



# The POWER of SUCCESS

## Michalów Stud



photos by Lidia Pawlowska

by Urszula Leczycka - Arabhorsepromotion.com  
photos by Erwin Escher, Joanna Jonientz, Wieslaw Pawlowski  
Lidia Pawlowska, Stuart Vesty

*Located in the heart of Poland the small village of Michalów is a seat of the second – considering the time of establishment and the number of horses – Polish Arabian horse state stud. Contrary to Janów Podlaski – with its power and noble of tradition and 200 years of history of breeding, Michalów established in 1953 is a farm organized and runned in kind of a different and more modern way. Having one of the herds most consolidated in type all around the world Michalów stud with its famous grey broodmare band is worldwi-*

*de known master of not only breeding of champions but also of masterfully planned marketing that results in several dozens of horses being sold annually – some of them achieving a giant amounts of money – just like the mare Kwestura – sold for 1 125 000 Euro during the last Pride of Poland sale. About the mysteries of Michalów stud' success and its plans for the near future tells Jerzy Białobok – the current director working at the stud since over 30 years now, also well known as ECAHO A-list international judge:*





***Tutto Arabi: Michałów as the only state stud of Poland manages to exist only with its own income (besides of Arabian horses and horse breeding center having also a herd of appaloosas, shetland ponies and dairy cows) and is gaining excellent results, also financial ones. At the moment, after 32 years of your stay as its director Michałów stud is winning the prizes for best Polish state farm almost every year. What is the definition of this economical success of Michałów stud while the other Polish state farms are in much more difficult condition?***

***Jerzy Białobok:*** Most of the success of Michałów stud is thanks to its creator and first director – Ignacy Jaworowski, who was a great breeder but certainly a rolling stone one. I remember when I came to Michałów it was during unhappy communism times but director Jaworowski was already lucky breeding the horses of type he desired. First of all he considered Arabian horse as a horse showing a certain type and features of selection. In his opinion Arabian horses should be beautiful and he could never accept the rules proposed by well known Polish hipologist – dr Skorkowski who divided Arabian sires into different types strictly and mostly by coat color. Director Jaworowski, just like most of breeders, thought that mating different bloods can result with outstanding effect. Moreover he was

travelling to Egypt very often at that time and what he found was that Middle Eastern people also didn't follow the Quoranic rules crossing only bays with bays and greys with greys. During the trips to Egypt he was asking the local breeders if the horses presented had any pedigrees and it often happened that he heard the reply "the horse has no pedigree but can have if you wish". As a breeder who used to know few different languages and was very familiar to the people around Ignacy Jaworowski had a chance to prove he was right. Later in the years it was easier to bring outside sires to outcross the bloodlines by importing Tersk Stud stallions and in fact Negatiw, Nabor and Comet were the first beautiful ones to be used in Poland that fit the breeding vision of Michałów stud. For sure he preferred grey mares and the grey band of Michałów broodmares was well known already at that time.

Jerzy & Urszula Białobok



photos by Wiesław Pawłowski

photos by Wiesław Pawłowski



Michałów breeding center & stallion station





Symbolic grave  
of horses of merit

On the way to the pastures



**TA: Director Jaworowski went his times ahead?**

**JB:** He certainly did but he also liked to study and read foreign magazines. It was not so common to travel to the US as often as nowadays but even looking through Arabian Horse World magazine he used to study photographs that for a breeder are one of the first subjective look on a horse. He saw that US breeders prefer some different type of Arabian horse. I think that Michałów stud at those times was in a better situation than Janów Podlaski because, as soon as I remember, 30 years ago Michałów was still chasing Janów's achievements and it's always easier to chase than to be chased. When I was beginning my work at Michałów 32 years ago I realized that our horses that we were to compete at the show ring with are quite comparable with Janów's ones but we had to deal with its history and tradition. What was the best way to deal? – Only by some additional work that could have been done. As it was not common to condition the hor-

ses before the shows in Poland at that time, doing even small we could have achieved quite a lot. I remember the first breakthrough at the auction – the sale of Carawella (Negativ – Czatanoga) in 1977 that won the buyers hearts with her good frames, outstanding movements in the arena, perfect stand-up and her beautiful dapple grey coat was her nice advantage too. American bidders went crazy. The average price paid for a horse at the sale was \$20–30 000 at that time. She was sold for \$153 000. Of course when I was beginning my adventure with Michałów stud no one was expecting a genius breeding ideas from me, I decided to focus on horse training and conditioning. It all began with my travel to Paris show in 1978 and gathering the team of reliable people to work with. Of course we did watch the foreign trainers but we also worked on our own methods of schooling horses. Discussing the things with Tadeusz Wojtal who established the training program at Michałów stud we started the



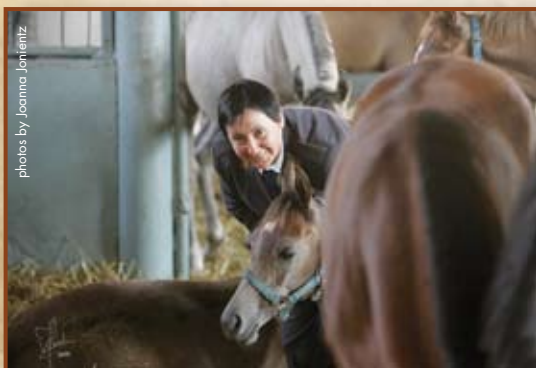


*first conditioning, lounging and show training finding some more great people like Krystyna Podlejska, Marek Bajor and Mariusz Li kiewicz. Unfortunately some of the team members just when they became good enough has left the stud going abroad – because of the difficult Polish economy conditions at that time.*

**TA:** *How does Michałów stud – the state farm responsible for preserving the certain bloodlines combine this duty with aggressive western market and Polish one becoming more demanding – that still need increasingly sophisticated show horses and when you need to compete against the big number of horses brought from outside Europe?*

**JB:** *It is hard indeed. We stay on the top somehow what is*

**Krystyna Podlejska - one of the long time main grooms and very first show trainers at Michałów**



photos by Joanna Joneiz

*hard as it's easier to climb the top that to keep staying there. I think that I'm trying to find a golden merit between using fashionable stallions and those homebred and I'm very glad that Kabsztad (Poganin – Kwestura) – 2008 Polish National Champion Colt, European Reserve and 2009 Sharjah International Champion Colt and Al Khalediah Reserve is sired by Polish-bred Poganin and this is also a continuation of Laheeb – the Egyptian line use in Poland. Although Kabsztad was born in Michałów thanks to co-operation with Janów stud and I personally think it's a pity that there is such a run for foreign stallions amongst Polish private breeders however I understand their way of thinking. It was one of the reasons that made me quitting the idea of selling Ekstern (Monogramm – Ernestyna) despite the high offers on him, as I recognize Ekstern as the best producing sire in Poland nowadays. Maybe his progeny is not perfect but I think that this stallion should stay in Poland by now and he can produce his worthy successor. Maybe we can consider selling him afterwards as we did with Emigrant (Ararat – Emigrantka) who left his son – Gaspar (out of Gaskonia). Gaspar is a sire comparable with his father and his daughters are sometimes even better especially as Emigrant progeny is late maturing and the females beco-*



photos by Joanna Joneiz

Mare & foal





me really high class mares being 5 or 6. I think that Gaspar will be this kind of a sire too.

**TA: Ekstern has no such successor in Poland so far?**

**JB:** Such male successor has to be proven in breeding that means that he should sire a good progeny. His main progenitor at the moment – Esparto is still young as a sire. I'm looking forward for some Ekstern foals born at Janów stud moreover that they are not carrying some faults of their sire – as the neck being too short sometimes but I think that there should be some interesting progeny of Ekstern left at Janów Podlaski. Still many young stallions are quite difficult as a sires – mentioning Poganin as an example again – he is quite hard to be bred to as his progeny can be both excellent and not satisfying but I think we should keep trying these young sires – this is what Michałów stud does considering bloodline preserving. Of course every breeder dreams of such sire as Gazal Al Shaqab or Laheeb that appeared just for one season in Michałów and did a great job. Laheeb was chosen by us as a yearling already, then we watched him as a two years old and he was not a spectacular Egyptian type of a horse at that moment but he fascinated us with his big frames and lack of serious leg faults, having nice head and neck, being elegant – a type of Egyptian stallion that one wish to use from the first sight. Of course the sires like Monogramm are once of a life time ones. I was trying hard to bring Monogramm back in Michałów where he could find a good retirement and eventually breed some mares in a natural way as we didn't succeed with his fresh and frozen semen anymore. Moreover that Monogramm as a sire practically does not exist on American market despite the fact that his Michałów-bred daughters like Kwestura, Zagrobla or the last one – 2009 Arabian Breeders World Cup Reserve Champion – Embra gained the highest titles in the US. But still it didn't result in his use in the States; they even say he was not the best producer over there.

**TA: Looking at Polish Arabian horses results on shows during last couple of years it's easy to notice that the best achievements are gained by the progeny of Polish mares – but sired by foreign stallions. It can be seen in Polish**



photos by Joanna Jonientz

**Tadeusz Wojtal - long time main groom of Michałów Stud well known as the horse trainer and handler**



photos by Iida Pawlowska

**Mariusz Liskiewicz - the best known Michałów Stud trainer and handler**

**private breeding that looks for foreign sires very much last time but also in the state studs being more conservative so far. Is the opinion that the best product one may get out of Polish mares but by foreign sires true?**

**JB:** Statistics say it's true but the last such successful get was the one sired by Monogramm who was not really strange for Polish breeding in his pedigree. Looking into the past the most successful Polish bred horses were those sired by Palas that was strange indeed and sired outstanding group of mares, Negatiw and Nabor – the sire of our first European champion mare in 1973 – Estebna. It also concerned the mares by Probat. I remember his daughters at the shows – when 4 or 5 mares placed on the top places of their classes in a row were all sired by Probat. Only the progeny of Monogramm has ever repeated such achievements. Laheeb or Gazal Al Shaqab' sired progeny was also very successful so this contention is hard to deny indeed. Maybe Polish stallions are somehow too close to our mares though I cannot explain this genetically or logically. Eukaliptus can be a kind of denial. His best progeny was probably produced out of grey saklavi mares of Michałów stud while at Janów his get was bewitching as youngsters but later in the age they didn't catch my eye so much but maybe I used to have some different expectations for a type of Eukaliptus horses. A kind of denial against the theory of foreign stallions produce was also Comet that sired outstanding group of mares, also Bandos at Janów... – I remember the breeding overview at Janów when they brought 16 mature Bandos daughters out from the barns



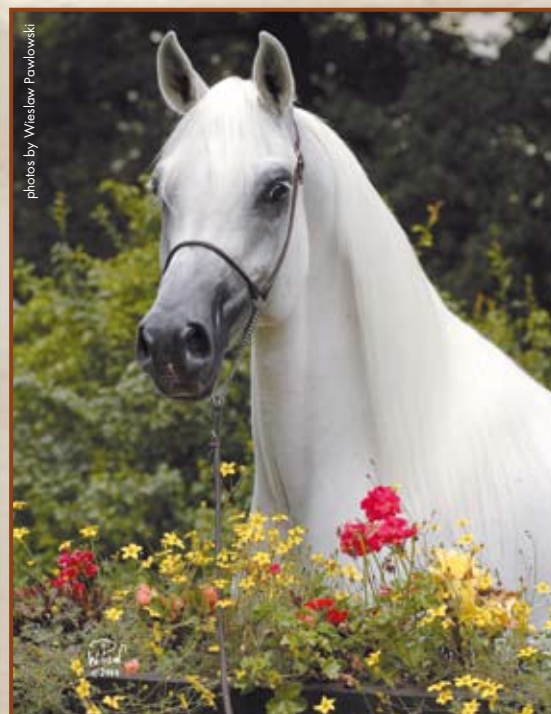


**Emigracja (Palas - Emisja) with the groom Krzysztof Skrzypek**

for presentation, they were all eye catching in type, dryness, quality, maybe not every head was such refined, some of them a bit long but those mares were of excellent class. Anyway the decision is more after foreign sires as Polish such successful ones were Eukaliptus, Bandos, Probat, Comet – so the past ones only. Although, besides Palas, those foreign successful in Poland were mostly of Polish origins anyway.

**TA:** Michałów stud has used such fashionable sires as Enzo or QR Marc last season. Is it a sign that you are following the common fashion or there were some particular reasons for what you have chosen these sires for Michałów stud?

**JB:** Frankly speaking, because Gazal Al Shaqab is not so easily available we have been looking for some replacement and this is why we choose QR Marc that is for sure very pretty himself considering the type, his sire line is very good and he has no feature that I particularly don't like at Marwan al Shaqab and some of his get – the long part of face, while I admired his sires' – Gazal Al Shaqab head very much. But there is no perfect horse in this



**Emanda (Ecaho - Emanacja)**

world. I was a bit afraid of the chestnut color and white markings of Enzo but I liked him when he was competing at the same time as Ganges and Kwestura in the US couple of years ago. I was less satisfied with him later on but this is a kind of dilemma every breeder has to face and would never do until he tries and sometimes we have to a stallion that doesn't satisfy us in total.

**TA:** Marek Trela – the director of Janów Podlaski stud in his latest interview for Tutto Arabi told about his sentiment to the old desert lines that he would be enthusiastic to introduce into Polish breeding again. He explained this was a reason for use Hlayyil Ramadan at Janów Podlaski recently. Which of the stallions never used in Poland before would you choose for Michałów Stud?

**JB:** I haven't found the one that would attract me that much so far but judging few times at the Middle East mostly in Saudi Arabia I was impressed by so called domestic horses. Some of them remind me of those old pictures of our first Arabian horses imported from the desert. There is something special in the dryness of tissue and no-





ble of those horses despite the heads being quite ordinary sometimes but as one can see through the past years – it's the easiest and on the other hand – the hardest to change the shape of horse's head. For sure desert bred horses are of very good quality and somehow they also attracted the first importers coming all the way from Europe to acquire original Arabian horse. I can compare it to the cabaret dancers or women from the mid war times at all and the women from the magazine covers or miss competitions nowadays – they are also of certainly different type and it shows that peoples taste changes in time. Although I don't approve the idea of importing a strange pedigree mares to Poland because I think we should base on our own bloodstock improving it with different stallions but it would be tempting for me to import a few domestic mares to Poland even if they could never be entered to Polish Arabian Stud Book. It would be just so called an art for an art but if I have the stud farm being paid from my own pocket I would import such mares as I think it could have some

interesting results in breeding.

**TA:** So can we expect such kind of stallion in Michałow – not domestic but representing some desert or Egyptian bloodlines?

**JB:** Yes I think so, moreover that we could have seen some positive effects of introducing such stallions – as Palas (Aswan – Panel) in Poland. I also think that his paternal half-brother Magnit (Aswan – Magnolia) was removed from the breeding program too early and sold too quickly – he was always given a second sort of mares after Palas. I liked his full brother Marsianin very much – he was certainly prettier and sired even better progeny. After our positive results with Labeeb I think I would like to find a stallion similar to him – but not a kind of porcelain-made toy if you know what I mean, looking as a porcelain statue as I don't like this type of a horse however when I judge these horses it's hard to punish them for anything – they usually also move very well in the ring although

El Dorada (Sanadik El Shaklan - Emigrantka)



photos by Lidia Pawłowska





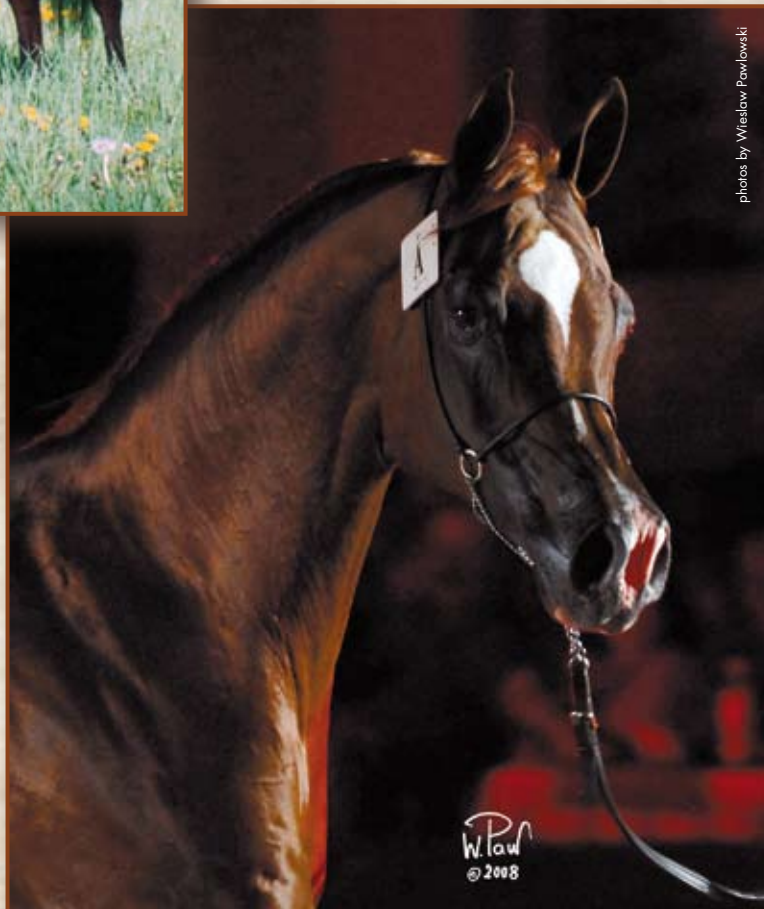
Ganges (Monogramm - Garonna)

*sometimes the power is not anymore enough for championship competitions...*

**TA:** *Few words about 2009 crop of foals at Michałow stud – with the progeny of which stallion are you satisfied the most at the moment?*

**JB:** *I think with Laabeeb get the most, for sure with Ekstern and QR Marc who surprised me positively however the job was quite easy as he got some of the best broodmares but also some with less typey heads and he did well. These are very young foals still so they will change a lot. The progeny of our home bred Eryks (Gazal Al Shaqab – Emmona) was a very nice surprise to me as well – unfortunately they are mostly colts but nice and of very good quality.*

**TA:** *And your favorite 2009 foal is....?*



photos by Wiesław Pawłowski

Kwestura  
(Monogramm - Kwesta)  
the highest horse ever  
sold from Poland  
(1 125 000 Euro)  
to Ajman Stud





**Gaspar (Emigrant - Gaskonia)**

**JB:** *I don't like to mention my favorites as usually something bad happens to them afterwards, moreover that the summer pasture time is coming soon – I don't know if all the Arabian horse breeders are superstitious but I am sometimes...*

**TA:** *What does the breeder and manager of the farm feel watching his mare being sold for over 1 million Euro?*

**JB:** *I think that the decisions what to sell and what to keep are very difficult at all and I always try to wait for a perfect moment to sell an outstanding horse. Of course every breeder has some not for sale horses in his mind – as we did have our E-line foundation mare Emigracja (Palas – Emisja) and her daughters – Emigrantka or Emanacja (both by Eukaliptus) – they are just too valuable though at Michałow barns there are some other horses more successful in the show rings. We sold one of them – Wilejka (El Paso – Warmia) – to a different climate zone – just to save her life. On the other hand there are some horses which can successfully promote our breeding with foreign*

*owners. Somehow I came to a conclusion that we have got all we could out from Kwestura – considering our breeding concept and this was the last moment to offer her. This is why we entered her for 2007 World Championships in Paris. She avoided it a year before when she was already in Paris, being in excellent disposition but just before the show she sprained her leg in the stall and got lame – sometimes every cloud has a silver lining and after her performance in 2007 I got sure that the time for sale has come. For sure the result of her son Kabsztad winning the champion title at 2008 Białka Junior Spring Show helped in making this decision and so I think that the moment was optimal. I'm glad that Kwestura found her new home at sh. Ammar Bin Humaid Al Nuaimi farm of Ajman – and I think Kwestura can still do a lot in the ring with this stud which is very much focused on shows.*

**TA:** *Have you been planning this sale for a long time or it was just a last moment idea to put her on the sales list?*





**Ekstern (Monogramm - Ernestyna)**

*JB: I reckoned with her sale, I knew that her time is coming and this competition at 2007 World Championships made me sure about that. Frankly speaking, from those two Monogramm daughters – Kwestura and Fallada I thought more about Fallada at that time but with Kwestura winning in Paris it was a better „buyer catching” moment and so the mares changed their order on the sales list. I think that Kwestura was next to last high quality Monogramm daughter to be offered by Michałow stud and I think our stud not for the first time was this power running the whole auction thanks to the sales price of Kwestura and few other mares sold over 200 000 or 300 000 Euro. The horse that brings all the auction up is a good advantage of the event however it brings me a headache rather than satisfaction – an important part of Michałow stud history was related with Kwestura and for sure it was a pity to sell her but I realize that we have to keep building our market for horses and attract it with something new still otherwise this market will die or become a weak one. It's the same as with our conclusion about expanding into the US market years ago – this American market is not the best sales partner itself at the*

**During the auction with Marek Trela (Janów Podlaski) & Jerzy Urbanski (Białka Stud)**



**With Polish National Champion Mare - Gaskonia (Probat x Gizela)**



*moment that can easily be seen at the auction results since last three years but this market is being strongly penetrated by Middle Eastern clients who buy most of their horses from the States – together with Southern America from where the horses usually goes to the US show rings first. I think that the idea of Michałow horses march into Ame-*





rican show rings for many years until now has resulted in quite high level of Janów Podlaski auction.

**TA:** Are you afraid of the global crisis influence into the results of 2009 auction at Janów Podlaski? Did this crisis influence the sales list or the minimum prices expected?

**JB:** I think that the group of horses I tried to select is not bad, over the average. I thought that after such successful sale last year I will finally have a peace of mind and will indulge a bit but the time that neither we nor the bankers expected has come – the price of Euro has risen up so much and everything was turned upside down. The global crisis is not so visible in Poland but it is in the US, having a different financial system. For me this crisis has symptoms of some artifice, some control and it's hard to tell if and how it would influence into this year auction – in Europe the global crisis exists mostly in big industries with big US investments – such like car or airplane ones but not really in small business. We never know how the sale will go on and sometimes – in the effect of good promotion of our horses – there is some new mysterious client from Indonesia appearing and buying most of the horses offered. I can be glad that this spring all the rest of the horses sold during the last two years have left the stud so it means we managed the crisis to head off. I think that this year we have some more concerns but Arabian horse market is unpredictable and this is why it's so difficult as well. Of course making some preparations we can try to help for the result but we can never foresee it. I think that the group of Michałów horses is very good and there is a lot to fight for a client with.

**TA:** Looking through this sales list of 2009 Pride of Poland one can have an impression that the average age of the horses offered has gone down and there are not so many show stars but more young broodmares with very fashionable pedigrees but unknown from the show scene... – why?

**JB:** As a big state stud we have a problem with showing as many as 20 or 30 good horses. There are always better and worse in this group and the better ones have to be selected for show training. Of course we could make a show career to the rest of mares too but we should then open a „travelling circus” – beginning the competition from Wels or Italian shows but we would also need a second team to work and travel with the horses – while the first team

could prepare the auction horses. Of course it is possible and I think that if this crisis would come into our reality it would force us to do it.

**TA:** And how, in such a big state stud as Michałów one the process of sale horses' selection is organized?

**JB:** The selection starts soon after the previous sale and clarifies during daily morning inspections in the barns. I have to persuade myself – and as director Jaworowski taught me – we make the decisions in the group. Of course the chief manager has to make the final one but if one of our breeding managers – Urszula Białobok or Magda Helak insist on leaving some mare at stud having their certain ideas about the horse I give up – besides the situation when we have no more luck or patience for this mare. Maybe I'm after not popular belief that the breeding within large herd cannot follow sentiments otherwise it will swamp with the number of its own bloodstock. I already saw such situation – with Kurozwaki state stud finally privatized in 1991 and this is why every horse sold abroad I consider as being sold twice as it disappears from the Polish market. Michałów stud sells between 80 and 100 horses annually. Only last year we sold just 70 because of the 2008 sale result that built us up financially but everything has to be planned anyway. Selling the daughters of our broodmares always leave the better one at stud of course but it's not always true that the more successful show mare is better a better one in the barn – it happens very often in breeding that the mousey mares became really successful as broodmares – our E-line foundation mare Emigracja is a perfect example. Luckily we succeed to make her Polish National Reserve Champion Mare twice in a row but it was more like will power. She was a typical mousey mare as well as her dam – Emisja. I even don't remember any top champion mare being a dam of even better foal.

**TA:** Indeed it's hard to imagine that Pianissima would give birth to even prettier foal than she is...

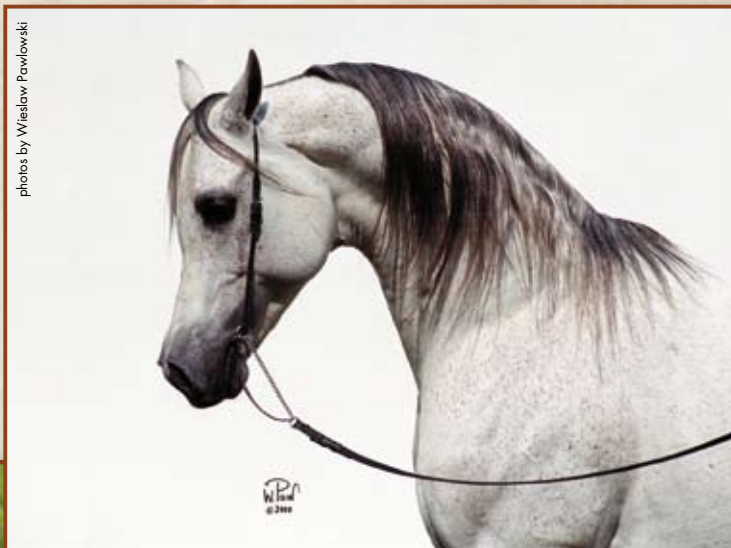
**JB:** Well Pianissima is a special case. It reminds me of a funny story. In early '90-ties we also had a mare with such incredible shape of face in Michałów – called Estarda (Gadir – Estancja). Unfortunately she passed away due to health problems. When she got anxious she almost couldn't breath normally and Marek Trela, who at that time was more veterinarian than a breeder, said that this mare is over bred and her type was so campy unnatural that it becomes to be not Arabian one anymore. I sad





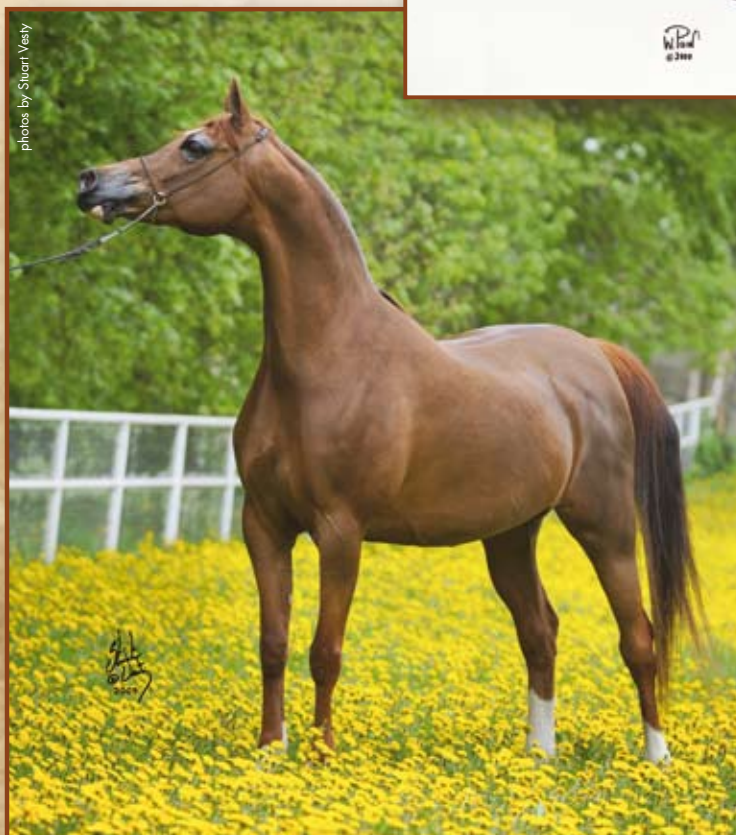
**Emigrant**  
(Ararat - Emigrantka)

photos by Wiesław Pawłowski



**Fallada (Monogramm - Fanaberia)**  
the star of 2009 Pride of Poland Auction

photos by Stuart Vesly



*ling moment – just like you did with Kwestura? From one point of view it would surely be tempting to give her as many chances as possible to try her with different stallions – on the other hand, you are responsible for financial success of the whole farm – how do you make it come together?*

*JB: Kwestura left her son Kabsztad at stud, she also left a daughter and granddaughter and maybe the mousey mare symptom will work at those two. I think that breeding it not following the rule that an average mare will not produce excellent foal. I think that in horse breeding those mousey ones produce the best. Many people think that champion bred to a champion should produce a superb champion so maybe it's not a media claim if I say that horse breeding it not working like this and nowadays*

*then – let's wait and you will also have such dilemma one day. Sometimes there are a creatures being over any standards.*

**TA:** *So is it more important to leave the champion mare at stud or sell her following her success and the best sel-*

*we cannot have a comfort of being only a breeders. In the past times the state farms were given the certain approved breeding plan from the headquarters in Warsaw. I still remember big wrangles when a stud manager wanted to replace one single mare to be bred the same way for the 5th time. These times are past and now we have to be re-*





sponsible for what we breed. As the state stud we still deal with some weak producing mares to preserve and continue some bloodlines but I think that such outstanding mares as Kwestura or Fallada which I consider to be a star of 2009 auction, have already finished their breeding careers in Michałów and can do a lot somewhere else.

**TA: Regarding your plan and ideas – can we look forward for a big sale of Michałów-bred champion mares in the future?**

**JB:** I don't think so as until now we only had Kwestura being 13 years old and the next one is Fallada, 14 years old. I don't see any further ones...

**TA: But there were some big Michałów-bred stars of the auction who joined the sales list in the last moment, after its official closing... – Druid (sold for \$500 000) or Wie a Wiatrów (\$220 000) just to mention those two?**

**JB:** Druid was not exactly the last moment offer. It was one of my first marketing ideas of that kind in the times when our racecourse in Warsaw was going through the hard times and about Wie a Wiatrów... – we had to save the sale result, she was also the part of her sire's (Ganges) promotion, that resulted in US National Reserve Champion title afterwards. She was also a "buyer catcher" at that moment when she won Polish National Reserve Champion Filly title a day before. Anyway she also became a valuable broodmare for her new owner, al Khalediah Stables afterwards. I don't think we will have more such kind of sales for the moment.

**TA: Is Michałów planning such kind of surprise as Kwestura last year for the coming 2009 auction?**

**JB:** We have Fallada, everybody thinks that I plan to sell Ekstern so I don't deny it but I still think we lack good sires in Poland for the moment.

**TA: So Ekstern will not appear at the auction ring?**

**JB:** No.

**TA: There are also some gossips that Michałów is planning to sell Ganges...**

**JB:** Also this is not true but one can say we plan... – I'm glad seeing Ganges as a good sire for Janów Podlaski stud, even better than Ekstern. He was also a good producer at Michałów siring few excellent foals but here the job is harder for him...

**TA: Is there a not for sale horse in Michałów barns?**

**JB:** I think there are many of them, including those mousey mares and I think Fallada will be the last Monogramm daughter leaving Michałów via the auction.

**TA: I wish you a good sale in 2009.**

**JB:** Thank you. □



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Kabsztad (Poganin - Kwestura)