arabian horse breeding in that country."



Ajmal Talal (Sinan Al Rayyan x Ansata Samari)

Mohammed Al Marzouq remembers: "When I saw Ansata Hejazi for the first time, I was very attracted to his nobility and classic type. My breeding goal was to preserve and breed the classic Arabian horse coming from families that originate from the Arabian Peninsula. With Hejazi I have achieved that. Hejazi's traits I admired most were his classic type, charisma and conformation. His personality was very special; he was very kind, very easy to handle and to work with. Ansata Hejazi's role at Ajmal Stud, in Kuwait and globally, was his ability to pass his special traits without diminishing or overwhelming the dam line of the mare. Also he is known to sire both stallions and mares of equal eminence, which is very rare. The best Hejazi offspring bred at Ajmal Stud were Ajmal Al Kout and Ajmal Tameen concerning stallions. Regarding females, extraordinary offspring were Ajmal Obbeyah, Ajmal Moneera, Ajmal Turkiyah, Ajmal Sara, Ajmal Sabha and many others."

Ala'a Hamad Al Roumi, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Kuwait Arabian Horse Center – Bait Al Arab Kuwait State Stud, relates: "I saw Ansata Hejazi for the first time in Kuwait at Mr. Mohammed Al Marzouq's farm in 2003. At that time we were about six straight Egyptian breeders and we were really in need of a good stallion. So we were very happy and proud when this very special stallion came to our country. You cannot imagine how glad we were to have

Ansata Hejazi in Kuwait. When I started my own breeding farm, my Arabian horse breeding colleagues had already begun three to five years earlier. At that time I was looking for a stallion who could pass on good structure in the body and a very nice head. Ansata Hejazi did exactly this for my breeding program. With him I really got what I wanted. I really appreciate Hejazi's ability to pass on great movements, marvelous structure, excellent topline, good head and neck and good legs. The best Hejazi offspring I have bred are the full siblings Gazal Al Rayah and Reem Al Rayah (Ansata Hejazi x Ghazala by Al Adeed Al Shaqab. These two horses have the most beautiful heads at my farm."

Asked about Ansata Hejazi's role, Ala'a Hamad Al Roumi reflects: "Ansata Hejazi did a lot for us in Kuwait and the Gulf. Many people from abroad were interested in breeding to Hejazi. Unfortunately, the technology regarding frozen semen was not as advanced as it is today. I think Hejazi took the place of Ansata Halim Shah. In Kuwait everybody was proud to have a son or daughter by Hejazi. When he was leased to Qatar, he did a lot there, too. Ansata Hejazi's breeding is unique in the world. In my opinion if somebody has progeny by Hejazi he is lucky."

When thinking about Ansata Hejazi's role for Arabian horse breeding in the Middle East and worldwide, Judith Forbis

*Ajmal Al Kout
(Ansata Hejazi x Ansata Malaka)*

remarks: "Hejazi was bred to be a breeding stallion and he proved to be one. The book perfectly illustrates his influence on the breed internationally, but most predominantly in the Arab world. That he went to his ancestral homeland, when so needed, now seems foreordained. The comments by breeders and admirers from many corners of the globe are praiseworthy indeed and, along with the many photographs, confirm that his direct offspring, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are having a broad impact globally. Furthermore, the book was limited to these three categories, as space did not allow to include those generations beyond where Hejazi's influential traits continue to manifest."

The book presentation at Bait Al Arab on February 20th, 2017 proved to be magnificent. "The book launch was truly spectacular", remembers Judith Forbis. "It was heartwarming to have so many of Hejazi's admirers there. The exhibition hall at Bait Al Arab Kuwait State Stud, where the launch was held, was tastefully decorated with huge photos of Hejazi framed in black against the stark white walls – a truly classic presentation. The magnificent Hejazi bronze sculpted by Karen Kasper dominated the center of the room. Nearby, a sample copy of the book had been placed on a small table adorned with white orchids. Flanked by Hejazi's many admirers who were anxious to examine the book, this gave Cynthia and me – and I am sure Mohammed Marzouq as well – an overwhelming sense of gratitude to see the enthusiasm, excitement and appreciation expressed by everyone. After more than two and a half years of hard work in producing this publication, it made all the effort worthwhile." Mohammed Al Marzouq also immensely enjoyed the book launch: "It was very emotional considering the number of people attended and the attention they showed during that day. Frankly, the book exceeded my expectations and I would like to thank Judith Forbis and Cynthia Culbertson for their exceptional work."

Thinking back to this evening, Ala'a Hamad Al Roumi ponders: "During the book presentation I had two different feelings. First of all I was happy because through this book also future breeders can read about Hejazi, his life and influence. Ansata Hejazi is a legend. On the other side I was sad because we lost this marvelous stallion and will never have him back."



The many fans and admirers of Judith Forbis are already curious about possible new projects. "In the remaining months of 2017 I already gave a lecture at the Egyptian Event Europe at Dusseldorf, Germany in August and will participate in the Pyramid Society's Breeders Conference in Assisi, Italy this October", Judith Forbis relates. "My home and facilities serenely overlook Lake Wilhelmina in Mena, Arkansas. It is peaceful living here with my dog, cat and chickens. My entire life has been related to horses, art, writing and the love of animals large and small. Surrounded by the picturesque Ouachita Mountains this valley provides a natural setting in which to host seminars and workshops relating to the subjects I love. However, as to definite projects – who knows what the future holds! Perhaps seminars on 'communicating with animals'."

The book "Ansata Hejazi – Born to Rule" can be obtained through Bait Al Arab, Kuwait or The Pyramid Society, USA.