



INTERVIEWS WITH OF THE WORLD

by Giorgia Mauri
photos by Simone Bergamaschi, Sunny Sassudelli

For the first time in history the World Championship was held outside Europe, after being held for 42 years in Paris. A stage that had become historic and beloved by all and was now our second home. The new location, which will alternate with Paris over the next four years, had already before the start of the World Championship stolen our hearts because of its beauty and the ability of this city to renew itself at a rapid pace.

In the days just before the start of the world championship, days of final



THE JUDGES CHAMPIONSHIP IN DOHA

preparations, anticipation, high expectations and excitement, we had the honor and pleasure of meeting the 15 judges invited by the organization to judge this first edition of the world championship in Doha. We gathered their views on many important issues surrounding this world championship and their emotions with respect to the role they have been called upon to play. We bring them back to you here in the next pages sharing with all of them the great pride of being at the center of the history of the Arabian horse. Enjoy your reading!



TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

AGA: I have been a breeder of UAE horses since 2004 and became interested in Arabian show horses in 2008. In 2016 I became a National Judge and in 2022 I was promoted to Ecaho B Judge.

This is my first time judging a World Championship, a show that every judge would love to be in. It is always a great honor to judge such an event and to admire the best Arabian horses.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

AGA: The fair has built its great reputation in Paris for more than 40 years. However, relocating this prestigious event becomes a privilege for many countries that organize it outside Paris. I believe that relocating these events can help promote Arabian horses globally.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

AGA: The show has always attracted high-quality horses, and I expect to see new super stars since the show is held in the Middle East.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar

first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

AGA: Qatar and other Arab countries such as the KSA and the UAE have been investing in this industry for decades. In addition, many events are organized every year to promote Arabian horses and encourage local and international breeders and owners. In recent years, I have noticed a great commitment and high competition not only among breeders but also among show organizers to promote their shows.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships? In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

AGA: In every show it is always the majority of judges who decide and not a single judge who evaluates the participating horses.

For me, as a breeder, if you have a show with a limited number of judges, without eliminating highest and lowest scores, the horse's result can be dramatically affected by the decision of one judge. Limited judges will always have a higher percentage in the final score.

In this show we have some judges from Brazil, Canada, the Middle East, and some from Europe, and the organizing committee made sure to have several experts from around the world to ensure a high level of judging.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

AGA: The World Championship is an exhibition in which high quality horses compete for the title. However, prize money always encourages breeders and owners to participate and make the quantity and quality higher.

TA: Were you surprised that they moved the World Championship to Qatar?

AGA: Yes, it was a surprise because after 42 years they moved it from Paris to the Middle East, and we hope that such big events can be held here in the future.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

AGA: I am very excited. It is a big event and I hope we'll enjoy it all together.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.

TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

AGA: I have been a judge for many years now. I think since 2005, maybe. This is my 3rd time to judge the World Championship. I started as a young rider. I was fascinated. One day I went to the club with my mother, I escaped from her and I went to see the horses. We have a golf course and then the racetrack. I was living in the city, I saw the horses training and it took my heart. As soon as I became a teenager, I went to the same place, to the stable and start riding. There were a lot of Arabian horses in the stables. I got to know them and live with them and study them. When you live with somebody, you start to be acquainted. And so started the passion. The experience accumulates since then, little by little. Then I decided I will breed. I got one mare back in the 80s and I'm still breeding till now. I became a judge and you know the rest of the story.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and non-sporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

AGA: For me, Paris was a really important show because of its location. One of the most beautiful cities, in my opinion, and also the glamour that was in this show. So we always enjoyed Paris. Coming here is also, I think, a great idea because Qatar is becoming a new center of events. Like the World cup, the Formula one car racing and other things. They build a fantastic city for them. A first class place. Don't forget that here in the Middle East, that's where the Arabian horse came from. So it's really a good idea to make an alternation between the two. I'm sure the glamour will stay in Qatar. We will not lose that. So it's great.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

AGA: I haven't been in Paris last year. I was in Paris the show before the Corona came. But I am sure the level would be high because here are all the famous farms located. So to try to make it easier for

them to show even more horses than the ones that had to travel to Europe.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

AGA: I'm sure there are... They have the will to do more and more. But I'm really against. Sometimes you may, like in football, World Cup is in different countries every year. But there are some shows with some traditions you cannot move. I mean, the Nations Cup? No. You cannot move that if it goes out of Aachen, it's not a nation cup. You cannot change traditions. You cannot buy traditions. But for the World Cup, it's okay. It belongs to the world.

I'm going to tell you something. Here there are a lot of facilities, a lot of money. We can create new ideas. We don't have to take all the old ideas and copy them. I think we have potential to make lot of new ideas and lot of new events and marketing things, and also attract people, and to be useful for the horse, for the business, for the Arabian.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

AGA: As a matter of fact, I believe in one judge. If you get one good, honest judge, it's enough. You don't need all this. But if that's make the thing look big and glamorous..it's their choice.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

AGA: No, of course, not. Because you make the score average. You take out the scores of the people that has an opinion and you leave the ones that are giving average marks.

You need somebody with opinion sometimes. These usually are the highest and the lowest marks.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

AGA: I was always going to the side of not having prizemoney to work and voluntarily and so on like we did in the



old days. This was nice because it attracted the people that love the horses. Nowadays, things are different. The expenses are so much, economies are down. And really with money, you can encourage the business much more. So the benefits of having the prizemoney and having the money involved, if it is well controlled and not to go towards corruption, it's really much better for the business and to encourage people. I mean, this is also one of the things that's making the shows smaller and smaller in Europe. There is no prizemoney. And that's how Influence of money in any sport. I mean, look at the prizes of football players now. Look at the prizes of the prize money the tennis players get. It's all like this. And if it's not, it will fail. Unfortunately, it's like that. It seems love needs some food!

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

AGA: At the beginning I thought it was very interesting and I was really shocked because I thought it went forever to Doha. But when I knew that it was alternating then I thought that its fine. It can turn into three, four countries. It's a good idea. I'm sure here in Doha, they have the facility to make something really wonderful. I'm curious to see what's going to happen. I hear a lot, but it's still happening. I hope it will live up to my expectations.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.

ANNA STOJANOWSKA / Poland



TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

AS: It is my first time, actually, I've never judged before the World Championships. However, I was just mentioning today in the morning that I have started in Italy in 1998. So it's 25 years already of experiences with judging. So it's a long time, and it shows us also how old I am. But yeah, 25 years, and I've never judged before World championships, always being involved with the state stud, so it was always a conflict of interest, or maybe I was not ready. Anyhow, it's my first time.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

AS: It's a big excitement because of being judging a first time award championship, and also because, as you said, it's the first time outside Europe, which is a little bit unknown area for everybody, like a white piece of paper. But it's like waiting also for something new, new chapter with excitement. So expectations are, of course, huge for everyone, for exhibitors, and also for us as officials, judges and other officials, and for the audience as well, I believe. And we will see what we can expect. We have in our memories Paris, and even people now talking about the world championships,

they always said, are you going to watch Paris? Not even a World championship, but Paris. So now it's not Paris, but it's Doha. Everything can happen.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

AS: Higher level. And after 25 years, I still feel excitement when standing on the middle of the ring and waiting for the first horses, I still feel the excitement and I have goosebumps. So especially now waiting for this today, first day of the show, I feel this excitement again and expect many good horses.

TA: Do you think there is a change in management and hospitality now that the World Championship has moved to Qatar?

AS: We all know that Christianne Chazel is still in charge and she is in head of this event. So for sure the hospitality and whole organization will be done according her advisors. But yeah, of course, everybody expects with the possibility of Qatar also engagement and excitement about what they are doing. For sure, we expect something spectacular and worldwide quality.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

AS: The breeding and the events for Arabian horses now moved from Europe to the Middle East. And the Middle Eastern countries are very strong with both of these activities, breeding and showing, definitely. So, yes, maybe it was a time to give them a chance or to move this event from Europe to the Middle East. But I still hope that it will be both continents involved with this. And the World Championship will be back maybe for every second year or every five years. I don't know what are their plans, but I think it's also important to make Europe, let's say, busy and still involved, especially with the breeding and showing the horses. We have to help Europe to be important on the Arabian horse scene and not let the breeders, trainers and all the industry die. So it should be both sides very much involved with this.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

AS: We will see. I still don't understand very much the idea, but for sure the organizer, they have some kind of different

perspective and ideas why they decide to do it. However, I'm very happy to be a member of this team and to be a part of this big event.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

AS: I'm completely against this idea. I don't like this idea because that makes the gap between the horses and the judges, it doesn't show the difference. But every organizer has his /her right and ideas which system of judging they are choosing. So they choose this one, which is of course available, so that is the organizers rights. But I'm not very keen on this idea.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

AS: I am not against the prize money. And as we are talking about the worldwide situation with the breeding and the breeders and the costs of training and the costs of showing the horses, a prizemoney helps a lot to the exhibitors, to the breeders, especially to those who cannot reach the cost of showing the horses.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

AS: I feel very much excited and very happy to be in Qatar and especially coming from cold Poland wind, it's now minus eight and a half meter of snow. It's also very nice to be in this sunny, beautiful weather. And I wish all of the exhibitors, spectators, people who are watching this World championships a good luck and absolutely big excitement. For sure, it will be a great show.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.

TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

CV: Well, I have been judging since long. Actually, this will be my first official time I judge a World Championship. But in the 1990s I judged as a provisioner judge in the Sierre-on-Departis in Paris, with Thérince Everwood. I was doing my provisioner for becoming a judge. In those days, there were no yearling classes, but that year they had a yearling class out of the whole championship. It was that time of Richard William. He pushed me and he said, you judge it. I was so nervous! That was my experience. It was maybe 30, 40 years ago.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

CV: Well, it's an experience. We have to see what comes out. Actually, I mean, Qatar, they did a very different and important championship and show before. They are having experience for the moment. Normally, it should be great. I think it would be like a show. But we have to wait and see.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

CV: Very high, that's for sure.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

CV: Well, that could be. It could be an idea. For Europeans, it's far away. But they can make it and they can make a very good show. They can try, so why not?

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

CV: Well, it's a bit scary. For me, it sounds like a manifestation, demonstration. I

think maybe it's a bit too much from my point of view. Well, I suppose the organizers have their own idea, but 15, that's just a bit too much.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

CV: I suppose the responsibility is always the same. Whether you have biggest and the lowest mark, because a normal judge will say what he sees or what he considers. The responsibility is the same here, and in a little show, anywhere else.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

CV: Well, I think price money makes things more difficult. Of course, it's good for the breeders, it's good for the people that show the horses, it's good maybe for the market, I don't know. But the world's prizemoney gets new interests in the decisions.

TA: Even for the World Championship, perhaps, when it is held in Europe it is more difficult because you cannot give the same amount of prize money.

CV: You have to balance the opportunities.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

CV: A big show. With all the meanings that show us.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.



EBRAHIM FARAJ ELYAS / Bahrain



TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

EF: My journey with horses started when I was young and I have always had a greater passion for Arabian horses. In 2008, I started the Arabian horse breeding program.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

EF: The World Arabian Horse Championship will probably be close to my home, and I look forward to this international championship being hosted in different countries, as is the case with other sports.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

EF: I expect a high level of horses.

TA: What has changed in the management of horses participating in shows in Europe compared to the years when the World Championship will be held in Paris?

EF: I think it's the same as Europe. Certainly the atmosphere is very different because of the region.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the

possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

EF: As I said in the previous answer, I hope the big shows will take place between Europe and the Middle East... my suggestion is to have an alternation between the two regions.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

EF: Each organizer has his or her own point of view on the number of judges.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

EF: There are advantages and disadvantages, and every judge has an opinion.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

EF: First of all, I would like to thank the organizers for the excellent set-up, atmosphere and hospitality. As for the prize money, I personally would like it to be so because the number of horses would be more.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

EF: The World Championship is always special and really attracts great attention.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.

TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

EG: To begin with, I am really very happy to judge the first World Championship in Qatar, an honor for me. I have been judging for 13 years and have judged around 100 shows. This will be the second time for me to judge the World Championship, my first time was in Paris in 2021.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

EG: The site is truly exceptional, congratulations to the entire organization and its teams. I think that this edition in Qatar will give another dimension to its championships and will perhaps make it possible to find new breeders and benefit from wider media support.

TA: Which level of horse do you expect?

EG: I am sure that we will judge the best horses of this year, all countries combined.

TA: Do you think there is a change in management and hospitality now that the World Championship has moved to Qatar?

EG: What will change this year is that we will have few or no horses coming from Europe, certainly complicated to come from Europe and very expensive for European breeders, I believe that we will have to think about solutions for the future!

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

EG: I think that the fact that other countries can organize the World Championship can be a good thing but it is important for me that all countries can participate so that the title of World Champion maintains its prestige.

TA: What do you think about the choice by

the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

EG: Maybe a little too much but not really a problem. I think that 12 judges in total and 7 judging each class would perhaps be simpler for the judging of each horse, less frightening for the horse.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

EG: I am not in favor of removing the lowest and highest marks, I prefer that my marks reflect my judgment, it is my role as a judge!

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

EG: Congratulations to the organization, it will be a real success. Regarding prize money, I am not necessarily in favor of it being given for the World Championships (Paris or other countries), I prefer that the 6 best horses from each European country (the gold medals from the national shows) be invited when the World Championships are held in countries outside Europe.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

EG: Amazing!

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.



ABDEL RAOUF ABBAS / Egypt



TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

RA: I have been a breeder perhaps since childhood. I was first a rider and then officially a breeder since 1991. I currently have almost 30 horses, mostly straight Egyptians. And as a judge I started, I think, in 1999. I started with my first course as a judge, then I became a national judge, then an international judge, after being tested in Poland twice to upgrade, first in Sharaj, then in Poland twice. Actually, I am the last judge who became judge A after a test, and then the rule was changed. So I've been judging for a long time, but for the World Championship this is the first time. But I have judged most of the big title shows like the Dubai International Cup, Aachen and the Middle East Championship. This was the event I wanted to judge all along. And here I am.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

RA: Paris has its own atmosphere, but Qatar is booming. I mean, as a country, I see that it is developing in an excellent way. And that, for me personally, is very much appreciated. What has been done in this country in recent years is huge. It is something really incredible. I have been here many times

and every time I come back I see a greater development of the country, I see it more beautiful. And the organization of the exhibitions I judged last year, the Sukwakis exhibition, is also incredibly well organized. I judged also this year in Al Shaqab, a very beautiful arena, extremely good organization. And I'm confident that this will also be something very unique, and I'm very happy to be a part of it.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

RA: I expect about the same or slightly better quality than in Paris, only for one reason. For Paris, the owners have to ship the horses, or some of them keep them in Europe. But now you can see the horses at home, in the original environment. And they have the same food, they stay at home. When you sleep in your own bed, you feel different the next morning than when you sleep in a hotel on a different bed. I think for horses it's the same thing. Being at home, having their own food, having their own bed, makes them feel at home, they feel more comfortable. And I think it will be a very exciting show. As I've heard, the place is also extremely beautiful. I am very excited about it!

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

RA: For me it doesn't make much difference. Being an Arab, I am very proud that all the big championships come to my home. This is my home. But who can do the best? For the sake of the Arabian horses that we all love, both Arab and European, we are all here together for the love of horses. So let's do something for the sake of Arabian horses.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

RA: For the judges it will be a little difficult, because there would be too many of us on one horse. But for the horses and for the owners, I think it will make them more comfortable. They will be comfortable about the results, because they will know that it will not be one judge or three judges judging the horse, but a whole group of judges from different countries, with different ages, with different experiences. So their decision will definitely be the fairest for the horse and the owner.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

RA: Each system has its advantages and disadvantages. Putting all the scores and then excluding the highest and lowest scores makes no difference to me. If I am an organizer or a horse owner, with my horse participating, I know the names of the judges before the show. If I trust them, if I know they are judges I can trust, I enter my horse. I can tell you, after all my experience, that 99.99% of the judges can be trusted. We are only here for one reason, and that is the love of horses. So for me, as a horse owner, if I get the list of the judges' names in good time before the show, if I feel that I can trust them and that I can count on them, I register my horse. If not, I don't enter it. So, for me personally, it doesn't make much of a difference to remove the highest and the lowest scores or leave them all. As I said, every system has downsides and upsides. But that's fine with me.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

RA: For my personal opinion, I'd much rather stand more for the side with the prizemoney. Because things are getting very expensive now. I mean, I'm talking not as a judge, I'm talking as a breeder. For the participants of the shows, everything is becoming very expensive, like transporting the horses. Most of the horses are in Europe or here in different parts of the peninsula. Moving the horses into the country and spending money on their feed, preparations, trainers and all this stuff, it has become very expensive. So I think having a good prizemoney will encourage more people to participate, encourage more people to breed better horses and will encourage more people to prepare their horses in a better way. I think it will end up by being on the good side of the breeding. That is why I would prefer to be on the side of those who encourage prize money.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

RA: I'm very positive that it will be an amazing show. I'm very positive that everybody, horse owners, trainers, judges, organizers, would do their very best to have one of the best shows in the world. And let's hope for it.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.

TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

FS: I joined Anica in 1990 and started judging in 1995. I judged the World championships maybe 10 times.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

FS: It's emotional as Paris has always been the most important venue for the Arabian Horses World Championships for 42 years. Sporting events have all passed through Qatar lately so Qatar will be a correct choice for the moment. Given the situation, it is the right alternative for the World Championship.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

FS: When you went to Paris, you knew that you could expect the best Arabian Horses in the world. I expect the same here. First the number of horses entered is four times more than in Paris. Then a great quality of horses as the Middle East has now the highest quality of Arabian horses in the world.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class and all of them present on the ground for the championships?

FS: This is my thought: I believe that a high number of judges in the field could nullify any conflicts of interest, but a horse of great quality will always have a majority of high ratings.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

FS: I don't think this will change anything for the ranking.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders

with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

FS: Winning a medal at the World Championship is worth more than price money. Price money is needed at smaller shows to stimulate breeders to participate, given the low number of participants compared to the past.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

FS: I expect a very good show, and I am sure that the organizational professionalism and hospitality will be ... over the top!

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.





TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in a few sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

GR: I have been judging as an ECAHO B judge for about nine years now. I was elected to the executive committee and chairman of the Registration Committee for four years with ECAHO. I was also the president of the Dutch Arabian Association. But after, I think, 18 years in the Association, I decided it's a good time for someone else to take over the reins. So I left this position last May. This is my first World Championship to judge. It is a special honor to be here and I am very excited. What can I say? It's something extraordinary, I'm sure.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country, in a spectacular location in Qatar, a country that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are one of the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

GR: I judged the first Katara show in 2021 and that show at the time already exceeded everybody's expectations. So I'm sure this one will be too and that they're not going to disappoint.

Because it's a "World Championship", it should actually circulate around the world. It was 42 years in Paris, so maybe it's time to give somebody else a chance to show what they can do. And I think it's quite a challenge for Qatar to live up to the expectations. But once they do this, I'm sure that in the future, it could be hosted in many countries, especially the countries which probably are dominant in the scene right now like Qatar, of which their horses obviously have a very good reputation in the world, winning a lot in many shows for many years already. So

it makes sense to sometimes do it here. Maybe next time go to Emirates, maybe go to Saudi, maybe go somewhere else, and maybe even go to a different continent in the future. But in the end this is up to the ECAHO showcommission to decide who they want to affiliate. I think it's a good thing to let the market move and to let people visit different places. It's the same for the World championship soccer. It's in a different country every time. And it brings also something good to the country. It might bring some more people to the scene who can get interested in the horses. You never know, because right now it's still quite a small scene, and of course, the horses deserve more. That's what we are concerned about. So I think it would be a good development.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

GR: My expectations are very high. In this region there are obviously big investors in potential World Champions and they have good breeding programs, so I expect high quality to come.

Before they had to bring the horses to Europe, train them there, make them ready. There was like sort of a "leading up to" story. When you win Aachen, when you win Menton, there are high expectations of maybe you'll be able to win the World Championship. At least the horses would score high. Now, we might have a different story. Maybe the emphasis will be more on the horses from the Middle Eastern circuit which would be interesting for the European scene so the Europeans will have again a good chance when the World Championship returns to Paris next year. Who knows? I think this could be a good thing.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

GR: I will tell you what, if nobody gives a 20, then you will never get the 20. Because only if two people give 20, one 20 will stay. If only one judge gives a 20, it will disappear, and the highest score will be probably 19,5. So I did some calculation in the past to see what difference it does it make, but it doesn't really. It does however quite effectively rule out extreme pushing or downgrading of scores.

Personally, I give the points I want and I don't calculate that, for example, if I give 19,5, it maybe stays. That does not work either, because if everybody else gives 19,5, then my 19,5 can get scrapped also. It could be my score, it could be somebody else's score. It doesn't matter, one will disappear. So in general it doesn't make a difference at all. Some people think it makes the 'scoring range' even more narrow, but it's not. And I think, especially with the quality that we should have here, you will see many 20's and I hope we see some agreement on low points as well, for example, bad legs or poor

movement. But with this system you cannot really 'kill' a horse's total score by giving for example 13 on the legs or if a judge makes a mistake.

I even liked what they did last year in Katara: Because they had so many judges, they took away the complete score of the highest and the lowest scoring judge. This is not an ECAHO rule, so they cannot do it anymore. I think they discussed it, but even that for me would be fine if you have many judges. It makes 'manipulation' of the scores even less easy. Those are the facts, still for some judges it may be an emotional thing to see their score erased. But the impact is minor. For me it's not a problem.

TA: On this show the judges are asked to give a separate score for head as there is a special award in each class for "Best Head". What are your thoughts about that?

GR: Honestly, I don't like this at all because we have to be careful that the horse is not just about the head. It would be better if they asked for best "type", as type encompasses the whole horse. So I would prefer an award for best type. That score is already on the card anyways. I would love that.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

GR: Prize money, no prize money. I don't care. Look at for example Dubai, they give 4 million prize money, but if you see who goes home with the prize money? Mostly big, rich stables that don't necessarily need it. Prize money for me is a secondary incentive, especially in these kind of high level shows. On the question whether more European horses would be tempted to make the expensive trip to a World Championship in the Middle East if there was a lot of prizemoney to win, I think that would not be a sure thing because you still need to win to get the money. You need to be somewhere near the top three at least to get interesting prize money. I think it shouldn't also be the main reason to participate.

Instead, if the organization could use the allocated money to provide free transport and waive entry and stabling fees or something like this, then they might come as the most expensive costs are covered in advance...

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

GR: Excitement. Obviously they are a fantastic host and the venue is amazing.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.

TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

IS: So my name is Irina Stigler. I was born in Russia and I'm representing my country under Russian flag. My story about Arabian horse begins in Italy, where I moved there 30 years ago. When I was in Verona, I saw the horse that came in, Piruet. From that moment I decided that this would be my future.

I bought my first colt in Lombardy, then I bought the filly, but not so good quality, which made me study a lot and finally with my first investment I went to Poland and USA to buy my first quality mares.... Then I started buying horses in Sicily. And so I continued. Now I have a farm and I breed quite good horses as they have been sold all over the world. As a judge, I think I started traveling the world 20 years ago. In 2015/2016 I was also elected the world's favorite judge by public decision. It was a very proud moment for me. In the past, I have also judged in Qatar. I have been here many times. Of course, it was a different kind of competition. This is the world championships. I have judged the World Championship twice, but in Paris. For the first time it is here in Qatar and I have the honor of judging it in a different country.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and non-sporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

IS: As for my personal opinion, this country has already had many guests because there has already been a lot of competition here. Of course, it is very nice to stay here in one of my favorite places. And it is also right to give an opportunity to try to take place here. I am sure it will be very well organized because it is the same organizer and let's see how it will go.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

IS: I expect better because in all the years

we are improving. We are improving everywhere, in every country, and for sure in the World Championship it should be the best horse in the world. Maybe some people couldn't come or bring the horses for some reasons. And if you see them for the first time here, maybe they look better. This is very interesting.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

IS: I think this is great. It's unexpected for everybody to be in or to be out. It's more relaxed.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

IS: Why not, both, I think we can apply them. On the one hand, of course, if someone gives the highest grade or the lowest grade, it also represents their opinion. But in some cases it can be a little bit exaggerated. Also, I agree with the system.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

IS: I think we will keep the same line as in Paris, because in Paris there was never any prize money. And I think having a top five or world champion title is already enough. It is an honor to win something in the Qatar World Championship.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

IS: I agreed immediately in a second when they asked me to judge, because I want to have fun. I have to say I'm starting to get a little nervous. Until last night I was fine. But today, let's see. I would like to really enjoy this first big event in Qatar.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.





TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

JL: Too many years. I don't know. I first started when I was 25. That was national. I've been doing it a long time. Then I went automatically onto the ECAHO panel. I have only two, three years left now, and then I finished.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

JL: I think if they could do the alternative, yes. It would be nice to keep it in Europe because no European horses can afford to compete here, but they can afford to compete in Paris.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

JL: Worldclass, the best in the world. By a country mile. I think they'd be a fantastic. Maybe we will see horses compete that we've never seen before. It would be very exciting, I think.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

JL: The importance is already here. They've already made it. They are top of

the world now. I don't think there's any other country in the world that can beat the Arab countries with their horses, the quality and quantity. We're all being left behind now.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

JL: I don't think it's necessary. Maybe 9, 10 judges and use seven at a time.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

JL: If they want our opinion, please let us give it, without it being taken away. Otherwise, it just becomes we all judge average. We can't use the whole range of marks. I look at it also in another way. If I see something I really like and I want to give it a good mark, I can do. If I see something I really don't like, at least my mark is down, has been expressed. It may be dropped, but I've expressed my opinion. That's another way of looking at it. But if I want my opinion to count, I'd rather they didn't drop my mark.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

JL: I don't think you need prizemoney. It's the prestige of the show. You don't need to give prize money as well. Only thing I would say, that perhaps in Europe we could do with a bit of prizemoney. It would be quite nice to encourage breeders. Maybe Katara can support Paris to encourage breeders from Europe by putting prizemoney. It's still a World Championship, but they could get their name involved in the title a bit more anything to just get a bit more money into it and then people could afford to do it. It would be nice if they could invite some European breeders to come to compete. It would be nice if you have the champions of Aachen here or from the European Championships. You can't offer it to everywhere. If they were to be super generous, it could be A-shows. But I think, yeah, Aachen champions. In the first years that Al Khalediah had their show they would invite horses from Europe.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

JL: I expect it to be fantastic.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.

TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

ZG: I have been judging for about 25 years. This is my first time judging the World Championship. So I think it will be a very good experience and the best experience of all.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

ZG: I think it's very different. I was surprised when I heard about it one year ago. But it was to be expected. All good horses are in the Middle East. Here is very good hospitality. So it's very different than Europe. Europe is a different show, so different people. What's happening in Paris? The town is very beautiful and it's famous and the show is well organized. But Qatar is fantastic. You can change Paris for Qatar. Qatar it's a very good location also. But I think it's totally different show. We have more judges here. I think it would be a very good show.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

ZG: Qatar is excellent. The people are very nice. I think the level here will be greater than Paris, than the Europeans.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

ZG: It is good if they invite horses from other countries to compete. It is a good idea because horses from outside have to spend a lot of money to get here. But if they get an invitation, the organizer has to pay. I don't know if that will be the case. But I think it's a good idea. They have to choose the right horses. The organizers did the same for Dubai in the beginning.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges

for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

ZG: I think it would be different because there are many judges, 15 judging 15 minds. So we have nine choosing the class. When the championship is over, 15 different minds. So I think the good horse will still win. Five, seven, eight. If you have one or five or nine or 15, it doesn't matter. I just do my job.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

ZG: I remember last year in Paris there were only a few horses. Here there are much more interesting horses, so I think it will be a very good show. I don't think they need prize money for the World Championship. For shows like Katara, Abu Dhabi, Dubai they have prize money, but it's a different show, it's different there. It is time to do something different. Also here in the Middle East they can support economically much better. There are many more VIP tables, many more people, many more young people. That's why I think it makes a difference. Europe doesn't have this money, doesn't have the same number of horses compared to the Middle East.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

ZG: I think it will be very different. When I heard about it, about a year ago, it was ... Were you surprised? Yes, I was expecting it. The fact is that all the good horses are in the Middle East.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.



MANFRED HAIN / Germany



TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

MH: I have been judging for 20 years. I think I judged the World Championship five or six times. I have been involved with Arabian horses for 30 years and have been a breeder for 25 years.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

MH: The Olympic Games is the same, they change the place, the world is changing. Paris is top. And we will see how it goes in Qatar. Our Paris is fantastic. I think the idea is good. The organization in Qatar till now is perfect.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

MH: Having the Nations Cup in Europe, especially in Germany, because it was established there. And some shows should stay on their own.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

MH: Too many.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

MH: Not good for me.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

MH: The title is enough. They don't need prizemoney.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

MH: Excited and proud to be invited.

This World Championship in Doha will be for sure magnificent thanks to the fantastic organization, the great number of horses, the spectacular venue on the beach with the skyline and the many visitors and guests who will come from all over the world.

Nevertheless, one eye should be on Europe, as the All Nations Cup does with its great history and possibilities for all the small breeders there.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.

TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

MVH: I have been judging the international shows since about 10 years but I was already on the national list since 25 years. I didn't want to combine judging with breeding, showing and organizing shows for the reason that this could cause too many conflicts of interest, and this is something that I wanted to avoid for sure. Since 2013, I stopped my farm and also my breeding program completely and started to focus really on judging all over the world. Due to the many invitations, I had the opportunity to have a lot of experience in a short time. Last year, I judged for the very first time the World Championship in Paris. This year, it's the second time that I will judge the World Championship, and this time in Qatar. It's a great honor to be invited to judge the very first World Championship in Qatar. This means history, I think. I am honored that the organization has confidence in my knowledge, and I hope it will be a wonderful experience.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

MVH: I'm 100 % supporting this idea. We had the World Championship in Paris for over 42 years on a row. And of course, those were all amazing happenings. I was participating many times. I have incredible good memories of the Paris World Championship, but we cannot ignore the fact that there was a reducing number of horses and also the growing importance of the Middle East owners. We cannot ignore this any longer. Those are facts, and we have to live with it. I have not seen yet the location, but I am quite sure that our host will organize a spectacular show on a wonderful venue. But please do not forget that Madame Chazelle is still involved in this organization and that she brings her many years of experience and knowledge to Qatar.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

MVH: It's a World Championship, so I expect to see the highest quality of horses who will take my breath away.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

MVH: We cannot ignore the growing importance of the Arab countries among the Arabian horses. As an European official and former European breeder, I hope we can combine the European skills with the Middle East skills to have a good marriage between those countries.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

MVH: It's quite a number, of course, but last February I was judging the Katara show, and we were 24 judges in our panel. In my opinion, all went well, so I do believe that this system with 15 judges will work out also this time.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

MVH: To me, this is not an issue if they delete the highest scores or the lowest scores. At the end, the result stays the same. This is my opinion. I judged many times with this system and my final ranking never changed.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

MVH: The World Championship means to me "Tradition", and it was always without prize money, so I prefer to keep it this way. I'm not against prize money, for sure not, because it is an additional financial help for participants, owners and breeders. For the World Championship, it should stay the way it was, as usual.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

MVH: I do hope..."Breathtaking"!

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.





TA: Goodmorning. Our readers would like to know in three sentences about your experience as a judge, how many years you have been judging, whether you have judged a World Championship before or is this your first time, and what is your feeling about being here today.

SB: It's a real pleasure to be here in Doha, for sure. And I have been happily involved with the Arabian horse my entire life since I was a young man at the age of nine. And I have been fortunate to have experienced and worked with the Arabian horse all over the world. So I'm invited here as the Canadian judge where I lived and worked for 18 years and my family has its roots. I also lived and studied in the United States as well as Poland and I currently reside in Australia. So it is a real treat to be here amongst such international judges representing the world. It's an interesting approach to invite a judge from a single country, 15 of us, which is quite a large number. The Arabian horses have always been my passion. This is my life's work. This is what I do for a living, involved with the Arabian horse industry. And so to be invited to come and judge the best horses in the world at the World Championship for the first time outside of Europe, which is a rather a bittersweet moment for all of us who have European roots, who enjoyed that show for 42 years in Paris. But it's a wonderful step forward as the industry has drastically changed in this part of the world since the World championship began 42 years ago. So it's a real privilege to be here.

TA: This is the first edition of a World Championship outside Europe. For the first time, the World Championship is being held in an Arab country in the spectacular location in Qatar that has already hosted world-class sporting and nonsporting events. You are the first judges

in history to judge a World Championship outside Europe. What do you think of this new location and what do you think the contributions the alternating locations between Europe and Qatar will make?

SB: I think it's only inevitable that at some point a show of the quality as the World Championship would have to find its way back to the Arabian homeland, especially since this part of the world has grown exponentially in the last three decades. Certainly I don't think any of us could have thought back in the day that we'd be having shows in Doha and Dubai and Damam and Riyadh and places like that. And in fact, I'm not sure anybody had heard of Doha 30 years ago, but here we are in a very modern, spectacular city that has a fantastic reputation for hosting world class events. And so it's wonderful to be celebrating the Arabian horse close to its origin with the people that have known and loved this horse for millennia. It's a privilege to bring that horse back here and be a part of their celebration of the Arabian horse.

TA: Which level of horses do you expect?

SB: Oh, I'm expecting the best. I'm expecting a few surprises, actually, which would be great. I've had the opportunity now that we can travel again, post Covid. I know that seems like a strange thing to say, but we were isolated for almost two and a half years in Australia, unable to see the horses except on live feed around the world. So last year I've had a chance to see lots of amazing horses in the European show season, and I expect those horses to be here competing, as well as some horses that I haven't been able to see that are close to home. So I expect the competition to be possibly the highest of the World Championship ever, which is quite a statement.

TA: What is the future in terms of the importance of Arab countries, Qatar first and then perhaps others, due to the possibility of hosting major events like the World Championship?

SB: When these shows began in Europe, when the whole concept of horse shows began, and those began in my lifetime and our lifetime, similarly idea outside of what was happening, maybe at the British nationals and at some shows in Scottsdale and in the US, but the idea of a European horse show where we celebrated together and enjoyed our breeding horses and evaluated them is a relatively new concept. I think it's only natural and inevitable that as the Arabian

horse popularity grows in regions around the world, that those shows and those events will also grow in those regions. It's wonderful to know that it's growing right here in the home where the Arabian horse was founded and nurtured for millennia. So I expect us to spend a lot more time in shows and events here, and I hope that we can all find a way to work together so that we're all celebrating each other's horses in those parts of the world and we're both from the west and we understand what it was like to raise those horses in North America and Europe. And now that I live in Australia and I'm passionate about trying to promote those horses here, and I think some of the initiatives that are being started here in the Middle East to try to help and stimulate breeding in some of those more remote parts of the world is also wonderful.

I think it'll all bring that energy back to the Middle East. I look forward to lots of wonderful things happening here and we'll see and I think we'll begin to think outside the box, beyond the World Championships and the All Nations Cup, to new events like Katara and then Dubai International show and all these other amazing events and names of places that when we now think of Sharjah and Abu Dhabi and all these places that were never on our radar before. So it's going to continue to grow year after year, decade after decade.

TA: What do you think about the choice by the organization to have 15 judges, 9 judges for each class all of them present on the ground for the championships?

SB: That's a decision for the organization to make. That last time I judged the World Championships, there were eight of us, I believe, which is a lot of judges in the ring. 15 judges in a championship would be a lot of judges in the championship. But I respect my fellow judges and it'll be nice to have a very global opinion and some global expertise brought to the table on that championship day. I think it certainly makes it a very level playing field. No single judge can sway the outcome. Right? And that's probably a good thing. These are judges that are respected at the highest level with a tremendous amount of experience, and it'll be a privilege to stand in the ring with them.

TA: In addition, there will be five criteria. As usual, the highest and lowest grade will be removed. What do you think about this method of evaluation?

SB: I have lots of history with this

dropping the highest and the lowest and as a show organizer and as a judge, and I found that dropping high and low is something that makes the audience happy, as most of the time when you alter the results and you pull the high and the low out, the results don't change. But if it makes the audience and the show organizers happier to know that no one can give a ridiculously high mark or ridiculously low mark and hurt a horse's chances of placing in a class, then so be it. I certainly think that if you've hired a judge to come, then their expertise should be recognized and included in the total. But I don't think it'll affect your ranking and then they will not change. It won't affect my ability to stay in the middle, that's for sure. If I see a horse that deserves a high mark and I expect to see many of those. Those high marks will come out. And if there's a horse that unfortunately has a less desirable attribute, then those low marks need to be given. We have a responsibility to do the right thing to the judge without over penalizing these beautiful horses that have come at the World Championship level.

TA: The organization has done an amazing job and the venue will be incredible. There will be more than 150 VIP tables and guests from all over the world, owners and breeders with a record 175 horses entered. Keeping with the Parisian tradition of not including the prize money. What do you think?

SB: I think so. I think there's nothing wrong with prize money and certainly events that are focused around prize money. That's a wonderful incentive for people to want to participate. But the World Championships is incentive enough on its own to win that title and to have that prestige, to be able to come and celebrate it in a beautiful place like this. I've seen the photos and the videos of the area that's been set up right there on the port. It looks fantastic and it's very authentically Arabian. I think we've all come to love and appreciate Paris and to be in Paris at the holiday season, because Paris is very special that time of the year. But this is something different, this is something unique. And I think we're going to really enjoy this. It's going to be memorable, and it'll help raise the standard of what we can expect at a World Championship.

TA: If you had to describe this World Championship and what you expect from it with one word what would you use?

SB: I would say Elite. It is really where the best in the world come to compete. There are so many wonderful titles to be achieved in our breed now, that matter and are important. But there is always something special about the World Championship title. Those show organizers that pulled all this together, all those years ago, in the late 70's, to make the World championships possible in place like Paris. I don't think they would ever could of envisioned that it would find its way back to the Middle East at some point. But here it is and I look forward to see 175 horses, which is a fantastic number as we all know that Paris can still be wonderful with a few less than that. But it will be certainly be a worthy winner standing in those final line-up and qualifying for the championship.

TA: Thank you very much for this interview and for your time.