
2012 U.S. Nationals



Like a first-run film or a Broadway play, each U.S. National Championship Show has a character all its own. To learn more about how people saw this year's event, we asked several who were there for their thoughts. What were their favorite memories? How would they evaluate the show? What was best about it, and what suggestions could they offer for the future?

There were as many opinions, of course, as there were speakers. However, it was not long before trends became apparent, observations that recurred again and again. For instance, nearly everyone said that this year, there was a new, positive feel to the show, a simmering of enthusiasm in the Arabian community that had not been apparent at the U.S. Nationals in recent years. Did everyone suddenly endorse Tulsa? Not really. Many prefaced their answers by saying that it was not their favorite location, but then cited



improvements this year that gave them hope for the future. Perhaps it was best phrased by halter judge Van Jacobsen, who said that it was as if everyone had decided to look on the glass as half-full, rather than half-empty. The new sense of excitement was palpable, most said, and they recognized the effort put in by the Show Commission and the APAHA volunteers not only to upgrade the show's decorations, but to solve past problems and restore the feeling of "Aren't we lucky to be here!"

There are some facets of Tulsa Expo Square that draw unreserved praise. “It has the cleanest facilities of anyplace we show,” said Chuck Siemon. “They even clean the wash racks!”

Add to that, the weather this year was exemplary—not too hot, nor too cold, and an ongoing parade of fair skies. (As one observer said, there was never a need to throw a tarp over your horse’s head as you hurried through a pelting rain to one of the rings.) The stall decorations, as usual, were beautiful, and Maddy Winer’s rendition of the National Anthem during the opening ceremonies was inspiring. And Arabians were great not only in competition, but as entertainment too: Sylvia Zerbini’s troupe of eight liberty horses gave new meaning to the breed’s legendary intelligence.

“The show has gotten better every year since it’s been in Tulsa,” said Siemon. “If you had only visited that show, that week, and seen all the positive things that were going on, you wouldn’t think there was any concern about the U.S. economy. Everything was so attractive, and it was wonderful to see so many people working so hard toward a common goal.”



Here is what a broad selection of Arabian owners, trainers, breeders and exhibitors had to say about the 2012 U.S. Nationals.

Andy Sellman
Argent Farms, River Falls, Wis.

“My most memorable moment from the show was showing Pyro Thyme SA, and there are several reasons why that was important to me,” Andy Sellman said. “I’ve been showing horses professionally for 17 years, and this was the second time that I got to show a national champion stallion. In my eyes, I think that this title is the most sought-after title there is. And I think that my colleagues and I are all in the same boat as we try to align ourselves with horses that are worthy of doing something like that—being a national champion stallion. From there, we have to prepare them in a fashion that is bordering on perfection, so that not only do you have a good enough horse, but it’s easy to use and a horse that people easily get behind. And so, it’s very rewarding and an honor to win that title, period. In addition, what made it truly special was doing it with the people in my life that I care so much about. To have that experience with my new family was really a special situation.”

And it was not just family, but friends, too, that touched him. “There was amazing energy there for that horse, and the thing



I realized that night, was ‘whoa, I didn’t realize we have so many friends!’ But honestly, every person that was in the picture is somehow or another a part of our lives or Pyro’s life or Claire and Margaret’s life. It was so cool, how many people were supportive. Another thing that made it so wonderful was winning the viewer’s choice award—having Pyro be so well received, and having our friends there to share the moment with Claire and with all of us. Experiences like that are made better when surrounded by friends and family, and that’s exactly what we had.

“Angie and I have talked about the show quite a bit since we got home,” Sellman continues, “and all in all, I thought that the show commission and the various contributors to the show made this U.S. Nationals really great. The decorations and the pageantry were excellent, and the feel of the show was one of the best they’ve had in Tulsa. It was just a friendlier and more enjoyable feel this year. I really think that this year was a step towards gaining back any people who may have lost interest or support in U.S. Nationals.”

Sheila Varian
Varian Arabians, Arroyo Grande, Calif.

“You simply have to be so proud of our horses,” Sheila Varian said, “because without doubt, the horses in our open divisions, especially the western, English and hunter horses, are simply spectacular. They are so schooled, so lovely, so well-presented, I could bring any person from any breed in for that Saturday night, and be very proud of our horses. They are simply over the top.”

She offered several suggestions for in the future. “If I had my druthers, especially on Friday or Saturday night, we would decide whether we want a presentation or a show,” she said. “What we have now is more like a presentation/competition, which is wonderful and thrilling for those of us that love the Arabian horse, but it’s not an exciting show. That’s okay if we are happy with what we have, but on Friday and Saturday nights, I’d like to see us step it up a little.

“For instance, there are certainly ways of making it exciting for a short few minutes while the scores are being tabulated. Think out of the box! Think of what would keep your focus on the ring for that time—for instance, it could be riders galloping around the ring with an American flag and a flag from one of the states. Probably there would be someone at the show who would be willing to carry the flag for one performance (unpaid, of course), and the flags could be donated by the members in each state. By the end of the show, all of the states which have Arabian horses there could have seen their flags go around. That’s just a thought.

“And personally, I’d like to have the photograph of the champion and reserve champion be taken outside. It takes too long for a group of people to go into the ring for the photograph; perhaps a nice site could be designed out back. (Again, I’m just talking about Friday and Saturday night, not the whole show.) Another thing I’d like to see is that in the finals, each horse that comes in is announced, and the announcer tells the crowd to pick their favorites and cheer them on. And I would love to see the finals for the reining





back in center ring on Saturday night—it's an exciting class that shows the amazing capability of the Arabian horse to shine in all disciplines.

“But the bottom line is, if we want it to be a show, then we need to make it a show. If we want it to be a presentation, which is wonderful, then that's fine, we have a presentation. But there would be more promotional value in a show.”

She considered the halter classes as well. “So many different age groups in halter made classes small and not as interesting,” she observed. “I think it would be advantageous to go back to where the national champion mare and stallion no longer qualify to show in halter at the Nationals, which would leave room for the horses coming up. That would definitely encourage more horses to show. I do like seeing the scores on the screen right after the horse shows, although it appears that the score for legs is the defining point (or else that we have no adequate-legged horses in

our breed, which I know is not so). There were some beautiful horses that were presented very well, and the quality of the horses we are breeding now is very apparent in all of the disciplines.

“And finally, it would be my desire for people to understand the effect of some of our padding and over-shoeing. We need to remember that with that much shoe on some of these horses—including some of the western pleasure, hunter and halter horses—they no longer can be turned out in a paddock to see a little sun. A little of that kind of enjoyment would have a big effect on some of the behavior, such as anxiety, cribbing and ulcers, that we see in many show horses.

“The main thing is, though, that U.S. Nationals made you very, very proud of our Arabian breed. The performance horses were over the top.”

June Yahola **Breeder, Cromwell, Okla.**

June Yahola has bred 12 to 14 national halter and performance champions, reserves and top tens, including five-time U.S. National Champion Pyro Thyme SA, but still considers herself a small breeder. “What we breed has to be good enough not to be denied,” she said, “so good that they have to pay attention.

“I was really proud of Tulsa and Oklahoma this year. The show was very well-run, well-organized, and everybody did a superb job!” What's next for Yahola? “I've bred two national champion stallions. My next goal is to breed a national champion mare! I think I've already picked the mother. Now, to find her the perfect stallion. ■

The Arabians and Half-Arabians of Sylvia Zerbinì's Grande Liberté Performance.



2012 U.S. Nationals *Show Results*



Arabian Stallion Adult 4 & Over Champion **PYRO THYME SA** (Pryme Thyme x Holly Onfire JW), shown by Andrew Sellman for owners Claire and Margaret Larson.



Arabian Colt (1-3 Years) Champion **HARIRY AL SHAQAB** (Marwan Al Shaqab x White Silkk), shown by Michael Byatt for owner Al Shaqab Member Qatar Foundation.



Arabian Stallion 8 & Over Champion **PYRO THYME SA** (Pryme Thyme x Holly Onfire JW), shown by Andrew Sellman for owners Claire and Margaret Larson.



Arabian Stallion 6-7 Champion **ARIA IMPRESARIO** (Marwan Al Shaqab x GC Echlectica), shown by David Boggs for owner Sloan Family Impresario Holding.



Arabian Stallion 4-5 Champion **TRIBUTE THYME SA** (Pryme Thyme x Diamond Tribute), shown by Alcides Rodrigues for owner Jason Tackett.



Arabian 3-Year-Old Colt Breeding Champion **ROHARA CROWN PRINCE** (Da Vinci FM x DD Crown Jewel), shown by Joseph Alberti II for owner Matthew Murray.



Arabian 2-Year-Old Colt Breeding Champion **HARIRY AL SHAQAB** (Marwan Al Shaqab x White Silkk), shown by Michael Byatt for owner Al Shaqab Member Qatar Foundation.



Arabian Yearling Colt Champion **EXCALIBUR EA** (Shanghai EA x Essence Of Marwan EA), shown by Ted Carson for owner Equus Arabians.



Arabian Futurity Colt Champion **TRUSSARDI** (Stival x Precious As Gold), shown by Eric Wolfe for owner Rojo Arabians.



Arabian Stallion AAOth Champion **MISTER MAGNUM** (Magnum Chall HVP x Pretty Tricky), shown by owner Robert Janeccki.



Arabian Mare 4 & Over Champion CR JASMEENAH (WH Justice x Fforget-Me-Not), shown by Michael Byatt for owner Al Jassimya Farm.



Arabian Filly (1-3 Years) Champion LUXEMERE JIZETTE (KM Bugatti x TA Jihana Bey), shown by David Boggs for owners Anthony Marino Sr and Anthony Marino Jr.



Arabian Mare 8 & Over Champion CR JASMEENAH (WH Justice x Fforget-Me-Not), shown by Michael Byatt for owner Al Jassimya Farm.



Arabian Mare 6-7 Champion MARWAN CRISTALRCA (Marwan Al Shaqab x Crysstell), shown by Gregory Gallun for owner Al Shahania Stud.



Arabian Mare 4-5 Champion JJ LA BARONESA (Magnum Psyche x NV Angelica), shown by David Boggs for owner Mayed SA.



Arabian 3-Year-Old Filly Breeding Champion LUXEMERE JIZETTE (KM Bugatti x TA Jihana Bey), shown by David Boggs for owners Anthony Marino Sr and Anthony Marino Jr.



Arabian 2-Year-Old Filly Breeding Champion GC SEASONS OF LOVE (Aria Impresario x GC Memoirs Of Gaishea), shown by Michael Byatt for owners Gerald Canda.



Arabian Yearling Filly Champion MISS MARWAN PA (Marwan Al Shaqab x Miss Amerika), shown by Michael Byatt for owner Al Shahania Stud.



Arabian Futurity Filly Champion RD MARCIENA (QR Marc x NW Siena Psyche), shown by Michael Byatt for owner Luciano Cury.



Arabian Mare AAOTH Champion ANNA MARIE BHF (Marwan Al Shaqab x BHF Anna Tevkah), shown by owner Anthony Marino Jr.



Arabian Gelding Adult 4 & Over and Gelding 6-7 Champion DC MAGNUM STORM (Magnum Psyche x Rohara Eclipse), shown by owner David Boggs.



Arabian Gelding Juvenile (1-3 Years) Champion ARIYA ENCORE (Aria Impresario x Airiya), shown by Andrew Sellman for owner Russell Family Trust.



Arabian Gelding 8 & Over Champion RELENTLYSS (First Cyte x Padrons Nike), shown by Jeff Schall for owner Kara Amundson-Laventure.



Arabian Gelding 4-5 Champion GH MARYN (NYN Hisani x Enjoue), shown by Austin Miller for owner Donald LeFever.



Arabian 3-Year-Old Gelding Champion SIR KEMPTON AC (Sir Fames HBV x TF Psynergy), shown by Jeff Schall for owners Andrew and Christine Steffens.



Arabian 2-Year-Old Gelding Champion RD SHANTAR (Bey Ambition x RD Arietta Bay), shown by Claudinei Machado for owners Murray and Shirley Popplewell.



Arabian Yearling Gelding Champion BON IVER (Aria Impresario x Rosetta LA), shown by owner Keith Krichke.



Arabian Futurity Gelding Champion ARAGONN (Aria Impresario x MFA Annies Song), shown by Leslie Sichini for owner Christian Cook.

This year's U.S. Nationals is October 18-26, 2013



Arabian Gelding AAOTH Champion HF PSYPHER (Amir Jamaal x HF Psyquoia, shown by owner Texie Lowery.