

# GRZEGORZ GAJEWICZ

photos by Alessio Azzali, Ewa Imielska-Hebda, Michelle Kelly

Since my early childhood years I was introduced too horses, mainly at the riding schools... yes I enjoyed dressage and reached a decent level till the day my father took me to Janow Podladski the yearly National Championship and auction... A whole new world opened and I knew I had to become a part of it.



# GRZEGORZ GAJEWICZ

I spend time in magazines, books, visiting shows and stud farms all related too Arabian horses. I tried to know everyone in the industry and make connections. At school I took a direction into animal husbandry... what I successfully finished. Meanwhile I had the chance to go and get my hands dirty in the barns of Jadem Arabians in Belgium and Sinus Arabians in Sweden. I chose those farms specifically as they focus on Polish breeding but outside Poland.

When a friend of mine, Pawel Sylwoniuk, from Poland called me from USA to say: "Hey are you interested, there is maybe a chance for you to come here"! My heart pumped harder and I followed the procedures of the CAEP visa program... some months later I landed in Los Angeles and Bart Van Buggenhout, at the time manager of Aljassimya Farm in Santa Ynez, picked me up. I spend a good 10 months under his wings... he has had and still has a big impact on my life, even currently as the barn manager of Al Rayyan Farm, a job he directed me towards and coaches me in.

My biggest interest always has been the breeding and management part, I never had the greatest interest in showing or training. So I start my days by walking the farm, looking at each horse, to pick up on any possible problem that might occur. Further my days are spend working with the care givers at the farm, maintaining feeding schedules and general well being of the horses. Assisting in making sure the farriers, trainers, veterinarians and office people all can do there job to the highest standard as is required in this Straight Egyptian breeding program with close too 200 horses and about 50 foals a year. Rayyan is often visited by guests for whom we organize presentations, it ads too the workload and standards that need to be achieved.

My favorite part is foaling out our mares and making sure the newborn foals and their mothers are all fine, seeing the babies get up and start nursing is always a pleasure to me. Mr. Fahad Al Sulaiti, manager of Al Rayyan Farm holds my respect and I hope to work under him for some more years to come.

# Interview

by Fabio Brianzoni

**Fabio Brianzoni: What has contact with Arabian horses given you on a personal level?**

**Grzegorz Gajewicz:** Definitely Arabian horses have given me many life lessons so far and because of that help build my character. If you know horses and their way of perception you have to learn to react very fast, a matter of seconds. I feel I have grown much more self confident over the years working with them. They are giving me solace after a difficult day. I am sure most of you whom are reading this know how fast you can release your stress by spending a couple minutes alone with one of the mares, just sitting in a stall corner or giving some carrots on a barn check.

**Fabio Brianzoni: What would you never give up in your professional life alongside them?**

**Grzegorz Gajewicz:** I don't like to lose the passion I have for real horse kindness. It is important to



me while staying with the horses, I can provide the best care for them. I see many people in our industry who lost that as making money seems to become more imported then the passion for the horses itself. For me horses come first wether it is





a recipient mare, gelding, broodmare, stallion or show horse... all deserve the same attention, care and financial commitment in the best possible way.

**Fabio Brianzoni: What are your future plans?**

**Grzegorz Gajewicz:** I am going to focus on gaining knowledge and experience in barn management. I care for my job and there is plenty more to learn and experience... the climate in the Middle East (Qatar) is not always easy, summers are harsh, plenty of learning opportunity is provided, it is a great challenge to keep the feeding schedules, time outside and happiness all in place.

The foaling season is coming up, so focus will be on that soon. Further we are together with a team, some of them new members, working on organizing our open house after the World Championships, which are going to take place in Doha this December. We would like to show the World the new Al Rayyan slogan, "seeds from heritage,".

Later in the season we plan to compete at some of the shows... its going to be an exciting winter season.

**Fabio Brianzoni: Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

**Grzegorz Gajewicz:** That is always a difficult question; The last few years have shown me that planning is not an easy feed, sometimes opportunities come whom simply can not be missed, as so I am now working for Rayyan and hope to keep doing that for a good few more years to come. We never know what is going to happen tomorrow but I do feel myself a happy person working with Arabian horses, so that's something most likely to remain. It amazes me that it does not matter how many years you have been working with horses, you have to solve new problems every day and through it, learn every day. I love traveling and would like to continue to do that and see farms, horses, meet people all around the globe. Maybe a day will come some years ahead of me now where my experience is extensive enough to become a manager that can assist in breeding decisions, that must be fun and exciting. □

