

Scottsdale W

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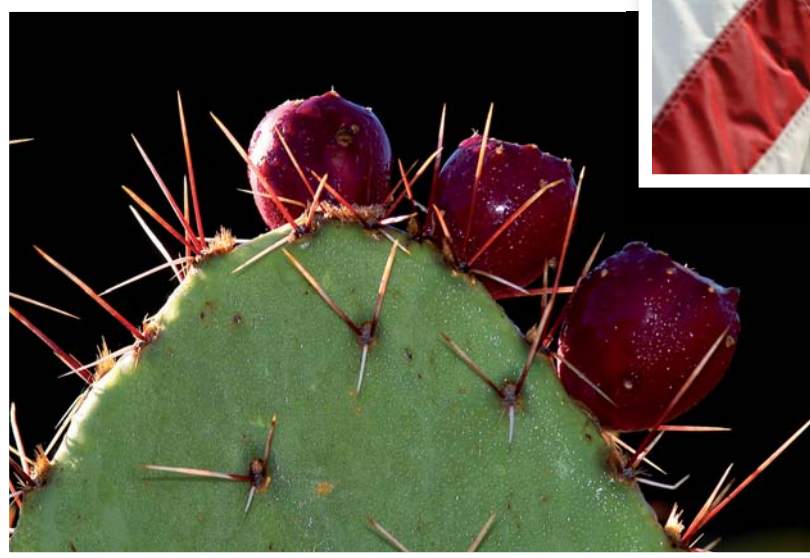
by Urszula Leczycka
photos by Nancy Pierce
and Catherine Noel

*A*rizona is certainly one of the most wonderful places in the world to spend the cold, European wintertime of February. The magnificent scenery of the Desert Southwest with its most characteristic symbol – huge, ancient saguaro cactuses, red, rocky mountains with the old silver and gold mines and surrounding Indian culture just next to the modern, huge golf courses, and skyscrapers of Phoenix is very nice difference from what we used to in the Old World.

The atmosphere of one of the biggest Arabian horse events in the world can also be noticed just when you arrive on the American ground at Phoenix airport – it's difficult to miss the big posters with some magnificent Arabian horses on the walls around. And when you enter the Scottsdale WestWorld showground being appointed with 500 pages show catalogue including over 2500 horses

and look at the several indoor and outdoor arenas surrounded by few huge market tents with whatever-you-wish Arabian horse related goods starting from home furniture to jewellery – you already know that you are in an Arabian Wonderland. Summer in February, more than 2000 four-legged VIP's at one place competing in hundreds of classes and privately presented in between, big money rustling in the lobby and open stables parties everynight after the show – it certainly could be addictive!

Scottsdale's love affair with Arabian horses began in 1940s with Merle Cheney who were amongst the first to own the Arabian horse ranch in the area and Anne and



Wonderland

European point of view



Grand Canyon



Fowler McCormick who established their winter home and ranch purchasing some land and horses from Cheney's. Anne became particularly fond of the breed and enlarged the ranch with some famous imports as the famed Naborr. She was also co-founder of the All Arabian Horse Show hosted for years at McCormick Ranch. The idea came when the Tweed family moved to Scottsdale from the Midwest in 1949 buying the land and two Arabian horses from Cheney's. In 1953, Ed Tweed hosted the first major horse event at his Brusally



Cath

Scottsdale



Polish group with Laura & Randy Brodzik, David Cains, Andy Sellman and the colt just purchased

Ranch. After a ride in the McDowell Mountains with his fellow members of the Scottsdale Sheriff's Posse he invited them and some other guests back to his place for a horse exhibition. In 1954 the International Arabian Horse Association urged Tweed to help start the first Arizona Arabian Horse Association and the following year Tweed along with local Arabian horse breeders sponsored the first All Arabian Horse Show. Some of 100 horses participated in the first event which commented from the bed of a truck by Tweed. During the years Ed also served as the Association's president and refused to enter any of his great Arabians in the show. Instead, he focused on staging a great event and hosting a post-show cookout for vendors and participants – that seems to be remained as a kind of the show tradition nowadays as well.

Growth of Scottsdale's Arabian industry that started in 1950s and 1960s with Lasma and Chauncey Ranches also keeps running until the XXIst century. There are

currently over 50 horse farms or businesses listed at Arabian Horse Association of Arizona. The large farms and training centers from all over the US come in the area of the modern Scottsdale's WestWorld (opened in 1987) just after the Thanksgiving Day in November hosting crowds of clients from all over the world daily – they will stay here until after the post-show tours in March. The event itself, held in the second part of February starts officially with the kick-off celebration evening. The horse show has become more than just a horse show here indeed. And it's certainly worth the exhausting, nearly 24-hours trip from Europe, with catching the few transfer flights within half an hour... When the initial "shock" has worn off, within few days of the event you will see a number of Arabian horses that is impossible to be seen even while attending all the European shows in one season. The variety of classes held at one time at several arenas will be vertiginous – in 2008 show catalogue I have counted over a 800!

Every kind of competition can be attended with Arabian horse here and some of them are reaching a stage of curiosity. From the European point of view one of the most bizarre competitions is park with Arabians imitating a Saddlebreds with certainly not very natural way for Arabian horse to move and be presented. But Scottsdale is the place where even men's riding sidesaddle have been seen...

On the other hand, the number of purest version of working horse classes here is just breathtaking – with the horses trained to the point of perfection responding the slightest move of the rider dressed in amazingly detailed western style costumes you wouldn't see anywhere else in

Supreme Champion



DA Valentino Champion Station

the world.

It must be pointed out that the Scottsdale show should be an obligatory lesson to attend by most European Arabian horse breeders especially from the countries where crowds of pure bred geldings has nothing to do, usually causing a big problem to their breeders. The variety of classes for Arabian geldings is really edifying here with strong competition for the prizes amongst the participants – both in halter and performance and the winning horses reaches some astronomical amounts in further purchases.

Relaxed and amused crowds of both exhibitors and spectators gives the loudest cheer to their favourites I have ever heard so Scottsdale is certainly not a place for those

with sensitive eardrums! Cheering a favourite is a kind of competition for itself here – no matter who is in the ring, when one part of turnout starts to make a noise, the opposite one will not leave it without the louder response. There was one particular competitor that impressed me this year. An old, grey mare competing at senior mare's class. This horse was absolute contradiction to what we call "American way of show grooming". Unclipped, slightly brushed, without a touch of oil and I believe she have never seen what is a show conditioning but she stood up proudly presented by her handler next to the horses of aces – as David Boggs or Michael Byatt (it was not an amateur class!). This veteran mare was probably the happiest horse at this show and gained one of the loudest applause

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Urszula Leczycka and the 2007 filly, Julianna Z.

while in dignified and slow trot however it's quite surprising what such a couples do at the show least of all in the professional classes. If the owners don't approve of the style of showing why do they bother the old veteran to participate? But again, it seems everything is possible at American show. On the other hand, so called professional treatment of show horses that developed into a perfection in horse conditioning for sure, sometimes raises to a point of exaggeration with the horses clipped to the skin level including the sensorials on faces, enormous lengths of tails as well as thick and heavy horseshoes giving an impression of a horse on high heels seem to be quite common. The

machine of show industry development is unable to stop. All these exertions makes you say "wow" with every horse entering the arena but closer inspection of the same one can be sometimes very disappointing. Especially a number of leg and body incorrectnesses were quite surprising and as for my personal impression the style of movement presentation in hands of most of American handlers keeping a horse on a short lead nearly just by the muzzles is certainly invalid for an Arabian to express his moving abilities.

One could have an impression that the halter classes this year were dominated by the progeny of 3 stallions. Senior class winners and champions at stallions part were definitely grabbed by Versace's offspring. The sire becoming still more popular not only in US thanks to some of his outstanding show contenders in Europe and Middle East with exotic chestnut Venetzia at the top of the list. So even more sad was the news about Versace's loss that electrified the crowds on the first day of the Scottsdale show. The progeny of Versace went into the money immediately – just after the show the 2008 Scottsdale Senior Champion Stallion and Supreme – DA Valentino was announced to be sold for \$5 millions. The one awarded Reserve was also Versace's son – Odyssey SC owned by Gemini Farms.

Amongst the top senior mares competing at Scottsdale event an "living US legend" Magnum Psyche is leading in the ranks. Nice, European accent was the Reserve title gained by Polish bred and owned Olita (be Ecabo) on lease to Valley Oak Arabians, however the competition against some perfectly marketed US mares trained and promoted by the US aces of the industry seems to be very difficult for non-US contenders.

It's not my intention to analyse the type of the horses



JJ La Estrella

Champion Mare

shown at Scottsdale. In my opinion, despite Arabian horse community becoming a global village, there is still quite a big difference in US and European point of view and expectations as to Arabian horse type. Used to look for the "European" ones I got the impression that some of the best horses could have been seen rather at the backstage of Scottsdale show – during open stables presentations. They say these are the contenders for "European style show in US" - Arabian Breeders World Cup held in Las Vegas since last year, held with the European rules of conduct of shows, way of showing and judgement. Will there be a two sections of Arabian horse breeding in US in the future then?

What I found especially interesting were the junior classes

with quite a big number of Marwan Al Shaqab's progeny. While at the European showings we could have seen very few and carefully selected representants of this extremely influencing sire of past few years, there was a good chance of looking through a big number of some different quality Marwans – but certainly there are still some more outstanding creatures left in US!

But what will make me coming back to Scottsdale for sure is not only this horse wonderland, the sunny weather and wonderful climate of Arizona in the middle of European winter – but certainly the people. Scottsdale is the place that, being for the first time to as a stranger, you will leave this place with crowds of friends – and great memories! □

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Maharaja HDM *Champion Colt*



True Desire LL
Champion Filly



Scottsdale



Pierce 08

Odyssey SC
Res. Champion Stallion



Pierce 08

Olita
Res. Champion Mare



Marwan
Al Magnifico
Res. Champion Colt



Valentinos Dream CBA
Res. Champion Filly

Scottsdale



EmpresPL



Art Dekko TT



Scheherazade PE

Results

Champion Fillies:
TRUE DESIRE LL (Ames
Charisma x Serenata El Jamaal)
owner: Mystica Arabians, AUS

Res. Champion Fillies:
VALENTINOS DREAM CBA
(Da Valentino x Magnums
Dream)
Owner: Cedarbrook Arabians
LLC, USA

Champion Colts:
MAHARAJA HDM (Marajj x
Miss Yasminahelamal)
Owner: Mystica Arabians, AUS

Res. Champion Colts:
MARWAN AL MAGNIFFICOO
(Marwan Al Shaqab x Pacific
Echo)
Owner: David Zouch Ross, USA

Champion Mares:
JJ LA ESTRELLA (Magnum
Psyche x WA Marlaina Lee)
Owner: Oakridge Arabians, USA

Res. Champion Mares:
OLITA (Echo x Orarwa)
Owner: Manny Vierra, USA

Champion Stallions:
DA VALENTINO (Versace x DA
Love)
Owner: Michele Pfeifer & David
Halsch, USA

Res. Champion Stallions:
ODYSSEY SC (Versace x Latoura
Echo)
Owner: East Coast Media LLC,
USA