



INTERVIEW *with* Taryl O'Shea

by Giorgia Mauri ■ pictures by Cat McKenna, Osteen-Schatzberg, Casey McBride, Mike Ferrara, Rick Osteen, Wendy Peterson, Howie Schatzberg, Donna

BIO

O'Shea brings more than 25 years of experience in the Arabian horse industry. She previously served as Executive Director of the Arabian Horse Association of Arizona (AHAA) for more than two decades, where she successfully managed and led the internationally recognized Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show & Shopping Expo - the largest Arabian horse show in the world, the Scottsdale Signature Stallion Auction & Futurity, Arabian National Breeder Finals, the American Cup Championships Arabian Horse Show, the Arabian Breeders World Cup (Vegas Show), and the Bentley Scottsdale Polo Championships. She has also served as Director of the Global Champions Arabians Tour – Americas, in addition to holding leadership roles in the automotive industry. O'Shea has been a member of AHA for nearly three decades.

Her educational background includes a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's degree in business marketing, and executive education programs from Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania.

The Arabian Horse Association ("AHA") has recently announced the appointment of Taryl O'Shea as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective May 11, 2026.

Thank you, Mrs O'Shea, for taking the time to give us this important interview in your capacity as the new CEO of AHA.

Congratulations on achieving this significant milestone, which is certainly well deserved given

your dedication over more than 20 years to taking on increasingly prominent roles within the Arabian horse world in America, establishing yourself globally as one of the most influential and authoritative figures in the field of Arabian horses.

Georgia Mauri: Please can you tell us about your vision for MODERNIZING AND EXPANDING THE ARABIAN HORSE COMMUNITY in North America and what will be your first steps as CEO of this prestigious Association?

Taryl O'Shea: Our focus will be to make sure the Arabian horse reaches a much broader audience while making sure we are financially secure for future years. We are committed to modernizing the Arabian Horse Association (AHA) so it operates with the efficiency, strategy, transparency, and accountability of a successful business.

At the heart of all of this is our goal to Unite. We are a diverse community, but we are all here because we love the Arabian horse. The priority will be to bring the broad base of horse lovers together and make sure everyone feels like they have a seat at the table. By focusing on active listening and staying fiscally responsible, we will create a cohesive team where our collective strengths MOVE the breed forward for generations to come.

G.M.: What are the areas of common ground with European and other international associations? Do you think you will bring about any changes in the nature and quality of AHA relations with other associations, and do you believe this could benefit the Arabian horse worldwide? If so, which ones and in what ways?

T.O.: We share so much common ground with our international partners because we are all driven by a



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deep appreciation for the Arabian horse. Whether we are working here in North America or with our peers in Europe and beyond, we all face the same challenges. How do we reach a younger generation and how do we show the world that this horse is the ultimate athlete as well as the perfect family horse. This breed is just as capable on a trail as it is in a show ring, and by recognizing that we are one global community, we can better work towards a unified vision of how to market the Arabian horse to secure its future.

I believe that shifting toward a more collaborative way of working will benefit the breed everywhere. When we focus on building relationships both nationally and internationally, we create a much more enjoyable experience for the people who own and breed these amazing horses. By aligning our vision and working together, we can expand our reach and learn how we can support one another to move the entire community forward together.

G.M.: *How the industry can attract NEW OWNERS, RIDERS, AND FANS in a changing sports landscape and which will be the role of AHA in helping to realize this purpose?*

T.O.: Revamping the perception of the Arabian horse starts with a simple truth: they are as intelligent as they are elegant. While their beauty is legendary, their real magic lies in their centuries-old bond with humans and

their intuitive emotional depth. As the ultimate family athlete, the Arabian offers a rare versatility—possessing the calm temperament for a scenic trail and the fiery spirit required for elite competition. They aren't just a breed; they are the perfect partner for every discipline.

The role of the AHA is to provide the leadership needed to market this vision effectively. We are shifting our focus to meet people where they are, using data and modern storytelling to reach a younger, more diverse audience. By focusing on building real relationships, we can lower the barriers to entry and create a more welcoming community. We are not just supporting the horse at home; we are providing the strategic marketing and vision needed to move our entire global community forward together.

G.M.: *How do you see the future of ARABIAN HORSE SHOWS in the US and also in Europe and the Middle East?*

T.O.: The future of Arabian horse shows depends on finding a perfect balance between deep tradition and a modern global perspective. While the Middle East has created immense excitement through the Global Champions Arabians Tour, setting a gold standard for luxury and cultural pride, Europe remains the strategic heart of the international community. It is inspiring to see how these regions are influencing events in the West to make them more dynamic. By staying diligent about strategic growth and focusing on the profound bond these horses form with people, we can ensure the



industry stays financially secure and inviting for the next generation.

In the United States, the focus is shifting toward making the breed more accessible by proving they are the ultimate family athlete. The industry is moving toward events where newcomers can fall in love with the Arabian horse and its versatility for a contemporary lifestyle. We must show the world how these horses perform under saddle and demonstrate that no other breed can match their athletic capability. As this emphasis on performance gains traction abroad, it reinforces the idea that the Arabian horse is as functional as it is beautiful, bridging the gap between elite exhibition and everyday utility.

G.M.: Can you please tell us about the effort to REFRESH HOW THE ARABIAN HORSE IS PERCEIVED, highlighting its athleticism, intelligence, and heritage?

T.O.: To refresh the perception of the Arabian horse, we are shifting the narrative to highlight the breed as a versatile and modern family athlete. While its beauty is well known, our focus is on demonstrating its incredible athleticism across diverse disciplines, from endurance and ranch work to recreational trail riding. We want to show that this is a horse capable of performing at the highest levels while remaining a durable and steady companion for any owner.

We need to communicate the unique intelligence and deep human bond that sets the Arabian apart from any other breed. This connection is rooted in a history where these horses lived in tents alongside the Bedouins

as members of the family. This constant proximity for thousands of years hardwired the breed for an exceptional level of social intelligence and their people-pleasing nature. They are genetically designed for partnership, making them intuitive and are a great choice for youth and amateur riders.

By honoring this heritage, we are not just looking at the past but explaining the source of the breed's heart and stamina. We are combining this historical prestige with a forward-thinking approach to show that the Arabian horse is a smart and rewarding choice for the modern equestrian. Our goal is to ensure all stakeholders see the breed as a vibrant, essential, and high-performing partner that offers a level of loyalty and versatility that is truly unmatched in the equine world.

What about the role of major events like the 60TH ANNIVERSARY U.S. NATIONALS IN TULSA THIS OCTOBER, expected to bring over 1,700 HORSES to compete for national titles?

T.O.: Major events like the 60th Anniversary of the U.S. Nationals in Tulsa this October serve as the perfect stage for this new narrative. With over 1,700 horses expected to compete, it is a massive live demonstration of the breed's heart and capability. By bringing the community together for such a milestone, we are moving beyond just talking about the past and showing the world that the Arabian horse is a vibrant, essential, and unmatched partner for the future.

Thanks again for your kind cooperation.

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