

# Aljassimya

## Amateur Challenge Holland

### the Covid-19 Edition

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photos by Jan Kan - [www.jankan.nl](http://www.jankan.nl)





*In previous years, the Stoop Family organized the Arabian Horse Weekend in the month of May in the small village St.-Oedenrode, in the Netherlands. This event included a C-National and a C-International Show, as well as one of the annual Aljassimya Amateur Shows. This year all showorganisers suffered to comply to governmental rules and regulations, due to Covid, and many shows had been cancelled. The team of Annelieke, Ine and Pieter Stoop insisted on doing what had to be done. Their National and International Show was shifted to the third weekend of August and the Aljassimya Amateur Show was shifted to the third Sunday in September.*

*This time, the show was held in a joint venture of the International DAWRA Show, which was held on Saturday 19th of September and the Aljassimya Amateur Challenge Holland was scheduled the day after. The competitions had were organized at the Ruitersportcentrum Het Keelven in Someren. A recently constructed new facility located in an agriculture area, but with access to the "Peel", a natural reserve with lots of riding possibilities. Absolutely a place were you can have a horsy weekend arrangement to get*

*away from the busy city life. Big riding arena, spacious parking area, several arena and airy stables. The prospect for a bigger event, for sure. The excellent and affordable Brasserie did complete the picture.*

*On Saturday, the Dutch Arabian Western Riding Association ( DAWRA ) had their International Show. Abundance of riding competition, with a lot of participants. Amongst them the 2020 European Champion Western Pleasure, Canisia Romani with Ashraf al Shams. The Netherlands have a long standing tradition of Western Riding, especially with Arabian Horses, and due to the increasing support of ECAHO and their sponsors the level of competition has increased tremendously. The Aljassimya Challenges provide an additional platform of competitions for those planning to start. So far only Novice level is offered. But indeed, you have to start at the bottom.*

*The Aljassimya Amateur Challenge Holland, on Sunday, had two sections. The Show classes were scheduled before noon and the Sport competitions were to continue in the afternoon. For this year only, due to the virus, it was agreed*

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**Best of show Novice: Ghandahara - shown by Servaz Heijmans**



**Junior Colts Amateur Winner: Avicii Lazize**



**Junior Fillies Novice Winner: Artwork by Knedo**

to invite only 2 judges for the Show Classes. Mr. Gideon Reisel from the Netherlands and Ms. Eline Raes from Belgium took on the task to mark the horses, handling, harmony and presentation as they did in previous events. Ringmaster was Ms. Ils van Dun and Mr. Bart Beckers was DC, both from Belgium.

In the show classes over 25 horses were entered in the 3 levels. Additionally there was a foal class. The last combination that was presenting themselves before the lunchbreak took the title of Best Novice. It was the grey mare Gandahara and her young handler Servaz Heijmans. Gandahara is out of Polish lines by Pegasus out of Georgia, bred by Michalow Stud and now owned by the Fam. Heijmans in the Netherlands. The combination gathered a score of 592 points, including a 100 for harmony, the

essence of Challenge, under the Patronage of Aljassimya Farm, Qatar. Silver went to Ms. Sharony Lufting with the Forelock's owned mare MDR Tavishah, a Kanz Albidayer daughter. In this section Bronze Medal was obtained by Mr. Thierry Oldenburg. Thierry presented the black Wadee Al Shaqab colt Kashmir, bred by Paul Gheysens from Knocke Arabians in Belgium.

Also in the Amateur level the combination of the handler and a senior mare took the title of Best Amateur. Here we saw the 10-year old chestnut AF Tryoshka and her handler Mrs. Kim de Bloeme, a combination that nearly dominated all classes they participated in the afternoon. Pretty, versatile and nicely presented... that's what the concept is all about. Af Tryoshka obtained a score of 584. The mare is bred in the Netherlands by Arabian Fantasie and now



**Best of show Experienced: Forelock's Yinx - shown by Ruth Walburg**



**Foal Class Winner: DG Vinyx**



**Experienced Silver Medal: Mansour KS**

owned by her handler Kim. She was sired by the Nadir I son, AF Umoyo out of Wushika Monpelou. A strong Russian pedigree, as often seen in the Netherlands. Silver in this group was Ms. Kaylee Roele with the gelding Elazar STC. Remco Bleijndaal obtained the Bronze Medal with this gelding ASE Bailando.

The highest score of the morning was given to Forelock's Yinx, a 4-year old mare, competing with her handler Ruth Walburg in the Senior Mares at the Experienced Amateurs level. This great moving chestnut gave us goose bumps with her outstanding trot and obtained excellent scores in all categories. As often the mark of Forelock's breeding program, located in the Netherlands, is clearly visible. Yinx is by the Ajman Moniscione son, FS Reflection out of Forelock's Yessy, a Champion mare herself by Psytadel.

Forelock's Yinx took the Gold Medal in the championship Experienced Amateur. The Silver Medal was for the Straight Egyptian senior stallion Mansour KS presented by Ralf Hesen. Ralf Hesen took also the Bronze Medal together with PA Vittoria Dancer. Vittoria is owned by Denise van Gils and is the mother of the Gold Medal Foals DG Vinyx.

Interesting to see was the small foal class, especially the handlers. Amongst them we welcomed Fenne Koppenol and Joyce van den Berg, both International Endurance riders from the Netherlands. Fenne competed in several ridden competitions on both days this weekend. Joyce presented her filly Di'Farah, clearly an endurance bred pedigree. Her bay filly was sired by the Castlebar Gulfstream son Dayway Stream Bliss out Eau Divine by Akim de Ducor. Not a common pedigree in our show arenas, but at least the ladies

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**Gold Medal Classic Pleasure Senior: Gipsy Queen Hagelkruis H. - ridden by Anouk Daris**



**Gold Medal Trail in Hand: Gipsy Queen Hagelkruis H.**



**Gold Medal Western Pleasure Senior: Gipsy Queen Hagelkruis H.**

had fun and that is part of the game. The victory of this class went to DG Vinyx, a bay filly, bred by professional trainer Denise van Gils and now owned by Ms. Franca Kerssens from the Netherlands. Her pedigree traces back to Excalibur EA and the Varian stallion Sundance Kid V. The filly's sire is Madagaskar J. The Silver Medal went to the colt foal Zamazenta S, bred and owned by E. Sterken and presented by Samantha Maynard. The Bronze Medal was for the colt foal Forelock's Renaissance, bred and owned by Forelock's Arabians and presented by Sharony Lufting. As agreed with the AJF team, foal classes are not included in the Challenge. Nevertheless it was a good opportunity to get those youngsters out and get some experience.

During the lunchbreak the local support team prepared the obstacles for the Trail Competition. Once approved by the

judge, the participants were guided through the patterns of the day by Judge Ms. Paulette Zorn. Judges' administrator was Ms. Carmen Brink, both from the Netherlands and with a lot of experience, especially in the Western Riding Competitions.

The competition that afternoon started with the In-Hand Trail. Over 10 combinations entered, 9 came forward, all placed. Clear victory and therefore the Gold for organizer Mrs. Annelieke Stoop with her mare Queen Hagelkruis H., with 71.5 points. Close second and Silver went to the earlier mentioned Mrs. Kim de Bloeme and her mare AF Tryoshka with 70 points. Bronze was for Ms. Tiyomi ten Brink and Forelocks' Vermilion. This combination gathered 69 points. Clearly a huge progression compared to the first Trail Competitions a couple of years ago. Several participants are



**Gold Medal Western Pleasure Junior: Palermo - ridden by Sebas Volker**



**Gold Medal Classic Pleasure Junior: FA Olympus**



**Gold Medal Hunter Pleasure Junior: Palermo**

seriously training for this kind of groundwork. Very educational for young horses and their handlers, it obviously creates a bond between you and your equine partner.

Another victory for Mrs. Kim de Bloeme and her mare AF Tryoshka in the Trail Ridden Competition. 6 Combinations competing, unfortunately 3 participants received DQ's for not completing the obstacles correctly. Silver went to Ms. Zoe Bols from Belgium with her fleabitten gelding Nadirr. Bronze this edition for Mr. Sebastian Volker and his bay stallion Palermo. Bred by Klarenbeek Arabians, in the Netherlands, this expressive stallion is linebred to the Champions Gazal Al Shaqab and Marajj. Clearly this was not going to be the only "Award" today for this nice tempered stallion.

In Hunter Pleasure Senior, the Gold was once again for AF Tryoshka and Kim in a class which had a well ridden performance from most competitors. We saw 11 combinations in the ring. Quiet and impressive, Mrs. Anouk Daris took Silver with the Partbred Gypsy Queen Hagelkruis H. Bronze this time for Ms. Chantal Schilperoort and her grey mare MT Marjorie, a QR Marc granddaughter, bred in the Netherlands.

Western Pleasure Junior Class had only 3 participants. Palermo and Sebastian took Gold. The bay Jawaher Ghazy and Ms. Zoë Bols took Silver for Kuwaiti breeder and owner Al Jawaher Stud. The stallion is by Kahil Al Shaqab out of an Ekstern daughter. Third place went to the young Ms. Hanna Antonissen of the Murillo Team with their homebred mare MJ Morania. This bay mare is by the QR Mar son Morowan KA.



**Gold Medal Hunter Pleasure Senior: AF Tryoschka - ridden by Kim de Bloeme - van Schaik**



**Gold Medal Trail Ridden: AF Tryoschka**



**Best of show Amateur: AF Tryoschka**

The Classic Pleasure was split into a Junior and 2 Senior groups, depending on the age of the performing horses. Five combinations in the Senior group I were the first place went to Ms. Anouk Daris and Gipsy Queen Hagelkruis H. Second place this time for rider Mrs. Anne-Laure Kwaspen with the Partbred Shatt el Dijala. AF Tryoschka and Kim had to settle this time with third position in this class. The Second Group II had 7 participants. First place went to Ilona Bax and Emirzo, a gelding by Enzo out of the Laheeb daughter Emira. The horse is bred by Michalow Stud and now proudly owned by Mrs. Helen Hennekes – van Nes. The long maned grey AR Sinan, who we saw more often in ridden competition in the past, ranked second for his rider Mrs. Jeanette de Bruin. Third place went to the Janow Podlaski bred Postar, owned and ridden by Lisa-Marie Heckenbücker from Germany, a combination that we have welcomed

several times in the Aljassimya Amateur Challenges.

The Championship battle between the top contenders of both Classic Pleasure Senior classes was won by Anouk and Gipsy Queen. AR Sinan and Jeanette took Silver and Ilona and Emirzo received the Bronze.

Thereafter we had 3 combinations in the Western Pleasure Senior. Another Gold for Annelieke and Gipsy Queen. Silver once again for Zoë and Nadirr. Bronze was achieved by Mr. Juan Murillo for owner Flaxman Arabians, Belgium with the chestnut stallion Jeryan Aljassimya, bred by Sheikh Jassim, Qatar.

Classic Pleasure Junior had 4 participants. Here the victory went to Belgium with FA Olympus, a grey gelding, bred and



owned by Flaxman Arabians and with a mainly Golden Cross pedigree with a touch of Polish. The horse was nicely ridden by Ms. Ilona Bax from the Netherlands. The Partbred Nena van de Beekerheide took Silver with Ms. Sema Lintsen. The stallion Palermo had to settle this time with Bronze, this time ridden by Sebastiaans' spouse Mrs. Chantal Schilperoort.

The last competition of the day was the Hunter Pleasure Junior. This time Gold for Palermo and Chantal, it was a very successful weekend for the stallion with both his riders/owners Chantal and Sebastiaan with time for a family picture too. Silver went to Kuwait for Jawaher Ghazy and Ms. Zoë Bols and Bronze this time for Ilona Bax and FA Olympus.

Taken the restrictions of the "virus" into account, this years' edition of the Aljassimya Amateur Challenge Holland was a big success. Great atmosphere amongst competitors. The excellent organizing team with the help of a good group

of volunteers brought this weekend to a success. The cooperation with DAWRA brought some newcomers to the Amateur Challenge.

This was unfortunately the last competition of this year. Out of the originally 20 Aljassimya Amateur Challenges planned only 5 took place for well-known reasons. Not much we can do than hope this pandemic will soon come to its end and we can be free to travel and compete without the limitations we had recently. Enough sad words have been written about this issue.

Only few people got the chance to compete this year. As Aljassimya stands for fairness in competition, the responsible team might need to take some decisions to see how we shall proceed with their annual "invitation to the World Championships or even the final Draw". Our hands are tied and movements are limited. However we will make the best out of it. More news to follow... A year lost is not a life lost.



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## Amateur Challenge

Text by Emma Maxwell

*The distinctive rules for the Amateur Challenge were created in Belgium in 2014 for the European Amateur Cup - a show which averaged 100 entries in the last five years - more than many C shows in the current European Arabian show scene. Three of the four people currently on the Amateur Challenge Committee were involved in creating the ideas behind, as well as the organisation of this first event Rob Rens, Ronny Vosch and Ilse Verbruggen. They have been joined by me, Emma Maxwell after they asked for, and were given, sponsorship from one of Qatar's most ambitious studs - Aljassimya Farm for whom I am the publicist. It's not often that a great idea and a very generous sponsorship are matched up so well. With the continued enthusiasm of our patron Sheikh Jassim Bin Khalifa Al Thani and a dedicated Committee the idea started a slow expansion across Europe.*

*Mission number one was to create shows where people can compete with their own or a borrowed Arabian horse and feel safe, be given encouragement and have a fun day out. The in hand division is divided into three levels - Novice for the genuinely beginners, Amateur for C show winners and Amateur Experienced for those with several wins under their belt. This way complete beginners have the time and space to enter the arena without feeling out of place amongst more experienced peers.*

*Of equal billing to Mission 1 is Mission 2 - to promote a style of showing Arabians that owners of other breeds of*

*horses - and the vast majority of Arabian owners can agree is respectful of the horse. As well as the normal five topics of in hand judging Type - Head and Neck - Body - Legs - Movement there are two more categories. Points are also given for the accurate presentation of the horse: standing still, walking in a straight line and trotting around the arena without breaking into canter or circling. Points are also given for the harmony of the horse and handler rewarding those partnerships which listen to each other and complete their show in unison. While those categories may appear to judge the handler... these points create an unusual effect - an unintended consequence that is beneficial. In practice I can clearly see that the handler scores regularly reflect not just the ability of the handler but the character and amenability of the horse, with anxious, aggressive or impatient horses scoring lower than those which have relaxed, balanced paces and a cheerful demeanour. When disposition is cited in every horse buying survey as the top requirement for new buyers, a judging system that rewards disposition is one that needs considering for the whole breed!*

*The classes therefore appear half way between a spots horse class and an Arabian show classes, with the horses expected to behave, rewarded for displaying regular, correct paces - but also show good breed Type and some show charisma. We feel that in this way the handler makes the most of the good points of the Arabian horse !*



*Thirdly, again in order to present the Arabian as a useful, rideable horse, any show which joins the Challenge must offer Pleasure and Trail classes. It is difficult to arrange ridden classes across Europe in the same style because traditions are so different,. But we use the ECAHO sports rules for three Pleasure classes (Classic, Hunter and Western) which follow an American showing model. They offer a very pleasant introduction to the show ground to a Novice horse or Rider and are quick and efficient for the judge and audience. It is a group class with no points awarded, in which you have to show the three paces - walk, trot and canter on each rein according to the judges instructions and complete a small rein back in the line up. You can use this class as a warm up for Dressage or other ridden classes that may be offered. We do allow*

*professional handlers who are not professional riders to take part and vice versa - pro riders are welcome to our in hand classes.*

*Everyone is welcome to join our Trail classes which have been one of the biggest successes of the new system and have pulled in more and more people each year. Borrowed from Western competitions, the horse must negotiate six obstacles (like TREC obstacles) with maximum efficiency and obedience. It is entertaining to compete in, watch and at the same time teaches you and your horse all sorts of useful life skills. In Hand Trail is the most popular class at most European shows and is suitable for everyone aged 8 - 80 ! Ridden Trail is also offered.*