

# DISCOVER **LEBANON**

**100 YEARS ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION ON MAY 14+15, 2016  
OF THE RACETRACK IN THE GREEN HEART OF BEIRUT**

**ALSO FEATURING THE 2<sup>ND</sup> LEBANESE ARABIAN HORSE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**TWO-DAYS OF SPECIAL ARABIAN FESTIVAL**

**FOLLOWED BY GUIDED BREEDERS AND TOURIST LEBANON TOUR**

Horse lovers and breeders  
are invited to take part and  
can get information here:

[www.daho.org](http://www.daho.org)

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# DISCOVER LEBANON

The Lebanon, located on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, is the point where the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa meet, geographically as well as culturally. The country was the ancient home of the Phoenicians who went from there (2700-450 BC) to become the masters of the sea trade and to re-define civilization.

There were Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Mamelukes, and finally French in the country, usually dominating for some centuries, leaving a rich historical heritage and putting their own stamp on the multicultural style that developed. Horse breeding was probably introduced to the Lebanon by the Greeks. Even for centuries before Christ, they had been masters of the art of riding. It was the Romans, however, who built the racetrack of Tyr, to the south of Beirut, about 2000 years ago. Major parts of it have been preserved for the world up to today.

Until 150 years ago, the horse markets of Beirut, Aleppo, and Damascus where the markets for the authentic Arabian Horse breeding of the Bedouins from the greater areas of Syria and Saudi Arabia. The local passion for horse races was taken up by the French colonial rulers, who built a hippodrome right in the heart of Beirut in 1916. It has been used for weekly horse races since then and is going to celebrate its 100 year anniversary with a festival this year on **May 14+15, 2016**.

Breeder and event manager Danny Ghosn from Beirut had successfully implemented this idea last year. For 2016, the Arabian Show is meant to step out of the experimental phase, evolving into an important event for the country.

For Ghosn, this plan reads like this: “After the success of the first Lebanese Arabian Horse Championships in that city of contrast, Beirut, we plan to repeat this event in 2016. Even in 2015, it took place at one of the oldest race tracks still operating, the “Beirut Park Hippodrome”, a place full of horse history. Excited and encouraged from taking part in that event, the Lebanese breeders went on to import 30 purebred Arabian horses, mainly from Europe, to elevate the quality of the country’s horses. The upcoming Second Lebanese Arabian Horse Championships, again supported by AHO, are going to take place on May 14 to 15 of 2016, which is coinciding with the 100 year anniversary of the “Beirut Park Hippodrome”. It will be a challenge as well as a great opportunity to once again have Lebanon on the World Map of Arabian Horses. The Lebanese Arabian Horse Organization is proudly com-



Mr. Nabil Nasrallah, Director General of the Hippodrome, Mr. Danny Ghosn, organizer of the show event and president of the Lebanese Arabian Horse Organization (LAHO), Judge Ziad Chebib, Governor of Beirut, Mr. Essam Abdullah, Arabian Horse Organisation (AHO).

mitted towards Arabian Horse breeding and showing in Lebanon.”

Following this and to celebrate this special day, there will be a **gala dinner** inviting representatives from politics and the population.

Guests from all over the world are expected, and after the show event on the premises of the race track, three Lebanese breeders will open the gates of their studs to guests, inviting them to have the stud presented to them. During a three-day tour, sightseeing featuring the historically valuable locations of Lebanon is also planned. For information on taking part in the show or in the stud and sightseeing tours, please contact: Mr. Danny Ghosn: [Info@tlaho.org](mailto:Info@tlaho.org)

## A city and her horses for a better world:

Beirut is famous for being a party metropolis (the “Paris of the Orient”), and the inhabitants of the city are well known for having learned to celebrate whenever they get a chance to – after the tragedy of fifteen years of civil war (1975-1990) and with much of the city reduced to rubble then, they know well how to get quite some creativity and passion out of life. Nobody talks about politics, religion, or the skyrocketing rents; instead, the cultural scene in Beirut is flourishing just as much as are the arts and music scenes, and more than in any other Arabian country. Re-discovering the Arabian horse is doubtlessly another element of this scene. The 100 year anniversary of the Hippodrome, this symbol of the multi-cultural cooperation of all the citizens of Beirut that took place even during the barbaric times of the wars, is considered an event nobody should miss. Seeing, experiencing and enjoying this city is worth a long trip there!

For more than 8 years now, there has been peace in Lebanon, a fact that triggered a tremendous boom for building and construction in Beirut. The old



Beirut was, by and large, built in Art Deco style. Up to the 1960ies, the impressive feature of the city was the fascinating mix of Ottoman architecture and turn-of-the-century styles. However, this building stock of old has been destroyed to a great extent. New investors from the Middle East preferred to tear the old houses down and build whole new city quarters instead, even if partly in the old style. The shopping malls (called the Beirut Souks) in the Old Town might be taken right out of the proceedings of a modern architectural competition. But then, the diversity marking the quarters of Beirut corresponds to the diversity found in the structure of the population. Many Lebanese people consider the building boom the symbol of a new era, a time no longer marked by unrest and attacks, but by stability and prosperity, which means by peace. The heart of the city is fascinating for another of its features: the people there have succeeded in breathing their very own Lebanese soul even into this modern, newly established world. Beirut is a city that looks like the tolerant, city-run Diversity Management that created it, not only because of the great number of different churches and mosques, not only because of the great number of creative business start-ups and of coffee houses and restaurants, of the party and music culture, and the graffiti around – no, what is so enjoyable about it is the atmosphere, an atmosphere that readily transfers to Arabian Horse shows and is a terrific motivation to enjoy, in addition to the horses, some days in this interesting city the like of which is hardly to be found anywhere else in the Arabian world.



## 100 years of “racetrack in Beirut” – a Symbol of Peace and Cooperation Right in the Green Heart of the City

During the civil war, the racetrack of Beirut obtained a special importance, as the engineer Nabil Nasrallah, who is today the Director General of the Hippodrome, reports. The city of Beirut was divided into a Western and an Eastern part by the famous Green Line, not to be crossed. Located right on this line were the 40 hectares (200 acres) of the racetrack and the pine grove of Beirut, the Horsh, a green oasis in the middle of the city where hundreds of horses were trained. They belonged to people of all religious affiliations, and the same was true for the trainers, the jockeys and grooms – a multicultural melting pot the contents of which were not to be divided even by the war. Nabil Nasrallah also tells the story of the many meetings between the forces fighting for possession of the city, meetings that took place on the racetrack, a small world of its own of mutual trust. Despite of all that, nobody was able to prevent a tank from reducing mayor parts of the racetrack to rubble later on, with most of the horses dying in that pandemonium, and several attempts to re-start racing operations during the war failed.



All the more important, then, to celebrate peace and friendship – not least because Arabian horses serve to bring together different cultures and religions from all over the world during our tensely strained times.

**See you  
in Beirut!**

