

# Interview with



# CEDES BAKKER

by Talitha Bakker ■ photos by Tutto Arabi archive

In the middle of the Covid-times we were able to meet with (former) Arabian horse breeder, enthusiast and judge Cedes Bakker and asked him a few questions.

**TA:** *You have been involved in Arabian Horses since you were young. Do you think the looks of the Arabian horses has changed over the years?*

**CB:** I think at this moment we are losing the vision of breeding a complete horse. Every horse is the same and you can judge them on the same way either its warmblood, welsh or Shetland pony, but you have to know their typical breed features. In my opinion a lot of not very experienced breeders or new breeders are only

looking for the head and losing the rest of the horse. Also we can see that there will be more special directions of breeding like show, endurance, riding or race horses, mostly total different type of horses. I think we have reached at this moment the max about the extreme heads. We have to keep the standard and that's a complete Arabian horse with the type, not only head, good, strong body and legs, so that we can use them various ways - showing or riding.

**TuttoArabi:** *You started your career with horse riding, also with purebred horses. Do you believe that the modern show horses are still capable of performing in sports?*

**CB:** Yes of course as long as the constitution of the horse



is good and also his mind should be good to cooperate and to work for the rider. However we are losing the good bone structure of the legs and that's explainable, because the horses are getting more and more refined and some people even say that there are stallions that are getting more and more feminine.

*Tutto Arabi: You started your career with horse riding, also on pure bred horses. What is your opinion on modern show horse breeding that is strongly focused on the shape of the head and expressive movements that in consequence pushes a lot of breeders to run for the pretty heads only. How in your opinion the future show horse breeding will look like? Do you like this development or are there still some features of the old fashion Arabian that you would like to see back in the modern horse?*

**CB:** Evolution is unstoppable but we have to be careful to preserve the special features which makes a horse an Arabian. I think that in the future we are getting more and more in different directions to get the Arabian horse better and better in there specialism for example: racing, endurance, riding and showing, BUT to improve one special thing will always cost quality of another feature!



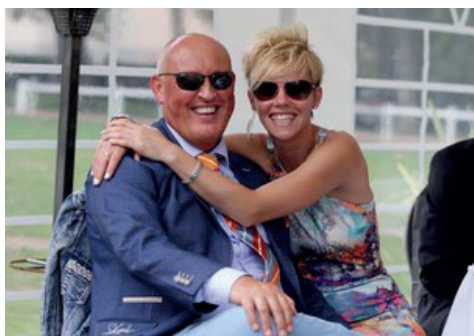
*TA: What is your opinion of the “ideal Arabian”?*

**CB:** For me the ideal Arabian horse would have a good type (not only a good head), good bodied, good legged, strong movement and a willingness character so that people can have fun with their horse!

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

**CB:** There are more horses that impressed me a lot, to impress me the horse has to give me goose bumps or tears in my eyes. I had the opportunity to judge many great champions in the past and hopefully in the future again.

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**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?*

**CB:** if you have money then you can afford the best of the best, so if these high quality and valued horses are competing, then they win also because the owners will use the best trainers and they will show the horses in the best conditions. And I understand the small breeders that they are not keeping up with the money but they should keep the love for the Arabian horse and should try to breed for the best they could.

**TA:** *What is the hardest point of judgment for show horse judge?*

**CB:** The hardest point is to judge the legs, because there are four of them and you really have to have the knowledge about legs and my riding background is helping me a lot, because of working with big dressage or jumping stables and see and ride so many different horses in the past to know what is functional wrong or right.

Over some time Cedes became one of the most popular faces in the international jury panel travelling to judge

different level shows across Europe and Middle East. But his story with the horses began with the career of high level dressage and show jumping rider...of ponies! Cedes Bakker: I am involved with horses since I was six, I started with riding ponies. I was riding both dressage and jumping on a high level. Also I was riding pony stallions for stallion owners. The ponies that I was riding had most of the time 50- 75% Arabian blood. So my parents were getting more interested in the purebred Arabian horses. In 1980 they bought their first Arabian purebred mares from the well-known Van Roosmalen family. They had mainly Crabbet / Russian lines. They were the owners of Bora who was a son of Abdullah. Later we also bought him and I rode him to the highest level of dressage and jumping, which was very unusual at that time, because the opinion of the traditional riders and judges was, that on a purebred Arabian horse, you could not ride, too difficult and hot! After one year their opinion was completely changed,

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because I was winning every time riding the Arabians. Then I was showing the horses of my parents on the shows in Holland. After this period my attention was made to be become a judge. In Holland you have to do an government exam to be allowed to become a judge.

**TA:** *What was your best show experience by now?*

**CB:** I have more favorite shows: Of course there are great important shows, that means A-shows and title shows, like Aachen, Paris Worldchampionships, Dubai, European championships, Las Vegas Worldcup I judged and enjoyed these shows because of the high quality horse and the tension of the shows.

Poland is also one of my favourite countries to judges shows because they breed so may good horses. Bialka, National championship Janow, Al Khalediah show.

Also I like to judge national championships from all

countries because for the owners its always a big honor if their horse is crowned as a national champion.

But on the other side I enjoy and support also a lot of the smaller shows because the atmosphere is more relaxed for the horses and also for the judges. Most of the times these organizers are doing there very best to entertain the owners, sponsors, trainers and of course to give the horses their best treatment and these smaller shows provide, because of qualifications, the bigger shows the higher quality horses. It also gives the younger horses time to get used to transport, atmosphere and people before they get to the high quality shows. To name a view shows: Bruge, Ismer show, the Italian shows in general, Arabian horse weekend, Tulip Cup.

Hopefully we are able to show our beautiful horses this year again , because it was very hard for everybody in this Covid time. □