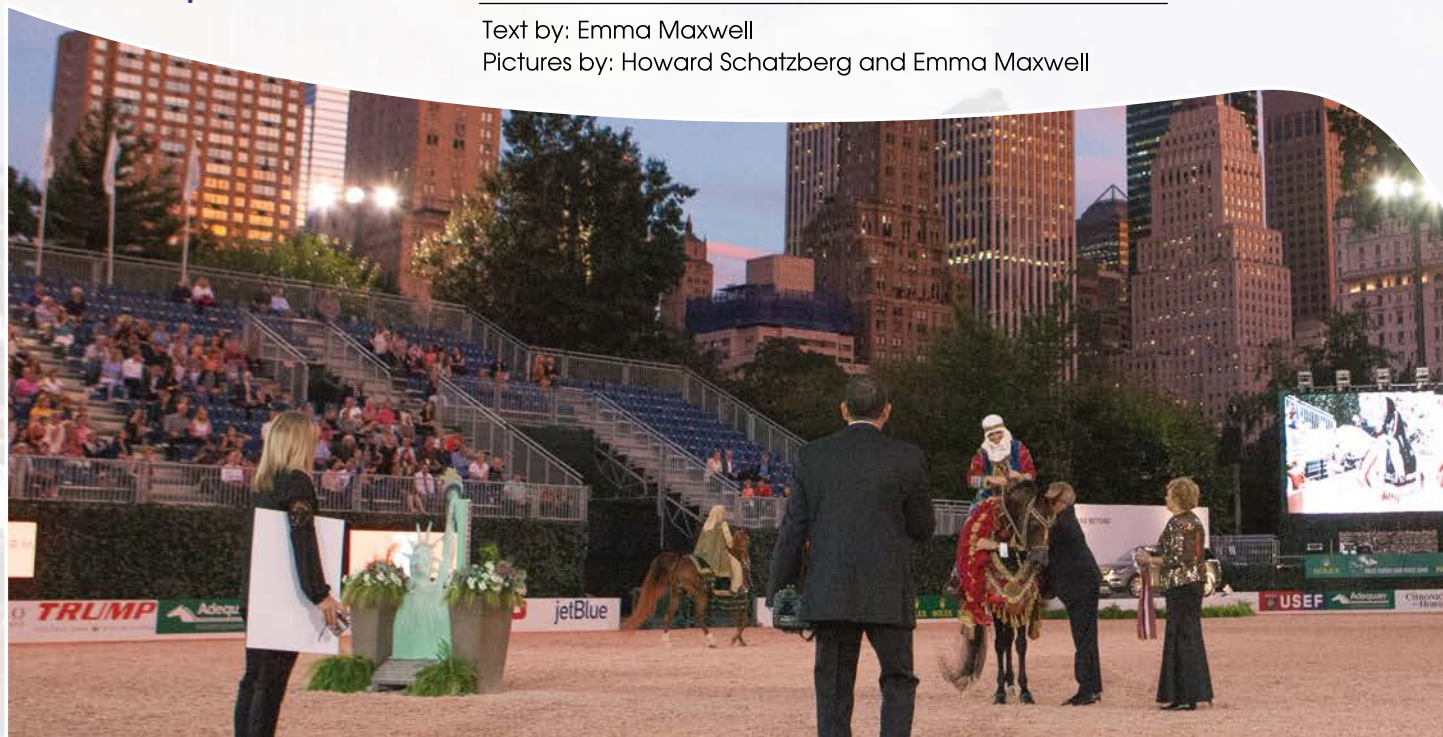




Arabian US OPEN

Text by: Emma Maxwell

Pictures by: Howard Schatzberg and Emma Maxwell



The second Arabian US Open took place on Wednesday 21st September 2016 in Central Park in New York. The Rolex Central Park Horse Show started in 2014 showcasing top level showjumping and dressage over the weekend, plus a meet the horses occasion for the general public in the arena on Sunday. Last year, with backing of the AHA and the main partnering sponsorship of Sheikh Jassim Bin Khalifa Al Thani's Aljassimya Farm the show allowed Arabians to add on to the event on the opening evening of the Wednesday night. Yes, it is just a few days before Aachen but as the single opportunity of the year when horses can compete in Central Park, it is not a date which can be altered and as an opportunity to promote the Arabian horse; not an occasion the breed can afford to miss out on. !

New York is simply one of the most exciting cities in the world and it is impossible not to feel energized just by being there. The horse show is an evening spectacular which

creates the perfect opportunity for the horse that has won everything to put a cherry on the top of an already stellar career. The occasion is designed to celebrate the appeal of the Arabian horse at his very best with eight classes were offered, four at halter and four at performance. It is not about numbers but quality and the very special opportunity to compete in Central Park. No competitor – whatever the equine sport is immune to the overwhelming feeling of coming into this arena with the immediately recognisable backdrop of NYC just behind the trees. In fact double Olympic Gold Medallist in dressage Charlotte Dujardin could not resist making a return to the show after accepting her invitation last year she returned to give her second Freestyle dressage display on Valegro on the Saturday night of this show.

As American judge Steve Lieblang noted “Being added into the RCPHS with the Arabians is absolutely amazing. It is an incredible opportunity to get some wonderful exposure. It is



great for people who are not normally exposed to Arabian horses to actually see them compete. I think the horses that we had tonight were extremely high-quality, and everyone did an absolutely incredible job.”

The show was opened with the Stars and Stripes paraded by Frank Hennessy's US National Champion Park Horse H Mobility H, who was just one of many US National Champion horses to be seen on the night. The competition opened just as the sun was setting with the crowd pleasing Native Costume Class won for the second year running by the amazing 27 year old gelding HL Sanction. Owned by Hawk Haven Farms and ridden by Cathy Vecsey, the athletic HL Sanction is a grandson of Bask and Serafix proving that good blood is still good blood, whatever the era it excelled in ! Runner up was Captain Courageous PA ridden by Sally Wheeler Maier, again one of last years competitors who was not going miss out on another chance to ride in this arena, encouraged by an enthusiastic crowd.

Yearlings were not included this year so the show continued with a Junior filly section that was won by elegant Aria Quintessa (Trussardi – MC Sophie) owned by Quintessa Partners LLC and presented by Michael Byatt. The youngest winner at this show, she like the oldest winner HL Sanction has already attained that magical US National Champion title, as a yearling last year. Silver champion was Fascination J (FA El Rasheem – Inspiration J) a second generation homebred from Larry Jerome of Jerland Farms, Wisconsin who gave an excellent display.

The Quintessa Partners doubled their fun when their lovely chestnut mare Aria Qatars Angel (Abha Qatar – BHF Dark Angel) also took the mare championship, with oth their champions handled by Michael Byatt. Reserve was Anna Marie BHF (Marwan Al Shaqab – BHF Anna Tevkah) owned by Anthony Marino Sr. and Anthony Marino Jr, and also already a US National Champion AOTH.



The most international section of the night was the Colt Championship won by Vangelis MI (DA Valentino – Always An Angel MI) owned and bred by Mulawa stud. Already Australian National Champion and Scottsdale international Champion he edged out the sole European competitor, a winner in both the USA and his home country France -Vortex Kalliste (Shanghai EA – Mirwanah Kalliste) owned and bred by Jennifer Dhombre. Jennifer commented that “I must say I am not at all a city lover but the Central Park atmosphere, like a green emerald in the centre of huge New York City makes this show very special. I think this show has the potential to become something we cannot miss going and see.”

Last but by no means least was the stallion class, which was headed by the 2009 US National Champion Stallion Aria Impresario (Marwan Al Shaqab – GC Echlectica) owned by Aria Impresario Holdings and presented by Michael Byatt. Looking superb at he pose, with a neck that goes on forever he was taken on a emotional lap of honour by his breeder,

performance trainer Joey Canda. This will be his last appearance in the show ring and a final jewel in his crown. He was not without rivals though as the younger stallion Kavalle MI (Gazal Al Shaqab – Karess), bred by Mulawa of Australia and now owned by Joanne Gunabalan put on a very dynamic performance with Andy Sellman and was a picture of beautiful Arabian in motion.

This year the halter entries were allowed to arrange themselves in a team – one horse for each of the four championships, with different or the same owners. The three teams Quicken Loans, Jarvis Insurance and Arabian Horse Times paid a premium for the entry of the four horses on their team and received VIP tickets, tables and after party tickets. The winning team – Quicken Loans won \$ 10 000 making their evening !

An innovation this year was that other three performance classes were run under a Pro/Am rule set meaning that their



professional trainer rode them for the first half of the class and an amateur, usually the owner rides for the second half of the class, making it a special class for both types of competitors. The Hunter Pleasure was won by the Enzo son C Hondo who already has a string of titles to his name including two National Championships at Youth Nationals in 2015. Trained and ridden by Natalie Jones and Anna Redmond for Wolf Springs Ranch, they narrowly won over Royal T Phorte and Tom Hansen, who noted that the occasion was "No doubt will be one of the coolest experiences of my riding career." Bronze champion was Ariya Encora owned by Katie Russell from California. "This is my first time here, and I feel blessed to be here," Russell stated. "I think it is pretty amazing to be over 55 and be here competing. Most people have things that they say are their glory days, and I feel like I made a glory day today. This is something pretty amazing to do.

The Performance continued with a very popular Western

Pleasure Class, won by the glamorous black PA Kid Khan (Sundance Kid v – PGA Kharrea) ridden by Rob Bick and Janie Wasilewski. PA Kid Khan went to gain Top Ten honours at the 2016 US Nationals as did the Bronze champion Holdin Aces.

Afires Style (by Afire Bey V) a previous US National Champion Junior Horse took the Country English Pleasure class ridden by Joel Kiesner and Alexa Cohn, in an evenly split decision between the eventual reserve Ames Inspiration (by A Noble Cause). Ridden by Leah Golladay and Lara Ames, this flashy bay mare went on to win 2016 US national Reserve Champion Country English Pleasure AOTR.

There was a lot of energy about the show and a lot of smiling faces – for who cannot not resist the chance to be in New York City in September. Still just at the start of its run - it should take its place as one of the highlights of the Arabian season.



Arabian Junior Mare Halter



Gold
ARIA QUINTESSA
Quintessa Partners LLC



Silver - FASCINATION J
Daria L. Stransky and Lawrence Jerome

Arabian Junior Stallion Halter



Gold
VANGELIS MI
Mulawa Arabian Stud



Silver - WORTOX KALLISTE
S.A.R.L. Kalliste Arabians

Arabian Senior Mare Halter



Gold

ARIA QATARS ANGEL

Quintessa Partners LLC



Silver - ANNA MARIE BHF

*Anthony Marino Sr. and
Anthony Marino Jr.*

Arabian Senior Stallion Halter



Gold

ARIA IMPRESARIO

Aria Impresario Holdings LLC



Silver - KAVALLE MI

Joanne Gunabalan



Arabian Mounted Native Costume

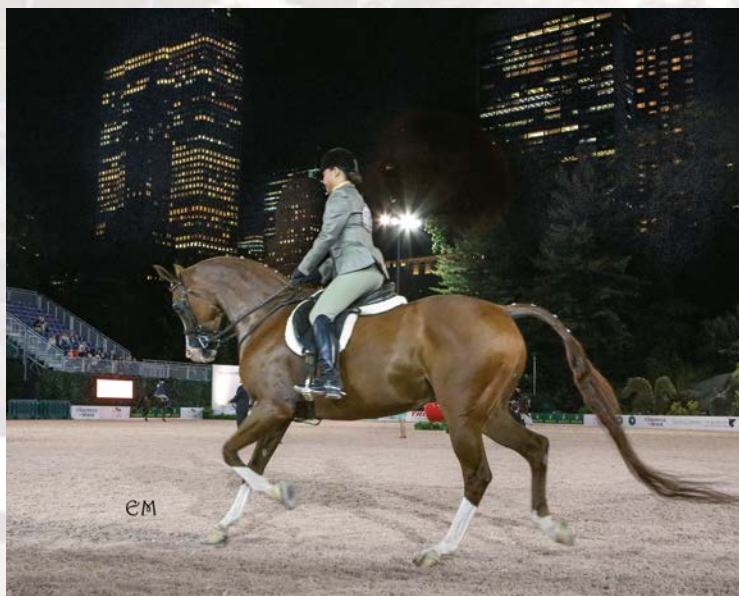


Silver - CAPTAIN COURAGEOUS PA

Rider: Kayleigh Meyer

Owner: Madison Fernandes and Krystal Duarte

Arabian Hunter Pleasure Pro/Am



Silver - ROYAL T PHORTE

Riders: Justin Cowden and Tom Hansen

Owner: Theresa Lungwitz

Gold

HL SANCTION

Rider: Cathy Vecsey

Owner: Hawk Haven Farms



Gold

C HONDO

Riders: Natalie Jones and

Anna Redmond

Owner: Wolf Springs Ranches Inc.



Arabian Western Pleasure Pro/Am



Gold

PA KID KHAN

Riders: Rob Bick and Janie Wasilewski

Owner: J Frank and Sara R. Chisholm



Silver - POSSESSION PGA

Riders: Carolyn Schroeder and Nan Harley

Owner: Nan Harley

Arabian Country English Pleasure Pro/Am



Gold

AFIRES STYLE

Riders: Joel Kiesner and Alexa Cohn

Owner: Ask LLC



AMES INSPIRATION

Riders: Leah Golladay and Lara Ames

Owner: Cedar Ridge Arabians