

Gideon Reisel



by Talitha Bakker ■ photos by TuttoArabi archive

A new listing to the ECAHO Judge list is Gideon Reisel from the Netherlands. Gideon is an Commercial airplane pilot and started with Arabian horses in 2001. From 2005 - 2013 he was the secretary with the Dutch Arabian Horse Association and is still a board member presenting the studbook as a delegate for WAHO and ECAHO. Together with his wife he has a small Arabian Horse farm. He is also one of the organizers of the International B Show, the Tulip Cup Holland, which is held every year. Being an ECAHO judge makes his involvement with the Arabian Horse breed even bigger.

INTERVIEW

Tutto Arabi: *How did you become involved with the Arabian Horse and what is it that intrigues you the most?* As both daughter and wife were spending their days and dollars at a public riding school we figured it would be more effective and convenient to buy a riding horse that would suit both girls. So the search started for a big size pony or small horse that was trained and well behaved for both to ride. As it turned out, the ultimate candidate was by chance an allround ridden gelding of Crabbet lineage, sweet natured and a great learning horse. Once we experienced the loyal nature and people oriented character of the Arabian Horse, we were hooked on the breed. Since then we owned two more ridden Arabians, and when our children left for college, we set our sights on breeding.

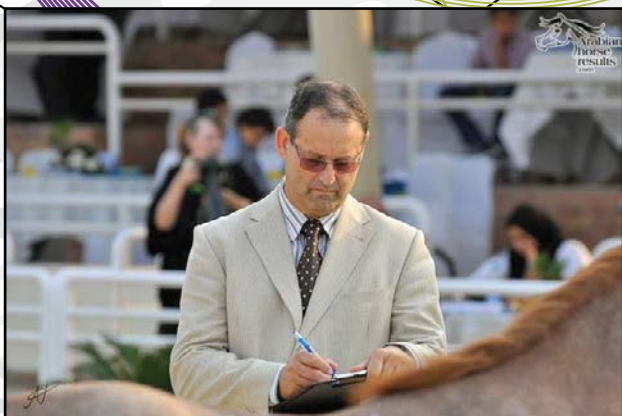
TA: *What was the reason you decided to become a judge?* You can never have enough Rolexes...Yes, I am kidding! The truth is I like to know what I am talking about and therefore I am eager to get all the details right. As a judge-



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trainee you have to dig deep into the anatomical, functional, typical and emotional facts that comprise the Arabian Horse. You get trained by the best in the industry and you learn so many practical things that make you rich in knowledge, that can be utilized on so many levels; You develop a better eye for your own broodmares; where they excel and where they need improvement. I love to teach and perpetuate knowledge; you gain better tools to explain things to others; I judge as a member of the Dutch Arabian Horse Studbook breeding stock licensing team, where one of the responsibilities is pointing out the strengths and/or the weaknesses in evaluated horses. I make it an effort to help owners recognize the intricate details of type and function of their own horses and how some of those details are more important than others in achieving their goals.

TA: What horse comes closest to your ideal of an Arabian Horse?

That is a multi-faceted question ! Are we talking show-horse, endurance-horse, race-horse or eventing-horse ? I can probably name an ideal horse for every discipline but maybe the most versatile one would be the best of all. If we go too far in one direction or the other, we either get caricatures of Arabian Horses or we lose Arabian type very quickly. But I will say this: I am a sucker for the eyes; to me they are the gateway to the horses soul, charisma and expression. By nature of the Arabian Horse's history, they should be big, not only because it is pretty, but because it is functional from an evolutionary standpoint. Another important feature to me is masculine type in stallions and feminine type in mares. From a reasonable distance you should be able to differentiate whether a horse is a mare or a stallion by their distinct features.

TA: And what are the particular horses that impressed you the most?

We have visited the stallions Laheeb in California and Israel, and Ekstern on location in Belgium and Poland. Although very different in build and type, both of these boys were full of spine-tingling charisma and presence. Needless to say they

left an impression, as we ended up with a granddaughter and a daughter of both of these stallions respectively.

TA: What horses are at your farm today and do you also breed with them?

We started our small breeding program with the two above mentioned broodmares from pure Polish lineage. We have bred both a few times and after some setbacks and a few colts, we now are blessed with a filly from each dam, that will be retained at the farm or future plans.

TA: With your job as pilot and your work for the Tulip Cup and managing your farm; how do you find time to judge?

Being an Airline pilot on intercontinental flights is actually quite convenient in this context. I can reasonably manipulate my own schedule to accommodate a judging weekend and I can spend all those sleepless jet-lag-nights planning for events like the Tulip Cup ;) At the same time I am blessed with a wife that is dedicated to the management of the horses so they are in capable hands at all times.

TA: Nowadays the competition in showing has grown rapidly and smaller breeders find it difficult to compete against the big middle eastern countries. What is your opinion regarding this development?

Ofcourse it is not easy for small breeders to compete with the brute force of stables with dozens of high quality broodmares, huge investment budgets and professional trainers. It seems the gap has widened over the last few years in that aspect. In the Netherlands we have started to organize D level shows with an old fashioned flair. We hope this will bring back some of the atmospheres of days gone by, where breeders and/or owners can come and enjoy showing their own horses with mutual comradely, without too much professional intervention and pressure.

TA: What do you think of the Gelding classes and amateur classes that has become more popular the past years.

This is a positive thing. Showing horses should not be limited



to professionals and breeding stock only. Owners should enjoy their horses at whatever level suits them and geldings are breeding-products too that on many occasions have outscored mares and stallions at shows. I am a great supporter of both !

TA: You have also been a secretary of the Arabian Horse association in the Netherlands. We hardly see any Dutch bred Arabs competing in the higher level shows. Do you think their breeding is still far from what the International level is requiring?

Obviously today we are far from the glory days of the past when Dutch bred horses were winning major international shows. Although our typical Dutch trading roots have lead to the sales of many high quality broodmares, we do have some hidden gems left in the Netherlands. I am sure we still have a strong base, but mostly in custody of small private breeders that have limited budgets. Proven stallions that could lift our broodmare base to international show-quality are quite expensive to use and not every small breeder is willing or able to invest in breedings that cost euro 5.000 to euro 10.000 when the market only rewards only euro 1.000 to euro 2.000 for a colt or a gelding in Europe.

TA: What do you think is necessary to breed a good show horse?

Start by investing in a great broodmare with sound conformation from proven lineage. "Look over her shoulder" to research her dam and granddam. If not, you might spend three generations fixing her faults which is probably more expensive and frustrating. Don't use a stallion just because he breeds champions; choose the one that best compliments the mare. But maybe most important of all; get educated and keep educated. Talk to your fellow breeders and learn from their experiences. There is a world of knowledge out there. Use it wisely ! □