



EL SAREEI

A GIFT FROM THE ISLAND OF PEARLS

by Joe Ferriss ■ photos by Erwin Escher, Gigi Grasso, Irina Filsinger, Judith Forbis, Rick Van Lent Jr.

Visualize a paradise of intense color. Picture the sparkling sand along the aqua blue shores surrounding the Island of Bahrain, as off shore divers search for the beloved luminescent pearls so treasured as gifts. Bahrain has for centuries been noted for its pearls. The time is 1898 and galloping playfully in the intense sands is a little bay Arabian filly, of the Dahmah Shahwaniah family of the horses of Aissa Ibn Khalifeh, the ruling Sheykh of Bahrain. Bahrain has also long been noted for its splendid Arabian horses. This little bay filly would grow to become a pearl, gleaming long after her lifetime.

In the Arab world, gifts are not considered lightly. Such gifts symbolize the standards and dignity of the giver.

The above mentioned bay filly, as a blossoming 5 year old was chosen in 1903 by the Emir of Bahrain to be given to Khedive Abbas II, Egypt's Khedive until 1914. The young bay mare would later be named Bint El Bahreyn. Actually two mares were gifted but the fate of the other is unknown.

The Khedive was the older brother of famed Prince Mohamed Ali Tewfik, a renowned Arabian horse breeder himself. Fate however seems to offer twists at every turn. The Khedive had built up an impressive stable of Arabians but by 1907 seemed to be winding down his breeding operation. This meant that some of his prized Arabians would become available. By the

end of that year, Lady Anne Blunt had acquired Bint El Bahreyn for her Sheykh Obeyd stud in Egypt and it is under her ownership that the line begins as a family in Egyptian breeding.

In her journals, Lady Anne Blunt notes having seen both Bahrain gift mares. She indicates having a favorable overall impression of Bint El Bahreyn though in some details she was far from Lady Anne's ideal, noting her to be a bit high on the leg, a rather long head and lopping ears. Lady Anne further commented that she was happy to have purchased the best one of the two, and delighted in having such authentic blood from Eastern Arabia.

But for just one foal, a filly, Bint El Bahreyn's blood might otherwise have been lost. Her only issue was the bay filly Dalal (Al Hamra), foaled in 1910, by Lady Anne Blunt's Jamil. Lady Anne Blunt was very pleased with this filly describing her as having a beautiful gazelle-like head. Only from Dalal flows any connection to this "island pearl" but it is a very significant line indeed.

Fortunately Dalal had two daughters, Durra, sired by Lady Anne's stallion Saadun, and Bint Dalal, sired by Prince Mohamed Ali's Kuhaylan Mimreh stallion Hadban. Durra founded a number of branches both male and female, but Bint Dalal is only represented through male lines. There are many ways to unfold the story for this family, but I am only choosing one tributary, that of Bint El Bahreyn's male descendant, El Sareei. Often a male descendant can spread the influence of a family wider than his female counterpart, yet sometimes is less noticed.

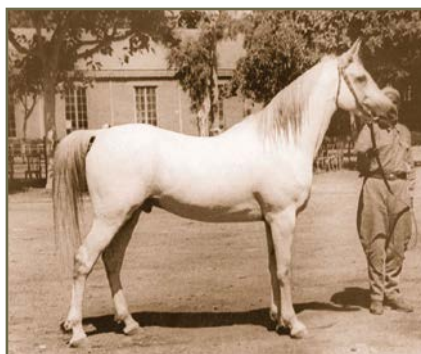
El Sareei was a bay stallion foaled in 1942 at the Royal Agricultural Society stud in Egypt (RAS). He was sired by the great RAS sire Shahloul (Ibn Rabdan x Bint Radia) and out of Zareefa (Kazmeyn x Durra). His pedigree is an

interesting one to review. Two distinguished families are united here. His sire, Shahloul, is of the prized Ali Pasha Sherif - Saqlawi Jidran family of Radia from the Sheykh Obeyd stud in Egypt. Radia and her daughter Bint Radia were often revered as classic examples of Arabian beauty. Shahloul succeeded his sire, Ibn Rabdan, at the RAS and became an excellent progenitor of his dam's magnificence through names which are now legend such as Moniet El Nefous, Bukra, Kateefa, and Maisa (sister to El Sareei). And of course the "pearl", Bint El Bahreyn, is carried forward via El Sareei's dam Zareefa,

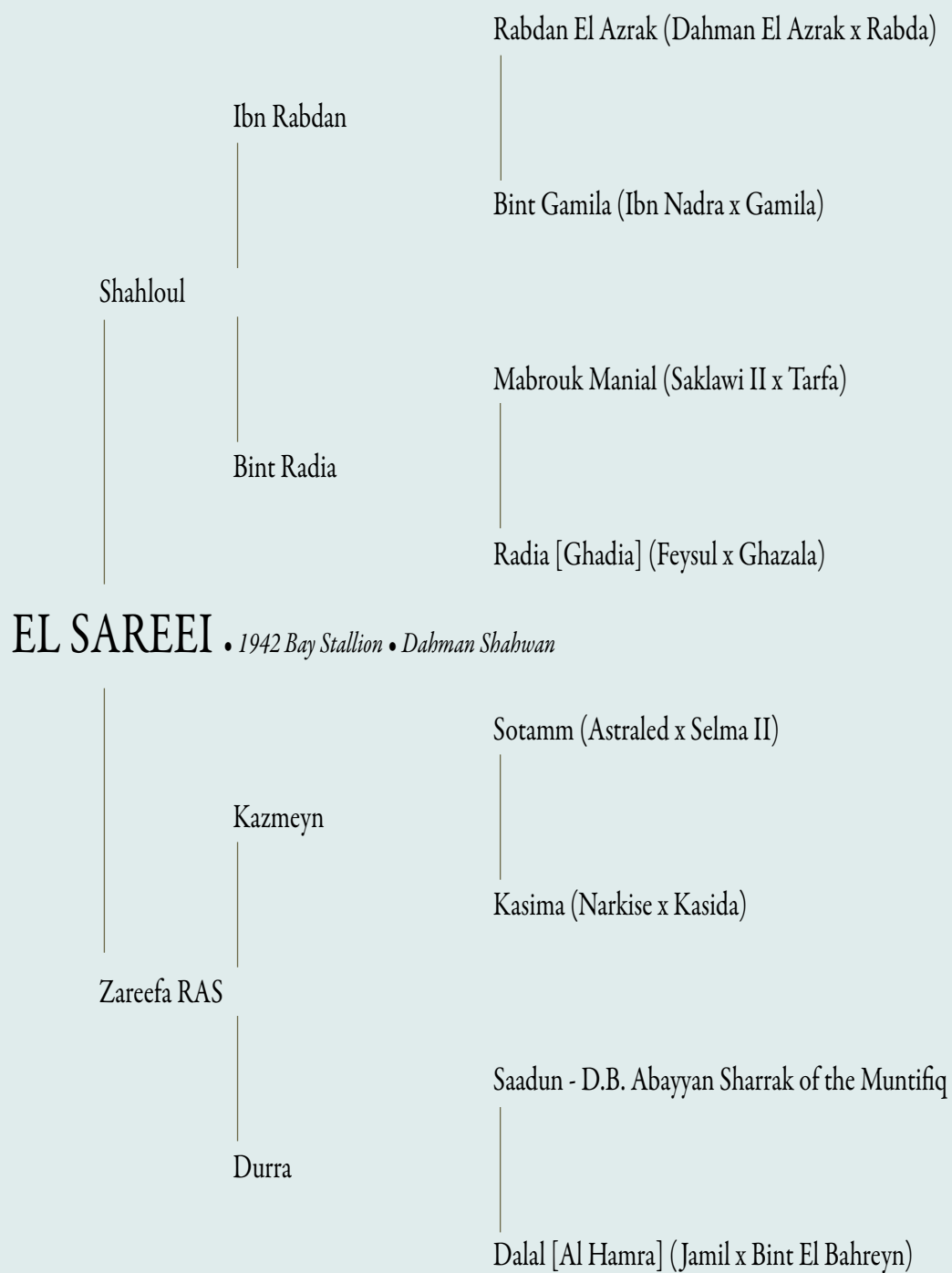
who also produced the above mentioned Maisa. In Zareefa's pedigree, it is interesting to note the close lines to tribal breeding through the Abayyan Sharrak stallion Saadun acquired from the Muntifiq, and also Kazmeyn, who is line bred to Queen of Sheba from the Qumusa-Saba tribe. In fact 43% of Zareefa's pedigree is from tribal stock acquired by the Blunts, not counting Bint El Bahreyn. In retrospect there is a kind of "genetic freshness" in El Sareei's pedigree that makes him very useful to extend the line-breeding options at the RAS as well as into future generations of Egyptian Arabians.

For me personally, the photos that I saw of El Sareei caused me to take notice of him. As one reviews some of the images of him, he was simply a magnificent example of an Arabian stallion.

Judging from some good photos courtesy of Judith Forbis, it is easy to see his striking beauty both in overall form and in the details. Although most available photos of him were taken in old age there is still much to learn from Judi's images. Though not extreme in any way, his head was one of good overall quality and of correct proportions to his beautifully shaped neck. His eyes were large, dark and prominent, giving a compelling expression. His ears were nicely shaped. The width across the forehead was broad



*Sire and dam of El Sareei, Shahloul and Zareefa RAS.
photos from Forbis archives.*





Two descriptive images of El Sareei taken in old age. Judith Forbis photos.

with appropriate tapering, past prominent tear bones, down the fore face joining large, well formed nostrils which would no doubt serve him well, expanding to take in needed air in a long gallop across the desert. His jowls were large, round, strong and set wide apart, allowing lots of room for his windpipe, a feature more valued in the old days yet not seen as often in some of today's breeding. Moving beyond the head, it is easy to appreciate his handsome overall silhouette. Most striking is the beautiful neck entering the shoulders at just the right point accented by prominent, crisply sculpted withers. Since he is advanced in age in most photos, it is understandable that his back would flow somewhat more curvaceous into his croup, which is terminated by a high set tail. The overall form is completed by refined, long legs of clean, flat bone. Some may want of more tendon, but there is an overall sense of harmony between strength and refinement.

So that is my just subjective impression from photos. But what did others have to say who saw the horse in person? Judi Forbis gives us the greatest insight, in her book *Authentic Arabian Bloodstock II*. When General Von Szandtner was hired to manage the E.A.O. he developed a detailed hand written herd book with pedigrees, photos and descriptions of various breeding stock. During the 1960s, Judi Forbis photographed and hand copied each page of Von Szandtner's herd books, recording the details, later offering much of the information in her book. By the time

Von Szandtner reviewed El Sareei, he would have been a mature stallion. Von Szandtner notes: "...very noble, very noble head, lively large eyes, well set ears, good well-set neck, good withers, forward stretching soft back, good loins, good croup, high set tail, wide and deep, cannons tied in, pasterns a little

bit long, sickel-hocked, very little walking

on toes, sound sex organs, good movements." Judi went on to include comments from Von Szandtner's successor, Dr. Mohamed Marsafi who described El Sareei as: "structurally better than Shahloul but not as good a head. Height about 15 hands." Then Judi, having also seen El Sareei on many occasions notes: "One of the most splendid and classic Arabians we had the pleasure to see. Beautiful head, well-balanced, prideful carriage, iridescent copper coat; a magnificent specimen of the breed. A good broodmare sire." She also noted in other

of her books that he was typical of the Bint El Bahreyn line having excellent movement.

How do we evaluate him as a sire? Judi Forbis commented that he never sired his equal but was a great broodmare sire. Because he was such an impressive soul himself, it would have been a tall order to repeat in any quantity, since so very few stallions can do this, but without question his daughters reveal a wonderful weave of his influence in contemporary Egyptian breeding.

Numerically, El Sareei sired 42 foals over a nine year period from 1955 to 1964. Of these 37 were straight Egyptian and 5 were descendants of Mr. T. B. Trouncer's imported Skowronek son Registan. It is a respectable number of get for a horse at his point in history. As it turned out, El Sareei was predominantly a sire of females. It seems logical that El Sareei had little choice but to become a broodmare sire since only 7 of the 37 straight Egyptian get he sired were stallions. Only two of these stallions have bred on to the present within straight Egyptian lines.

The 1961 bay stallion Asfour EAO (x Ghandoura El Saghira) has but a handful of descendants, but the other El Sareei son, Tuhotmos, a 1962 bay stallion (x Moniet El Nefous) became an extremely popular sire. He was used considerably in Egypt before being exported to the U.S. at the age of 11. His get that remained in Egypt became influential there. Several of his get were exported to Europe where they made a significant impact. His heavy use in the U.S. made him a premier source of El Sareei blood. In America, Tuhotmos became a sensation. Having seen him on a number of occasions, he certainly made me take notice. Though he was smaller than his sire, Tuhotmos was an artist's inspiration for his dry, refined beauty, and he was an extremely charismatic horse who must have come close to repeating his sire's charm. He was so charming in fact that his lifetime number of foals is 427, found in many countries. Tuhotmos is worthy of a separate article so I will not cover him in detail here, but suffice it to say that he is a very significant source of El Sareei blood.

However, the daughters of El Sareei have so much to do with carrying on his legacy. The chart at right shows 25 of his daughters that have produced straight Egyptian foals. Only three daughters, Zahia II, Bint Kawthar,

and Kareman are no longer found in Egyptian pedigrees today. Many of these El Sareei daughters have become very influential on Egyptian breeding internationally.

There must have been some excitement at the E.A.O. that August morning of 1955 when El Sareei's very first foal arrived, a grey filly out of Galila (x Sid Abouhom), whose name became Zebeda. Pictures show her to be a pretty mare with a lovely head. She proved to be an exceptional broodmare. Zebeda is the dam of Shaker El Masri (x Morafic), a popular sire who went to Germany and France, siring 88 get including famed El Shaklan. Zebeda is also dam of the exquisite Alifa (x Alaa El Din) whose daughter Kodwa (2 crosses to El Sareei) went to Switzerland and became a producer of champions. Zebeda produced Zohair (x Alaa El Din) who stood at stud in Hungary and is found in Babolna pedigrees. It is interesting to note that both Alaa El Din and Morafic crossed very well with El Sareei daughters.

El Sareei's next foal was Malacha. Her dam Moheba (x Sid Abouhom) was exported to Germany in foal to El



The iridescent copper bay color of El Sareei gleaming in the Egyptian sun. Judith Forbis photo.

Sareei producing Malacha. As it turned out Malacha became the only tail female line to Halima, renowned as the dam of the beloved Ansata Ibn Halima. While Malacha was not exotic by today's standards she is a fine example of why El Sareei was such a good broodmare sire. Malacha's two beautiful daughters Moheba II and Malikah both by Gazal (Nazeer x Bukra) have created a legend producing so many excellent and classic Arabians. In honor of the extraordinary influence of these two mares, many of their descendants are named beginning with the letter "M", much like Rodania of the past was referred to as the "R" family. Either way, it shows the tremendous regard that descendants of Malacha have earned internationally. With Malikah having 13 straight Egyptian foals and Moheba II having 12 straight Egyptian foals this family is one of the most prominent in history. Accordingly, the very long list of international show winners connected to Malacha is astounding, even to this day some carrying as many as 10 or more crosses to her.

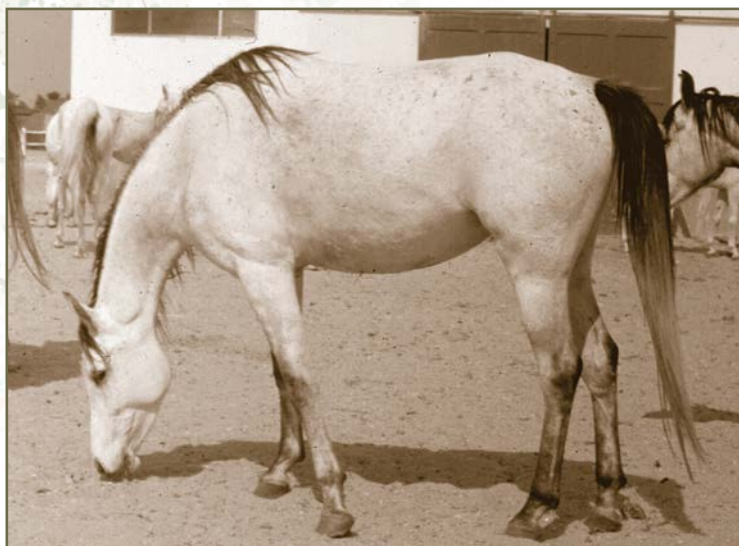
Zebeda and Malacha alone were impressive examples of El Sareei daughters but his third daughter, Bint Kamla (x Kamla by Sheikh El Arab) adds considerably to his deserved legacy. She produced 2 sons by Morafic, El Badi and Shaarawi. Both became E.A.O. sires with the popular Shaarawi being most heavily used, producing 51 foals. Bint Kamla produced two daughters by Alaa El Din, Lutfia and Nazeema. Lutfia was exported to Hungary and then to Germany where she became an excellent broodmare producing 12 foals for Babolna and 4 for Dr. Nagel. Lutfia's foals include the beautiful and mystifying "Gala" Ibn Galal 1-7, U.S. National Top Ten mare, and the striking stallion Nejdy (x Salaa El Dine). Bint Kamla's other daughter Nazeema went on to produce a number of important sons, including the very charming Misk (x Wahag), a sire in Egypt, and the handsome mahogany bay Nizam, a double Bint Kamla grandson, exported to Germany and later to Israel.

It is remarkable how sometimes when a mare only produces one foal it can have the impact of ten. Such was the case for El Sareei's next daughter, Rida (x Rouda by Sheikh El Arab). She produced only one foal, a daughter named Hosna in Egypt (x Ibn Maisa). Hosna was exported to the Babolna stud in Hungary, and later to Germany. She produced 13 foals. Her

Straight Egyptian Daughters of El Sareei who have produced Egyptian foals:

Name	year & color	Dam (sire x dam)	Egyptian foals
Zebeda	1955 grey	Galila (Sid Abouhom x Rouda)	10 foals
Malacha [exp. to Germany]	1955 bay	Moheba (Sid Abouhom x Halima)	6 foals
Bint Kamla	1956 chestnut	Kamla (Sheikh El Arab x Samha)	4 foals
Bint Shams [exp. to U.S.]	1956 grey	Shams (Mashaan x Bint Samiha)	6 foals
Rida	1956 bay	Rouda (Sheikh El Arab x Fasiha)	1 foal
Zahia II	1956 bay	Zaafarana (Balance x Samira RAS)	2 foals
Rashida	1956 bay	Yashmak (Sheikh El Arab x Bint Rissala)	2 foals
Mohga	1956 black	Yosreia (Sheikh El Arab x Hind)	9 foals
Kismat / Bint Dahma [exp. to U.S.]	1956 chestnut	Dahma II (Nazeer x Futna)	11 foals
Bint Nefisa I [exp. to U.S.]	1957 bay	Nefisa (Balance x Helwa)	11 foals
Salomi / Salomy [exp. to U.S.]	1957 grey	Malaka (Kheir x Bint Bint Riyala)	4 foals
Hagir	1957 grey	Kamar (Nazeer x Komeira)	6 foals
Bint Samia	1957 bay	Samia (Nazeer x Malaka)	2 foals
Bint Kawthar	1959 bay	Kawthar (Mekdam x Bint Karima)	3 foals
Bint Hanaa [exp. to U.S.]	1959 bay	Hanaa (El Belbesi x Hind IOHB)	13 foals
Abeer [exp. to Germany]	1960 chestnut	Absa (Gassir x Zahra RAS)	9 foals
Set El Wadi	1962 bay	Mamlouka (Nazeer x Malaka)	6 foals
Amani	1962 grey	Nazeera (Nazeer x Malaka)	5 foals
Shook [exp. to U.S.]	1962 grey	Rayana (Ezzat x Rateeba)	12 foals
Korima	1962 grey	Bint El Bataa (Nazeer x El Bataa)	10 foals
Kareman [exp. to Morocco then Spain]	1962 bay	Lateefa (Gamil III x Salwa)	1 foal
Anzar / AK Anzar [exp. to U.S.]	1963 bay	Hanaa (El Belbesi x Hind IOHB)	8 foals
Ramza	1963 grey	Shahbaa (Hamdan x Shahd)	5 foals
Thouraya I	1963 grey	Rayana (Ezzat x Rateeba)	12 foals
Izees [exp. to U.S.]	1964 bay	Ghariba (Aboud x Gharbawia)	1 foal

*The lovely Zebeda,
first born daughter of El Sareei.
She became very influential
throughout Europe.
Dam of Shaker El Masri,
Alifa, Zohair and others.
Judith Forbis photo.*





Above and at right, two magnificent daughters of Malacha: Malikah, owned by the Filsinger Arabian Stud, and Moheba II, broodmare for Marbach, both sired by Ghazal. Irina Filsinger photo, left. Image at right from Judith Forbis archive.

Ghazal

Nazeer (Mansour x Bint Samiha)

Bukra (Shahloul x Bint Sabah)

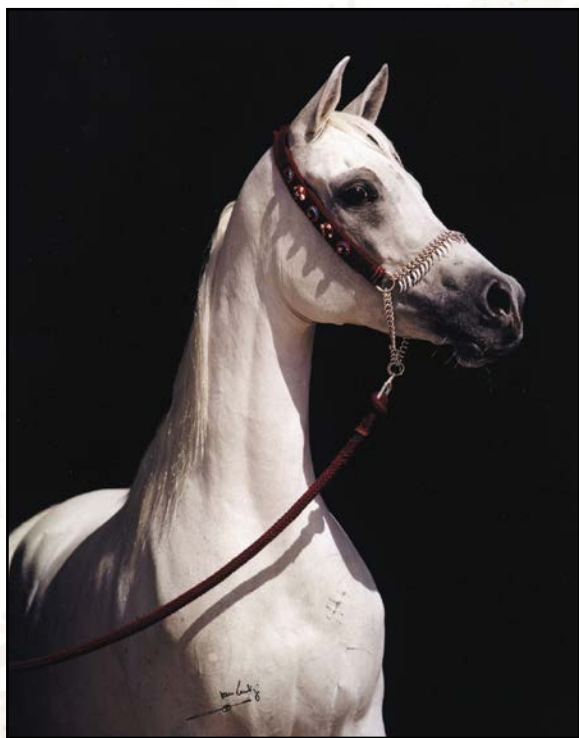
Malikah and Moheba II

El Sareei (Shahloul x Zareefa)

Malacha

Moheba (Sid Abouhom x Halima)

Prominent descendants of Malacha. Left is world renowned sire Imperial Madheen (Messaoud x Madinah). Rich in Bint El Bahreyn blood, he has two crosses to Malacha through Malikah plus one cross to the El Sareei daughter, Mohga, and he includes El Sareei's full sister Maisa. Rick Van Lent Jr. photo. Below left is Ansata Majesta, two crosses to Malacha, one via Jamil (to Moheba II) and tail female to Malacha through Malikah. Ansata Majesta is one of 5 full sisters by Ansata Halim Shah who have worldwide impact. Rick Van Lent Jr. photo. Below is Ashbal Al Rayyan, son of Ansata Majesta, a very successful Qatar show horse and a chief sire for Al Rayyan. He is the sire of Athena, 2008 Sharjah International Champion Mare and 2007 European Champion Mare-Verona. Gigi Grasso photo.





At left is Bint Kamla (El Sareei x Kamla) and above is her famed son Shaarawi by Morafic. Shaarawi was an important sire at the EAO. Judith Forbis photos.



Classic Shadwan, a double Bint Kamla stallion, international champion and sire of champions. Erwin Escher photo.



Misk, the charismatic son of Nazeema, and very popular sire at Shams El Asil Stud, Egypt. Forbis archive photo.

black son El Aswad (x Ibn Galal), became a popular sire with 125 foals to his credit. Hosna's daughter, 27-Ibn Galal-5, was exported to Australia as a two year old in 1977. She became a founding mare for Marion Richmond's famed Simeon Stud. She was an Australian champion and dam of champions with generations of international champions continuing from this family. 27-Ibn Galal-5's daughter, Simeon Safanad is famed as dam of international champion Simeon Shai, owned by Silver Maple Farms, U.S.A., and Simeon Sadik, owned by Halsdon Stud in the U.K. 27-Ibn Galal-5 is not only a granddaughter of Hosna but she is also a granddaughter of another important El Sareei daughter,



The international champion Simeon Shai (Raadin Royal Star x Simeon Safanad). Gigi Grasso photo.

the 1956 black mare Mohga (x Yosreia). With 9 foals, Mohga's influence is far reaching. Mohga's name was first introduced to Americans by her beautiful daughter Nahlah (x Morafic), who was many times a champion and crowd favorite. Later Mohga's black son El Mokhtar (x Galal) arrived in the U.S. and played a role in the popular movie version of Walter Farley's book, "The Black Stallion".

In Europe two of Mohga's sons were imported from Egypt: Meyhar (x Alaa El Din), and the handsome chestnut Ibn Galal, imported for Babolna, who in no time distinguished himself as a truly superior sire. With 117 get to his credit, Ibn Galal is the sire of many

famous mares and stallions. It is interesting to note that Mohga's black color is transmitted from generation to generation, largely through Ibn Galal who is not only in many European pedigrees but is also in the pedigree of the very heavily used U.S. stallions Simeon Shai and The Minstril, familiar sources of black and dark colors. Mohga left sons and daughters in Egypt as well so she is certainly high among the influential daughters of El Sareei.

The blood of El Sareei was first introduced in America via the famed imports of Richard Pritzlaff who, in 1958, imported the bay Bint Nefisa (x Nefisa) and the

chestnut Bint Dahma (x Dahma II). Because General Vonszandtner had selected these horses for Richard, they had become well regarded for their quality and were an integral part of the Pritzlaff breeding program for many years. Both were noted for their large lustrous eyes and deep jowls, like El Sareei, and contributed much to the Pritzlaff program. Bint Nefisa is remembered especially for her daughters Alfisa RSI (x Alcibiades), and the lovely big eyed Balmoniet RSI (x Monietor RSI), both of these mares being producers of the black color. Bint Dahma has a large family through both sons and daughters in the U.S. She is the dam of 11 foals, 10 of which have been quite prolific.

Four years later among the famed Gleannloch importations to the U.S., was the El Sareei daughter Salomy (x Malaka), in foal to Morafic, producing the show winning Saba El Zahraa. Her son Samim, by Ansata Ibn Halima, became a fine sire and her daughter Il Mandil (x Moftakhar) carries her line forward in America. Salomy is also the tail female line of Judith Wich's Ansata Azali in Germany.

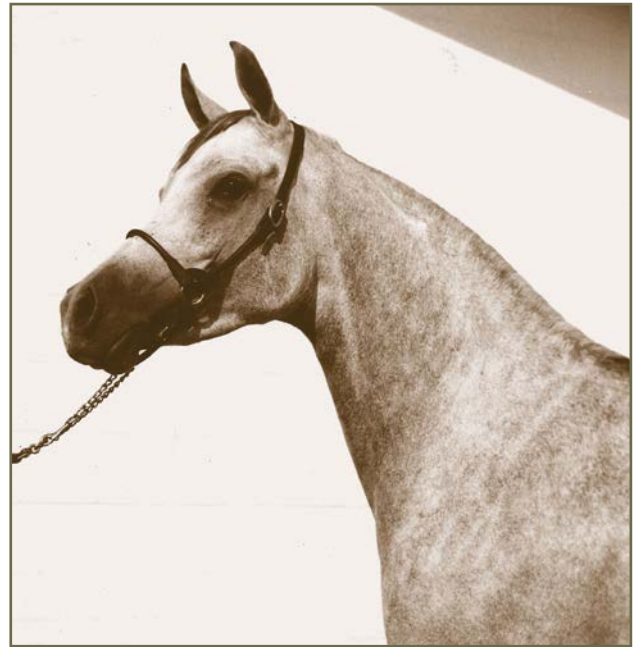
In 1968, H. J. Huebner imported the 9 year old El Sareei daughter, Bint Hanaa (x Hanaa) along with her 4 year old Morafic daughter, Gamilaa. Both of these mares became a part

of Gleannloch's breeding program and, along with the aforementioned Mohga daughter

Nahlah, El Sareei blood became very successful in the U.S. National show ring. The versatile Nahlah was U.S. Reserve National Champion mare, as well as Top Ten Mare at halter, Top Ten English and Western Pleasure and Top Ten Native Costume. Bint Hanaa produced U.S. Reserve National Champion Mare Bint Bint Hanaa (x Morafic), a full sister to Gamilaa who also produced National winners.

Other El Sareei daughters imported to the U.S. include: Bint Shams (x Shams), Shook (Rayana), Anzar (x Hanaa), a full sister to Bint Hanaa, and Izees (x Ghariba). El Sareei get imported to the U.S. represents a total of 8 daughters

and the aforementioned son, Tuhotmos, so a strong sampling of his blood reached North America. El Sareei's daughter Amani (x Nazeera) produced Asadd, a striking liver chestnut stallion who was imported to the U.S. and later became U.S. National Champion Stallion as well as twice Top Ten National English Pleasure champion.



Nahlah (Morafic x Mohga) Forbis archives.

Amani also produced JKB Mawaheb, imported to Germany and later leased to Ansata in the U.S.

Europe not only benefited from the huge impact of the El Sareei daughter, Malacha imported there, but another El Sareei daughter was imported to Germany, Abeer (x Absa) where she produced 7 foals for Erich Hagenlocher. Two of her daughters foaled in Egypt later went to Europe, Bint Fayek (x Fayek) and Rasha (x Ibn Maisa), so Abeer's blood is found in European Egyptian breeding.

Other El Sareei daughters who are influential in Europe include: Set El Wadi (x Mamlouka), dam European imports Ghroub (x Galal) and Ibn Mourad (x Mourad); Korima (x Bint El Bataa), dam of European imports Wafaa (x Nasralla), as well as JKB Belkies, Sawsan, and Bint Korima, all by Galal. The El Sareei daughter Rashida (x Yashmak), produced Nazic (x Morafic) and Gubran (x Alaa El Din) who have progeny imported to Europe.

In Egypt, El Sareei's daughter Ramza (x Shahbaa) produced some impressive get by Alaa El Din, again affirming the successful cross of Alaa El Din on El Sareei daughters. These include the stallions Anas

and Ibn Alaa El Din, and the exquisite chestnut mare Safnaz (x Alaa El Din) who became a much admired broodmare at the E.A.O. She is noted as the dam of Imperial's U.S. import, Ibn Safnaz. The El Sareei daughter Hagir (x Kamar) produced the very classic Akhtal, a chief sire at the E.A.O., and a favorite of mine for his beautiful, carved ivory like appearance. He sired 55 Egyptian foals, most retained in Egypt, but many were also exported to Germany, North America, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. For sentimentality, it is heart warming to see descendants of Bint El Bahreyn come full circle to the Bahraini shores where she once must have roamed.

I was always enamoured by the photos of El Sareei and the descriptions of him, but I never really realized the impact that he has had on Arabian breeding until I undertook this little study of his influence which I enjoy sharing with the readers. Just for fun I took a look at some recent international show winners to see what role El Sareei played in the background of their breeding. The chart at the left is a small sampling but gives the reader a little feel for his connection to successful Arabian breeding even to this day, some 66 years after his birth.

So the story of El Sareei is a modest one actually. He was a very special individual who gave us a wealth of daughters and an influential son, each with their own role in the journey for the perfect classic Arabian horse. He did not dominate his get with his own look, in "cookie-cutter" fashion, but rather he imparted them with a better job to do, that of producing a more classic Arabian in generations to come. So the next time you look into the deep, dark eyes of a classic Arabian in whose veins flows the blood of El Sareei, perhaps you will see his reflection. And if you look further into those deep dark eyes, perhaps you will see a beautiful pearl of a dark bay filly, playing on the sparkling sandy shores, against the aqua blue sky in 1898, destined to be the bearer of gifts from Allah - the Arabian horse we hold dear. □



*The deep, dark eyes of El Sareei. Photo taken in old age.
Judith Forbis photo.*

Special thanks to Judith Forbis, Gigi Grasso, Irina Filsinger, Erwin Escher, Rik Van Lent, Jr. and the Pyramid Society for their artful images provided in illustrating this feature.