

# THE AMBASSADOR AL AYAL<sup>AA</sup>

Al Ayad | The Vision HG



by Emma Maxwell ■ photos by Gigi Grasso

For so many of the people around the world who love Arabian horses there is a universal ideal of their original vision of the breed. That first glimpse of a mature grey Arabian stallion walking past and totally capturing the imagination. Sometime we don't even know who the horse was, we just remember the moment of epiphany. Over the years this memory merges with the Vernet etchings, the Victor Adam paintings or the Gladys Brown Edwards standard for Arabian type and becomes a perfect imagining of the Arabian. Seeing Al Ayal AA is like seeing that horse step out of your mind in front of you. Whenever I see him I cannot help thinking "THIS is the Arabian horse!" After all, the breed standard is not ours to change.

Appropriately his dam was named "The Vision" and that is what she was. A black mare of immense quality and presence. Not the 'presence' produced by the rustling of a million plastic bags but the real deal. The aura that makes you stop and acknowledge that this is one of special ones, even just standing quietly in the stall. The Vision HG was the touchstone of Ariela Arabians and the mare people travelled the world to come and see. She is the mare all breeders dream of being blessed with; and yet she was not without her frustrations, Al Ayal AA was her tenth foal.... and her eighth colt. However the sons of The Vision HG were not just colts, they were stallions.

Before Al Ayal AA came the famous bay Al Maraam, Al Lahab, one of a handful of Egyptians to win World





IN THE COVER

Champion stallion, black Al Hakim, herd sire in Germany, and two exotic multi champion grey full brothers to Al Lahab, Al Hadiyah AA and Al Raheb AA . The latter is the sire of last years las Vegas Champion mare - also a Straight Egyptian. Horses from the Straight Egyptian breeding program of Ariela Arabians were never afraid to take on the open show ring.

In 2005 Chen and Eliko heard about a stallion in Germany, Al Ayad who had yet to sire a foal. A viewing in the stable was enough to convince that this 'outcross' within Egyptian lines should stay with them for two years on lease. From the sire line of, and line bred to Hadban Enzahi from whom those curved ears are inherited Al Ayad was a complete success. The world stood up and took notice of his son Al Ayal AA when he was born in 2008 Before he was a year old Frank Sponle had arranged a three year lease that took to him not just to Germany but also to Ajman Stud in the UAE, where he also gained the Gold Championship at the Dubai International. A truly historic moment when the restrictions of international politics melted away in the face of the overwhelming quality of this one Arabian horse.

History was made again when in 2015 he was leased for two years to Sheikh Jassim Bin Khalifa Al Thani's Aljassimya Farm of Qatar. Shown just once he was unanimous Champion Stallion win in the Scottsdale International Straight Egyptian section in 2016. In 2017 he stood at La Movida Arabians in Austria and after his foals arrived in California was immediately rebooked to return to Aljassimya Farm in 2018. A sire of such consistency is rarely encountered, as any glance at the results of the shows in his homeland will tell you. A walk around the pastures at Aljassimya Farm will convince you of the same, and most especially with the WH Justice daughters. Easy to recognise

with the clean muzzle, deep jowl and curved ears of their sire, and also with the long muscled hip, clean muscled shoulder and the flag straight tail carriage.

In the winter of 2017 he returned again to Israel to collect the WAHO Trophy awarded to him, where I can only use words of the National Society which chose him for the award.

"Al Ayal, at less than ten years old, has raised the worldwide standard for what is seen as perfection in an Arabian show horse. He symbolizes what all lovers of the Arabian horse dream of -- a horse so stunning that he not only inspires worldwide admiration, but also serves as an absolutely transformational catalyst that advances international relations, understanding, and good will among mankind.

Al Ayal is such a rarity, and we are honored to award him with the 2017 WAHO Cup"

To anyone who saw him as a colt he was even more of a revelation as a mature stallion, He gets better as he gets older, as an Arabian should. More dry, more refined but also more masculine in musculature and character, he has grown fully into the king he always promised to be. Now at ten years old he is at the peak of the turn of generations. His dam The Vision HG passed away earlier this year leaving a huge hole in heart of Ariela Arabians, while his many champion youngsters are maturing to become the leaders of their generation.

Al Ayal AA will make one of his rare entrances in to the show arena at the 2018 Salon Du Cheval for the Stallion World Championship. Presented by Giacomo Capacci, and he will be competing as a true Ambassador of the Arabian breed and its ability to bring people together. □