

Abu Dhabi

HH Sheikh Mansoor Bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Global Arabian Horse Flat Racing Festival

by Deirdre Hyde ■ photos by Morhaf

The highlight of almost a week of equestrian activity in Abu Dhabi in November must have been the conclusion of the HH Sheikh Mansoor Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Global Arabian Horse Flat Racing Festival. The highlight being the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Jewel Crown, dubbed the World's richest Arabian race worth Dh5,000,000 (approximately 1.2 million euros) and the finals of the HH Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak (IFAHR) Apprentice Jockey Championship, and the HH Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak (IFAHR) Ladies World Championship.

Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club now run by a new Director General, Australian Kim Elliott, was sporting festive attire with a multitude of banners and flags. A well-decked marquee provided excellent catering throughout the afternoon and evening for the many international guests and sponsors. A variety of entertainments had been laid on before the races started and by the time the horses for the first race were in the paddock there was definitely a party atmosphere and the competitors for the Best Dressed Lady and the Best Hat were making themselves obvious to the judges.



H.R.H. Prince AbdulAziz receiving the winner's trophy for the Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Jewel Crown with his Mashhur Al Khalediah (FR), trained in U.K. by P. Collington and ridden by Jean-Bernard Eyquem.



Mashhur Al Khalediah (FR)
winning the Jewel Crown
from Bel'Izam (FR) and Chaddad (FR)



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The first of the highlight races was the Dh100,000 HH Sheikhha Fatima Bint Mubarak (IFAHR) Apprentice Jockey Championship a 1600m prestige turf race for horses rated 40-65. Ten apprentices had won qualifiers over the summer and with all the build-up were now experiencing the excitement of a "big race" day. A favourite for the race had to be Bainoona 20(5-5-4) trained by Eric Lemartinel who has won the last four runnings of this race for The President, H.H. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Bainoona (Mahabb - Miledy Del Ma) is a French bred six year old mare well primed for the race and the lucky apprentice to win her in the draw was a young Italian Riccardo Lacopini who is based in Cappanelle Racecourse and in what appeared a well-planned race, the mare was ridden quietly until the final bend when she moved swiftly into the lead 200m from home and there she stayed comfortably to win and give Lacopini his 70th career win.

The next race was the HH Sheikhha Fatima Bint Mubarak (IFAHR) Ladies World Championship, with the same conditions as the previous race and ten lady qualifiers. Betting people would probably already have had their money on the eventual winner Asyyad in the same colours and for the same trainer as Bainoona, but the similarity did not stop there because Asyyad is a 5 year-old gelded half-brother by top US sire Burning Sand, and he had won the Apprentice race last season! He proved an easy winner for his Danish jockey Victoria Larsen who was ecstatic after her much dreamed success.

Finally, the last race of the day the Jewel Crown had arrived and people crowded the paddock rails to get glimpses of Arabian racing's super stars especially the International runners from France, Great Britain and Saudi Arabia. These specialist Arabian racers are big and beautiful, ages ranging from 4 to 9 years, and all of them looked in tip top condition, gleaming coats and rippling well defined muscles, but so different in type from the Arabians we had been admiring during the show!



Italian apprentice Riccardo Lacopini rider of Bainoona(FR), trained by Eric Lemartinel for HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan winner of the HH Sheikhha Fatima Bint Mubarak (IFAHR) Apprentices Jockey World Championship



The winner of this race last year Al Shamoos (No Risk Al Maury – Hamiya) had returned hoping to retain her crown, however it was not to be, despite having a comfortable position from the start and having every chance she was unable to hold off the challenge of the eventual leaders. Hopes had also been high for Hayyan

(Munjiz – Dabwa) dual Arabian Derby winner in UK and France earlier in the year but he too faded in the last 500m. The winner was the highest rated horse of the field, Mashhur Al Khalediah, racing in the colours of Athbah Stud. He is trained in UK by Philip Collington and he had been a close third in his last start, the Group 1

Winner of the HH Sheikhha Fatima Bint Mubarak (IFAHR) Ladies World Championship, Victoria Larsen on Asyyad(FR) trained by Eric Lemartinel for HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.



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Arabian World Cup at Longchamp in October. He is by the Tiwaig son Jalnar Al Khalidiyah out of Amerah Al Khalediah by Amer, she is also interesting as she is a daughter of Savannah bred in Poland by 32 year old Monarch AH still happily living out his days at Wrsan Stables in Abu Dhabi, out of Sarmacja from the outstanding Sabellina damline, Savannah won 13 of her 18 starts including 11 stakes races and was one of the best race mares ever bred by Janow Podlaski. She was sold to Khalidiyah Stud where Mashhur was bred.

Runner up was Bel'Izam (Nizam – Djesabelle) trained by Damien De Watrigant in France for HE Sheikh Rashid Bin Hamdan Al Maktoum whilst third was another Amer grandson Chaddad (Mared Al Sabra – Nisae) trained in UAE by Salem Bin Ghadyer for HE Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohamed Al Maktoum.

The final race of the night was the Sheikha Latifa Bint Mansoor Bin Zayed Al Nahyan International Pony Race, for which there were seven qualifying races in Spain, Sweden, France, Belgium, New Zealand, Italy and USA. Although very serious this is always a fun affair, the children are aged between 10 and 14 and what a wonderful experience for these youngsters. In Abu Dhabi the ponies are not specialist racers as they might be where pony racing is more established so success rather hangs on the luck of the draw. Nevertheless Louis Boutin on Baldor, riding in the colours of HE Sheikh Mansoor was a tidy winner from Ivan Nicholas on Onyx for Romania and Charlotte New all the way from New Zealand on Kulla in third, but well done to all.

HH Sheikh Mansoor Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Global Arabian Horse Flat Racing Festival season had come to an end. Thanks go to Lara Sawaya the inspiration



Sheikha Lateefa bint Mansoor bin Zayed Al Nahyan presents the trophy for the International Pony Race in her name to the winner Louis Boutin on Baldor



behind it and already people look forward to 2020 calendar which will once more have finals in Abu Dhabi with the added extra of the annual Conference this will be a date not to be missed. □