



Gataka

(Ekstern x Gwarka / Monogramm)

Champion & Best in Show 2011 Polska-Arabia Arabian Horse Festival
Special Trophy Award from the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Poland

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– make it
yourself!

The interview with **Andrzej Wójtowicz**,
owner of Bełżyce Arabians Stud in Poland

Interview by Urszula Łęczycka



First Lady
(Ekstern x Fila / Oset)

Florencja
(Oset x Florena / Palas)

He was beginning his story with horses having no family traditions or any experience with animals breeding, contrary to this – he started to learn horse riding in the age over 30 exchanging his current ice cream whole sale business for jockey jacket and stable for almost 100 horses. When he was at the beginning, many of horse experts wouldn't bet a cent that a businessman without knowledge and practice may be successful in horse breeding. When his horses were not successful enough at races or shows- he started to train them himself. And even if, as he recalls, he must have been looking funny and experienced jockeys were using all their tricks and games to depreciate him easily, nowadays his Belżyce Stud owes around 70 pure bred horses, after few years of establishment the owner became well respected trainer and jockey and the first home bred horse won the Derby. Until now Belżyce-bred horses 4 times in a row were decorated as Arabian Race Horse of the Year, yearling filly Gataka is

one of the best show yearlings in Poland and the mare Kashira owned by Belżyce Stud was highly sold at 2011 Pride of Poland. Andrzej Wójtowicz, Polish breeder that we are introducing in this issue is a living proof for the fact that obstinacy, persistence, initiative and ability to listen to good advisors are key features for success – not only in business but also in horse breeding.

Tutto Arabi: *Belżyce is one of the biggest Polish private farms even if your story with Arabian horses began not long ago and in quite interesting way. Why and how you got interested in Arabian horses?*

Andrzej Wójtowicz: *My story with Arabian horses began quite incidentally. In July 1995 my friend invited me to his ranch and proposed horse riding on his halfbred mare. During a gallop in my head the idea of buying an own horse started, and so I did it. The chestnut mare I*

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International Multichampion Mare

Kashira

(Magnum Psyche x Kahila IV / Ibn Bint Inas)

purchased was very ungrateful object of my fulfilled dreams. She was kicking, biting and throwing me down from her back. I decided to quit horse idea and come back to my usual business. These days it was quite widely spoken about upcoming famous annual sale at Janów Podlaski stud that I decided to visit. My attention was taken by VIP sector unfortunately not available for a normal spectator without special invitation. I was informed that only the bidders who paid an entry fee for the auction may enter – and so I paid the required amount just to get there. I was located between some Middle Eastern buyers and Mrs Shirley Watts. And this was her with whom I finally lost a battle for the mare – Waćpanna. But before the bid started I made the audience confused asking the auctioneer to run the bidding also in Polish not only in English language that I didn't understand... The auctioneer Marek Grzybowski, a friend nowadays, excused the audience and since then the auction is being run in both languages. My will to have won horse was so big that I returned to Janów Podlaski and bought 8

years old mare Faszyna. Until the end of that year I was the owner of 12 Arabian horses.

TA: *Is that true you began as a jockey riding your own horses despite the fact that you started your riding lessons quite late in the age?*

AW: *I started to ride horses late indeed. In the age of 33 I took part in my first race and beginnings were very difficult. It was hard to face experienced jockeys and some internal, informal system between them. But the harder it was the more stubborn I was and I succeeded winning 100 races to gain the jockey title. Now looking from a perspective I see how high I set my goal. Almost impossibly.*

TA: *At the beginning Bełżyce Arabians was famous for its race successes – can you briefly describe it?*



Nicol

(Major x Njuschaah / Santhos)

AW: Since the beginning of our farm we think that all our horses should be proven on race track. Our first race horses went to Służewiec race track stables to be trained. But the results were so unsatisfying that we decided to set our own training center in Bełżyce. I became a licensed trainer and first foal crop born in Bełżyce I trained myself. The stallion Gwaro (Bardysz – Gwarancja/Piechur) became the best 3 years old horse on the track and won the Derby in 2000. This result we repeated in 2006 with the stallion Eliat (Eldon – Eleuzyna/Wermut). Many times our horses gained the highest race trophies, beating track records and were winning title races as: Europa International Prize– stallion Esej, Białka Stakes – with Gwaro and mares: Fiszka and Savannah, Oaks – Aryjka, Mamba and Fiszka. The horses trained in Bełżyce won around 50 stakes and 4 times in a row were becoming the Best Race Horses of the Year in Poland.

TA: Do you think that races and Arabian race horses has

a future in Poland considering the hard competition against Russian and French lines bred horses?

AW: In my opinion the competition against Russian or French Arabians on race field has no chance. But putting Arabian horses in race training as a strength proof is very important as it develops horses' conformation and works against movement system degradation that we often see at many show and breeding horses.

TA: But it seems that Bełżyce Arabians is now the stud mostly focused on show breeding. Is it easier or more profitable way?

AW: Indeed since a couple of years we focused more on shows as we discovered a good breeding potential of our mares also on this field. It was also caused by some bad rumors on Polish racing scene in the years 2006-2008. But we still send our horses to the race track. If it is easier to

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PS Pacos

(Lucky Dream x Petreena / Ponomarev)

breed for shows I think its easier to breed the Derby winner then show champion as olny a smaller part of Arabian horse population goes to the race training and it often happens that horse that might be a good racer will not even go to race training while to the shows many more horses goes and starts so the chance for single horse to win is not so big.

TA: *Your stud reached some very well results in the shows recently – the filly Gataka in now one of most promising yearlings in Poland. What is your method to manage such a big farm and what are your most important goals to achieve in Arabian horse breeding?*

AW: *The method is very simple – you must love what you do, be good observer and have a lot of energy and a looooot of humility. The rest is probably Allah support. If it comes to our plan – come back to the races and to use top sires.*

TA: *...and top sires for Beżyce Arabians are....*

AW: *RFI Farid, WH Justice, Ajman Moniscione, Shanghai EA, HDB Sihr Ibn Massai and maybe some more title shows winners.*

TA: *Beżyce Arabians was also very succesful in horse sales recently also reaching some high prices at Pride of Poland sale – Kashira was sold this year for 57 000 Euro, 3 years ago the filly Garuna went for 47 000 Euro. Where the horses bred by Beżyce Arabians can be found?*

AW: *The term of high price is very relative but we can't complain of course! We sold the horses to many corners of the world including: Australia, USA, France, Germany, Norway, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Iran, Oman, Kuwait, Italy, England and Greece.*

TA: *And what are the most precious horses still at your farm?*

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Gwaro

(Bardysz x Gwarancja / Piechur)

2000 Derby winner



Eliat

(Eldon x Eleuzyna / Wermut)

2006 Derby winner

AW: They are all precious for us but amongst these 70 I would surely pick: Gwarka (Monogramm – Gratka/Arbil), her daughter Gataka by Ekstern, Florencja (Oset – Florena/Palas) and her offspring: Fortycja (by Pegasus) and Face of Queen (by HDB Sihr Ibn Massai), First Lady (Ekstern – Fila/Oset), Nicol (Major – Njuschaah/Santhos) and beloved racers: the mare Mamba (Ar-Rahman – Matnia/Palas) and her sire – unbeaten on Służewiec racetrack Ar-Rahman (Aleppo – Arabella/Fason), that won 18 times and is the only pure bred Arabian who won so many races.

TA: Is it difficult to run big private stud farm nowadays when the competition is so big and the expectations rising up from season to season?

AW: We are the only farm in Poland that I know that has the incomes only from horse breeding. It is not easy but as you can see it's not impossible and on satisfying level.

TA: The biggest goal to achieve by Bełżyce Arabians is...

AW: The highest sold horse at Pride of Poland and gold medal on World Championships!

TA: Ambitious plans, we wish you the success and the time will show if it comes...