

# WE, WOMEN

by Giorgia Mauri

Sometimes encounters turn out to be journeys that take us far away, into the world, into time.

This is what happened on my trip to Iran, a journey I have yet to make physically but which I made spiritually through the experience of coming into contact with some of the Iranian women of the Arab horse, with their words, with their writings.

Thanks eternally to Shery and her generosity, patience and friendship with which she accompanied me on this journey of discovery of a world I did not know and which I now see better and with new eyes, with an unexpected glance.

Thanks to her and the way she has embraced the We Women Project, I have come to know many women, 10 to be precise including Shery, whose stories are on the next pages and are stories of care, of love, of strength.

In addition to the ten stories, there is a special one, the one you will read first, in Shery's words. It is the story of Mary Leila Gharagozlou, a woman whom many have met and who really marked and changed me. Mary was an extraordinary woman who changed history, whose life was dedicated to horses, to her love for them, to the respect that she bestowed on these marvellous creatures throughout her life, and to the great work that she did and that allowed the recognition, and therefore the preservation, worldwide of the Asil Arabian breed and its tradition and descendants. But what marked me most about Mary's story was her ability to be above every impediment, every limitation, the determination with which she lived and managed all her incredible work, a strength that allowed her to touch so many lives in a profound way, made her go through and overcome great challenges and in the end took

her beyond the physical time we are allowed, to speak to us still today through her story and to inspire us anew.

This means that we are stronger than everything, time, adversity, it means that our stories move the world, touch lives, change balances, and therefore we all have a great responsibility: that of doing things well, of doing good and putting it into our own lives and the lives of others, without limits, believing in what we do and always looking towards the goal, passing the baton to others at some point. Thank you Mary for having lived such a full life and for having taught those around you, thank you for having believed so strongly to make this inspiration still possible today, which remains in the words and memories of those who knew you and remains as an indelible legacy to draw on every day, an inexhaustible source of strength. It is a great honour for me to have been able to meet Shery and all the Iranian women in this edition of We Women. It is a privilege to have read Mary's story and to have been able to gather information, photos, words and to have been able to talk to some of the people who knew her and shared so much with her.

I hope that the strength of these women, Mary, Shery, Hilda, Shirin, Homeira, TajGol, Negin, Golnaz, Sama, Juan and Kimia, will reach you as it has reached me, I hope that our closeness, as women in the world and here, in the Arabian horses and on the pages of We Women, will be the engine of an unstoppable evolutionary step.

I hope that the words of these extraordinary women will reach as many people as possible, inspire you and be a friend to you, wherever you are and whatever road you are on.

# MARY LEILA GHARAGOZLOU

by Shery Amir Aslani

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank Giorgia Mauri about her admirable project "We, Women" and the Tutto Arabi magazine which has been following us, Arabian horse enthusiasts for so many years. I think we all agree that the display of Tutto Arabi or Desert Heritage magazines on our shows has become a sort of landmark.*

*As many of us have emphasized, we are a big family with the same inspirations, no matter our social, religious or nationality backgrounds and differences. Again, thank you for bringing us together.*

*While writing my own story and as I was trying to answer the questions that were asked, I realized that my involvement with Arabian horses, and that of many others of us in Iran, is entirely obligated to Mary Gharagozlou. She is well known to many, but perhaps not to the younger generation and I was thinking that her story would be extraordinarily fascinating, so I am grateful to Giorgia for asking me to add Mary's story to "We, Women".*

*Life has unexpected turns and nothing had prepared me for what was coming up. I was living back in Iran and starting to think about reconnecting with horses. On 3 different occasions, in the summer of 1986, during friendly gatherings, I had the opportunity to hear about a very charismatic lady, who was living on the outskirts of Tehran with a herd of Arabian horses. I didn't know much about Arabians but what ignited my curiosity was when they explained not only what her intentions were but what she had achieved in the past. This lady's name was to become a legend among Arabian breeders in Iran - Mary Leila Gharagozlou.*

Born in 1927 in the province of Hamadan, it was through Mary's 1952 marriage to Majid Khan Bakhtiari, the chief of the Bakhtiari tribe, that she was introduced to the Asil Arabian horses of Khuzestan, which became her passion. I was told that these horses, of which the main herd belonged to Majid's grandfather, had known pedigrees going as far back as 8-10 generations. Mary's devotion to these horses was such that she realized that in order to ensure their preservation, by joining WAHO this would bring the rightful international recognition. So she began working & preparing the first Stud Book. My friends explained to me that in order to gather information acceptable to WAHO, she would travel to Khuzestan, the Asil province of Iran, to remote places and farms located far away, driving in difficult conditions, under the rain, sometimes stuck in the mud for hours or during excruciating hot days, just to sketch newly borns and their dam. She would record their pedigrees, making sure that they belonged to a renowned strain. By 1975, the first Volume of our Stud Book was accepted and Iran became a full WAHO Member, which has continued to this day.

I was mesmerized by these stories of Mary's achievements, and incredibly intrigued so I decided that not only did I need to meet Mary but



Mary (on the right) with Qashqai women

I also needed to see these horses for myself. One afternoon, I finally arrived at her property. I was told that she had gone for a ride and she would be back in an hour. While waiting for her return, I visited her stables. I think without realizing it at the time, this was a pivotal moment in my life. I was captivated by what I was seeing: these Arabian mares, with their babies at foot, with their beautiful heads, beautiful eyes and sweet temperament. I was hooked.



I will never forget my first encounter with Mary when she returned. She was riding a beautiful black mare, which I learnt later was called Khabiseh. In front of her, 4 Doberman dogs were running around, followed by a large group of one to two year fillies, all galloping back & forth and finally entering their paddock. She was accompanied by 3 other riders also mounted on lovely mares. Everything I was seeing and experiencing was new to me and I knew that this was what I wanted all my life.

At that time, Mary was controlling all the registration of the Arabian horses. In spring, she would travel to Khuzestan and stay there until all the newborns were freeze branded. It wasn't an easy task. There are no big studs in Khuzestan but many small breeders & she had to visit them all, one by one, in different counties. Khuzestan is known for its ethnic diversity, dealing with this diversity was not easy. I think to this day, she was the only one who managed to earn their trust, they respected her because they knew she had these Asil horses at heart. Also, being married to the khan of Bakhtiaris, and living in Khuzestan, honoring all the customs of the well known & most influential tribes surely helped. While living in Aghili, she submerged herself in the history of the breed, learning how to differentiate between strains. They have been traditionally of great importance, specially in Iran as a Strain would show all you want to know about a horse's breeding history and its origins. The Asil strains are linked to the tribal names. They are common to the region of Mesopotamia, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Syria or Egypt. Mary became a scholar on the matter and she has written captivating articles about it which can be found online. I really recommend you to read this article, in her own words:

[www.waho.org/introducing-the-asil-horse-of-khuzestan-iran/](http://www.waho.org/introducing-the-asil-horse-of-khuzestan-iran/)

After Majid's death in a flying accident, and for various other reasons, Mary's life changed dramatically. She experienced very difficult times. She had to abandon her horses, gifting them to people she knew would take good care of them. I think she only kept Khabiseh that she loved unconditionally. Khabiseh's dam, the black mare Khanum, had been a wedding present from Majid's father, Sardar Mohtasham, and her sire Samarquand was a black stallion bred by Mary's husband. Her strain was Wadne Khersani Mir, which was rare and valuable and her dam line very worthy. Khabiseh means 'the Wicked one'. I finally one day dared to ask her the reason all the offspring had such unusual names. Mary explained with a confused smile that it's a custom among Bakhtiaris, in order to push away the 'evil eye', to give their horses atypical names. She

first laughed at such superstitions but was later convinced. Coincidences or not, those with plain names were subject to many incidents.

Mary never stopped caring, even when she was personally under pressure. I was told she would sneak inside the National Stud with the help of old grooms & she would check the newborns and register all the necessary informations. Years passed and Mary finally settled again, buying a property near Tehran where she built a beautiful old fashioned house and stables and she began searching for her horses and those related to Majid's herd. A number of these horses had been kept in the National stud and luckily they were not harmed during the turmoil of the past years. Mary also renewed her ties with the Equestrian Federation and as the Registrar, she restarted her lifetime's work to gain international acceptance for all the Asils of Iran. Once again she was traveling throughout the country, gathering and re-identifying all the horses that were dispersed during the years of revolution and war. She wanted to restore the importance of the Asils of Iran and renew their introduction to newcomers both at home and abroad. By 1999, that second volume was completed and accepted by WAHO.

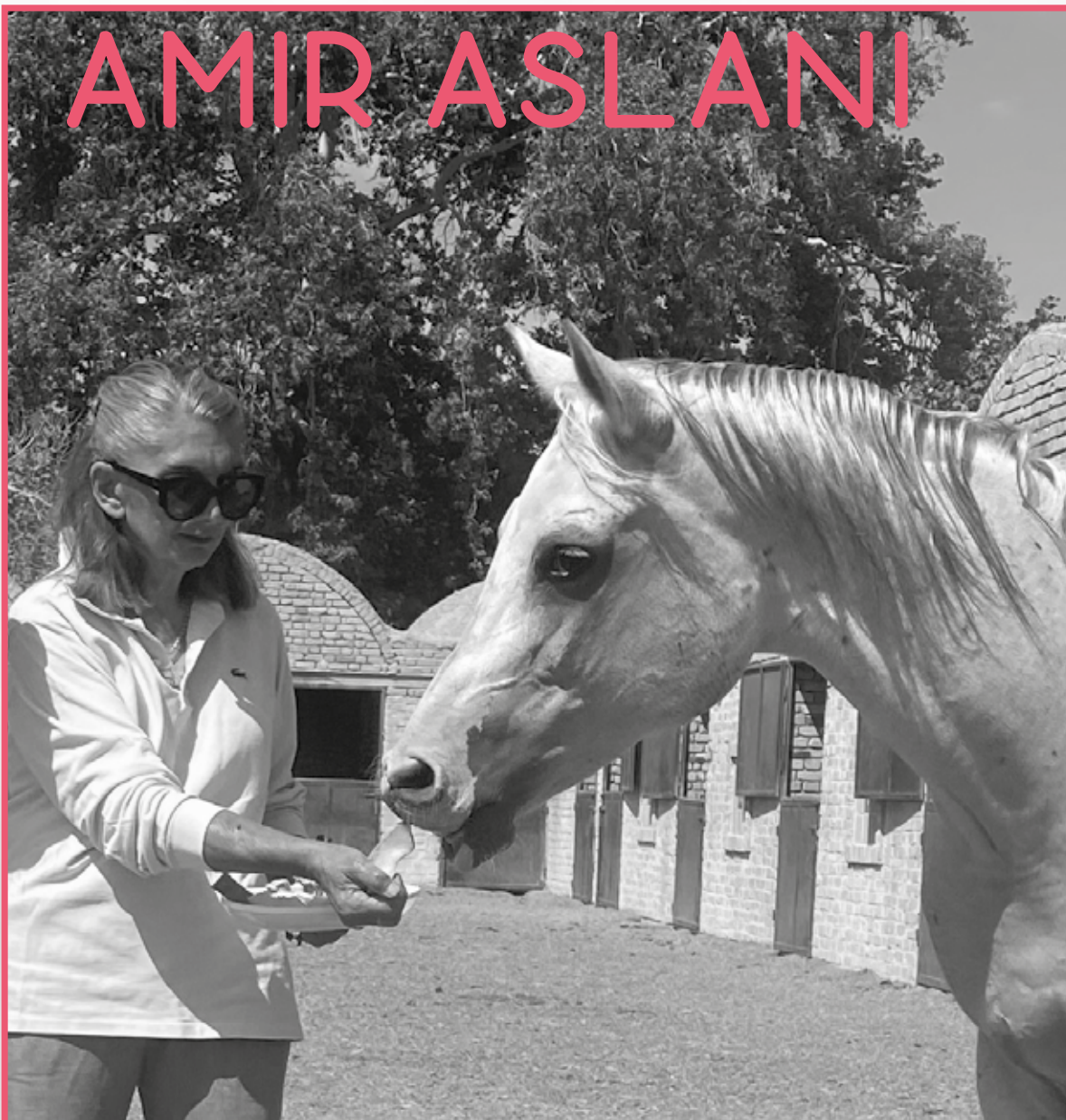
I had the privilege to travel with Mary to 3 different WAHO conferences before her passing in 2001, and I personally witnessed how respected and loved she was by the whole Arabian Horse community, nationally and internationally. Mary has been the pillar of the Arabian Horse in Iran and she is missed every day. She has been the reason why we Iranian women have never been challenged during our involvement with horses, neither politically nor socially.

In Iran, women's rights have changed according to the form of government ruling the country. However socially, I believe that throughout history, women benefited of a privileged status. If you search about the game of Polo, one will learn that it originated in ancient Iran, and it was played by nobility women. After the Islamic revolution, although women got restricted in different disciplines, their participation in mixed gender Equestrian events, was never prohibited, like Show Jumping or Endurance rides. I like to believe that we owe it to women like Mary Leila Gharagozlou and before her to other extraordinary women that have shattered societal norms, challenged stereotypes for a brighter future. I will use a quotation "the stories of the great women of the past continue to be told, not only in their honor but also to encourage the same level of respect for women in the present as the great Persian empires accorded them in the past."

Her obituary from WAHO can be read here:

[www.waho.org/mrs-mary-leila-gharagozlou-iran/](http://www.waho.org/mrs-mary-leila-gharagozlou-iran/)

# SHERY AMIR ASLANI



Breeder - Ecaho B Judge - Registrar



My passion for horses has always been present and buried in the depth of my being. My favorite game as a toddler was to jump from one armchair to another, convincing myself that they were horses. I was born in 1954 in Tehran.

My father being a diplomat, I started traveling quite young. However, although I kept pestering my parents about letting me ride, my journey with horses started in the 1970's, when I was already a teen in Brazil, where my father was last posted.

Back in Iran, I got involved in show jumping, bought my first horse and before I know it, I was entering competitions. Beautiful memories of riding almost every day, training or pleasure riding around my beautiful country, Iran. But I had to cut in short as I had to continue my studies abroad.

Almost 15 years passed with no horses in my life, sometimes dreaming during my sleep that I was riding one. I got married and became a mom to a lovely boy.

In 1986 I came back to Iran and my life took another turn when I met Mary Leila Gharagozlou, the Asil horse lady of Iran. She had a breeding center in the outskirts of Tehran and she had gathered the most exquisite mares, some actually belonging to her in the past. This was the post revolution times in Iran.

Horse riding is like bicycle riding, you never forget. Mary introduced me to the world of Arabian horses and I was mesmerized from the start. She had a full library about pedigrees and Arabian horse scholars, Palgrave, Major Tweedie, Lady Blunt, Carl Raswan. I devoured every single of them and discovered a fascinating world.

My first Arabian was a grey colt who thought my son and I to ride. Followed by a mare and obviously another mare for my son. We learnt to groom, to care, to tack up, to clean tack, to lead and to catch them in the pasture. So many delightful first experiences, our story similar to many other breeders and horse owners of the world.

Mary was an inspiration, I was lucky to have had the

opportunity to share my time with her, listening to her stories and to interesting tales of her youth. That first mare of mixed Crabbet & Iranian bloodline, which was Mary's breeding hooked me into racing. Her name was Lahabeh.

In the 1990's, there wasn't a clear distinction between show horses or race horses and we would enter our horses in any event presented to us.

40 years has passed since that first purchase, time has flown with an incredible speed, I have bred race horses, I have trained them, I have won races and I have also lost races and as a result I have gained a lot of experience: I am witnessing the sixth generation offspring of my beloved Lahabeh. And as I look back, through my travels, inside my country or abroad, I realize that all of us, whose passion has been breeding Arabian horses, our quest for perfection has been untouched by time. As mare owners, past or present, we have not only all felt similar emotions but shared the same reactions, longing for that perfect breeding that would fulfill our hopes. And when it does, this is the moment one realizes what a perfect life it is.

Obviously, all of us have had to face difficult times, the loss of a beloved mare or stallion, freak accidents, loosing in competitions, heartbreaking choices sometimes, but if our passion for horses is genuine, we should never surrender. Keep dreaming, dreams do come true, specially with horses.

I have never encountered any particular problem, as a woman, breeding or competing. I think Mary opened the path for us, Iranian women as she was a venerated figure among Arabian horse owners & breeders.

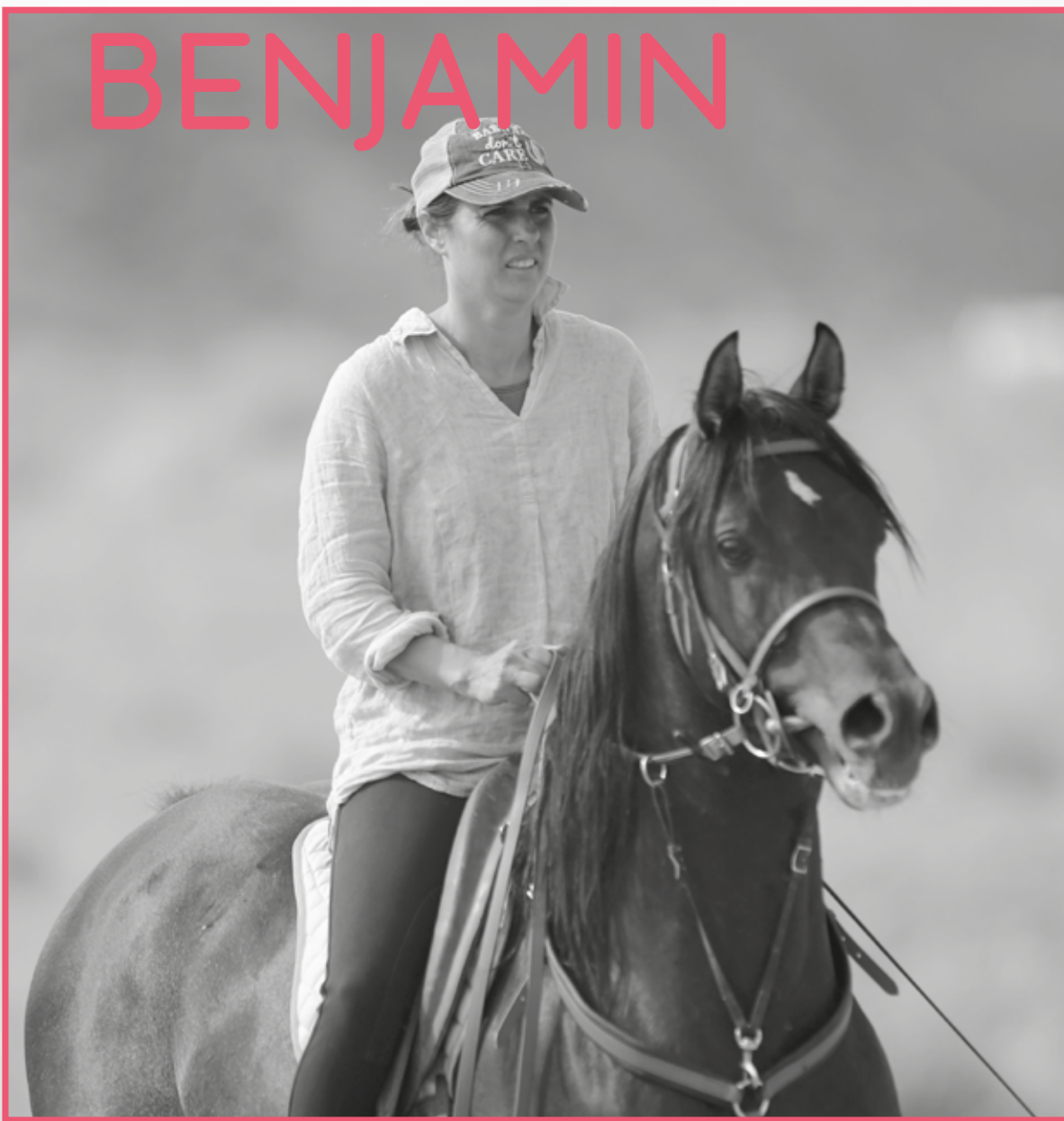
She has inspired us to follow in her footsteps. As the Registrar of our stud book, not only I have maintained it by applying the rules, but we have also seek other international memberships, like ECAHO or IFAHR. And time has come to pass the baton to younger generations.

**MY ADVICE TO NEW COMERS, FOLLOW YOUR DREAM AND YOUR PASSION, BUT BE REALISTIC. BEFORE PLUNGING INTO BUYING YOUR FIRST HORSE, GET PREPARED. WHAT IS YOUR MAIN GOAL? DO YOU JUST WANT TO RIDE OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO BREED? WHERE WILL YOU KEEP THE RESULT OF THAT BREEDING? DO U HAVE THE NECESSARY RESOURCES?**

**WHEN YOU GET A HORSE, YOUR ARE NOT JUST GETTING A PET. YOU ARE GETTING A WHOLE NEW LIFESTYLE. THERE WILL BE A LOT OF COMMITMENTS., SPEND TIME TO LEARN ABOUT HORSES: READ BOOKS OR MAGAZINES, JOIN FORUMS, ATTEND COURSES. HAVING DONE THAT, YOU WILL BE READY FOR THE RIDE OF A LIFETIME.**

# HILDA BENJAMIN

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**Breeder - Trainer - Endurance Rider - Handler - Riding Teacher**

I was first introduced to Arabian horses when I was just 5 years old by Mary Leila Gharagozlou, who was the keeper of our Iranian Arabian horses. She was a very close friend to my grandmother and mother whom she loved dearly. My grandmother being English and Mary's mother as an American, shared common interests. Both were foreigners married to prominent families. It had its challenges.

On weekends, we would visit Mary and as a youngster I would love spending time with her horses. I was impossible to keep out of Mary's stables. How can you not love these beautiful creatures. I fancied a white mare called Jem, a half Crabbet & half Iranian bloodline which I would take for long rides. We bonded right away. She was stunningly beautiful. She had foaled a little chestnut colt, full of life that I adored. We named him Patan.

Mary understood the deep connection between Patan and I, and she surprised me by gifting him to me for my birthday. Patan was born in 1996 and he still lives with me.

I rode him on daily basis, entered endurance competitions, learnt how to train him, to teach him, to groom him. I think in a way, he became my first teacher. He was eager to for whatever would come next, and he would give me all he had. What an incredible honor it was to have him in my life. He has been my best companion for so many years. I was encouraged by Mary and my parents to

follow my passion for horses and to travel to England in order to participate in BHS courses which I attended for 2 years.

Back to Iran, I built few stables in the family property which I currently owned and added few more horses.

Mary has been the driving force behind the passion I have for horses. During the first show held in Iran, I was the first female handler, to show horses. From then on, I was always participating in shows. Mary loved inspiring and motivating young girls in the industry when she saw potential on them.

We were also lucky to have had Emma Maxwell as our first teacher as a handler. She had an incredible feeling about horses and she taught me well.

Throughout the years, I have competed in numerous endurance races, show jumping and a little bit of dressage. It has brought me a lot of experiences that I am willing to share with newcomers.

I am now 41 years old and currently training horses, breaking young horses to riding and teaching youngsters riding.

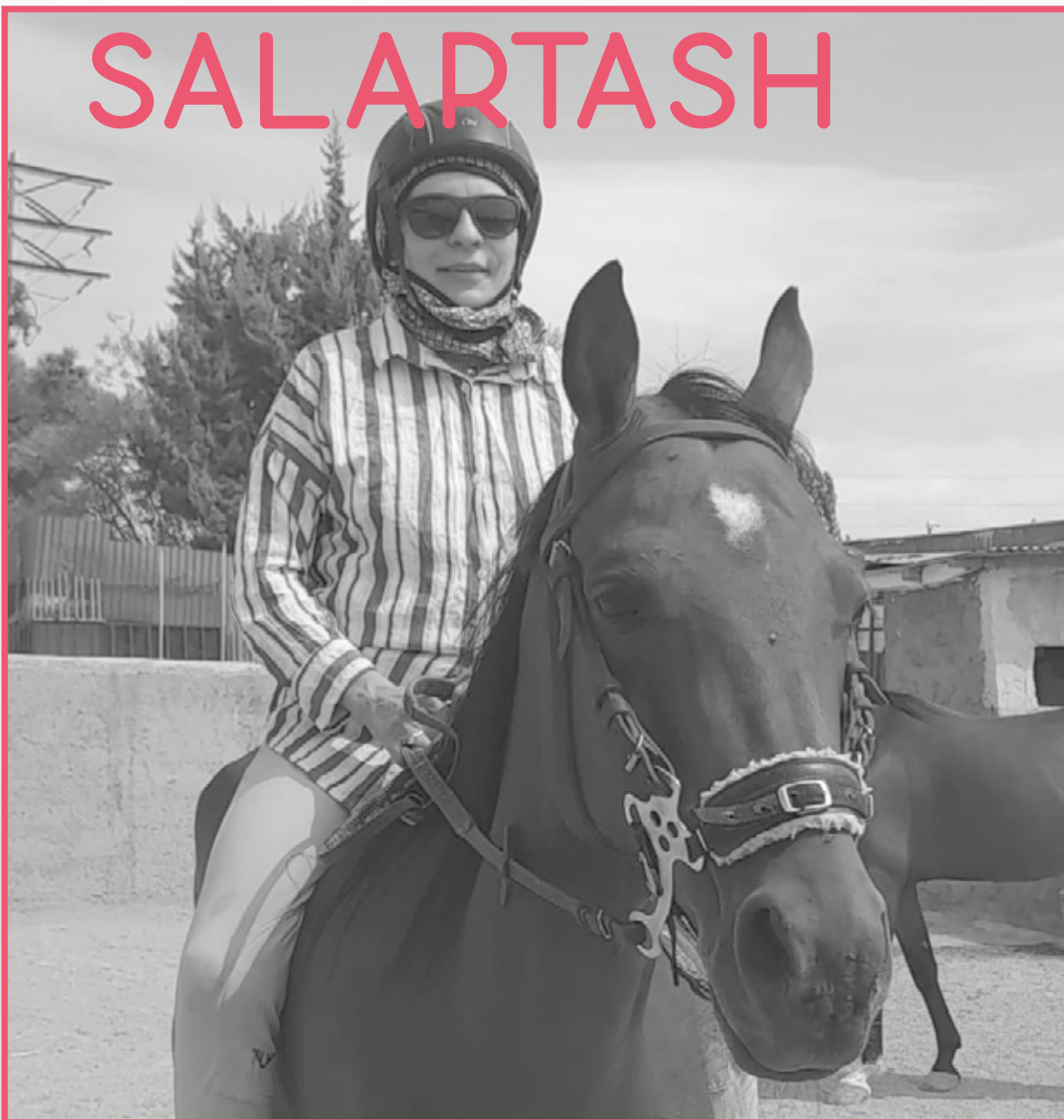
I think our first experiences are the most crucial. Patience is the key. Molding a horse or a young rider is not different. They both need time to enjoy what is coming: a special bond between horse & rider. Some of my greatest life lessons were taught to me by my own horses.

**TO YOUNG WOMEN LOOKING TO GET IN THE INDUSTRY, DON'T RUSH ANYTHING WHEN IT COMES TO ARABIANS.**

**IT'S ESSENTIAL TO LEARN FIRST AS MUCH AS U CAN. DON'T TAKE SHORTCUTS. YOU ARE HERE FOR THE LONG RUN.**



# SHIRIN SALARTASH



Iran Asil Association Executive Board Member and Managing Director -  
Breeder



My name is Shirin Salartash. I am from Iran. I am a PhD student in applied linguistics -TEFL. I teach and hold Asil horses. I am also a board member of the Iran Asil Association and I am currently its Managing Director, and I try to help preserve Iran's Asil horses as they have remained intact for thousands of years. A heritage not only for Iran, but for the whole world.

Being related to the late Mary Leila Gharagozlou, I got to know the Asils through her. This is how I became acquainted with the world of the Arabian horse. She gave me an Asil mare, a Saglawi, named

Shusha and later left me one of her favourite Khersani mares, Vasvaseh.

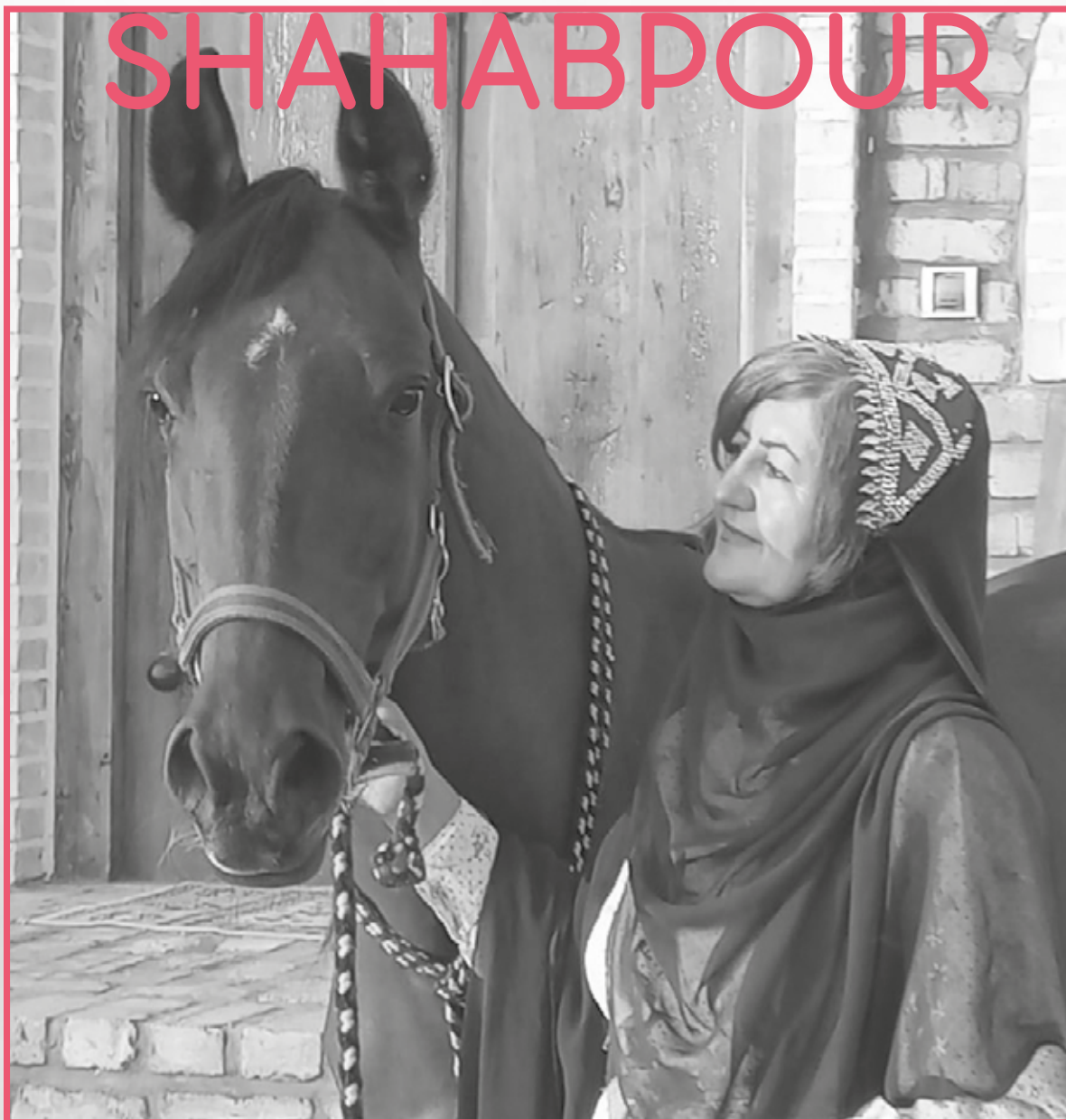
I believe that being a woman in the Arabian horse world is a challenge worth taking on.

I didn't find any obstacles in Arabian horse world, not really. Though it is a challenge but the obstacles are all movable.

If women want to move forward without being disappointed, I believe my story and experience can be an inspiration. They should learn to follow the right path and also think about what benefits they can bring to the society in which they live.

**THIS IS WHAT I SAY TO YOUNG WOMEN: NEVER GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS AND WHAT IS RIGHT. DO NOT GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS AND THEY WILL COME TRUE. I LEARNT THIS FROM MARY. AND BE USEFUL. THAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE.**

# HOMEIRA SHAHABPOUR



## Breeder - National Judge

Homeira belongs to the Bakhtiari tribe. She is wearing the traditional Bakhtiari outfit. Her family has been breeding horses for centuries



Born in the beautiful province of Khusistan, in the foothills of the Zagros mountains, I am originally Bakhtiari and like many of my ancestors, I am a breeder of Asil horses. The name Bakhtiari means "bearer of good luck".

I grew up surrounded by horses, and my love and passion for them was always present since I was born.

I was raised in a family where horses were an integral part of life, and my deep rooted passion was the reason I decided to own and care for them.

As a child, I had the privilege to meet Mary Leila Gharagozlou whom my father, belonging to the Bakhtiari tribe, would usually accompany in her migratory travels. Mary's husband, Majid Bakhtiar was one the 'Khans' of the Bakhtiaris.

As a little girl, I was mesmerized by seeing a woman being so independent, riding in front of all men, praised and respected by all. She was an inspiration.

I need to emphasize that I am coming from a tribe

where women have enjoyed a rather high degree of freedom. Not only, were they excellent riders but also gifted shooters. They needed the skills to defend themselves and their livestock against thieves and wild animals.

We, Bakhtiaris have had our share of influential women like Maryam Bakhtiari (1874-1937). She is known to have taken up arms against foreign enemies. Her bravery is well known to historians and her lifetime story a fascinating narrative. She was the only woman adorned with the German Iron cross, symbolizing her courage.

However, Mary's exploits and originality has its bearings on that young girl I was then and I was fascinated by her. She has been influencing me through my whole life.

I also owe my father who let me indulge my passion for horses and honestly, I never really encountered any difficulties during my life shared with them, maybe sometimes only financially. Obviously, we all wish to care for these beautiful creatures.

**I WISH MY EXPERIENCE WITH BREEDING ASIL HORSES COULD HELP YOUNGER PASSIONATE HORSE LOVING PEOPLE AND MY MESSAGE TO FUTURE GENERATIONS IS: IF YOU WISH TO SUCCEED IN THIS VENTURE YOU NEED TO HAVE DEEP LOVE, GREAT PASSION AND A LOT OF PATIENCE.**

# TAJ GOL GHAMKHAR



Breeder - National Judge - Vice Director of Khusistan Equestrian Committee



I was born in January 1970, in the beautiful province of Khusistan: the cradle of the Arabian Horse.

My father was a well known breeder in Ahwaz & I owe him everything I have learnt in my life about horses. Nonetheless, he also broke my heart as a child when he decided to gift my beloved first owned horse to one of his friends. In those days in Khusistan it was custom to give away a horse to close friends or relatives who would praise that particular horse.

I cried for 3 days, refused to eat and to this day, his memory is still hunting & hurting me. His name was Sobeili Maarouf.

Our family has been breeding Asil Arabians for more than 300 years and at the present, with my brothers, we are the fifth generation of Asil horse breeders.

I became the head of the women Equestrian Committee of Khusistan in 1998-1999, then vice-director of the Equestrian Committee when both committees merged.

I was lucky to hold this position until 2005. The province of Khusistan, for many centuries

before the discovery of oil, was particularly famous for being the most important Asil producing area of Persia. Many famous Arabic speaking tribes, whether sedentary, or nomadic lived in Khusistan and many Asil strains are linked to their tribal names.

Dealing with breeders & horse owners had its toll of challenges, specially as we were recognized by WAHO. I had to explain what was expected of us & not everyone would understand and comply. However, as a woman, I never felt undermined, on the contrary, I was respected because I was one of them and I was sharing the same passion they had for horses.

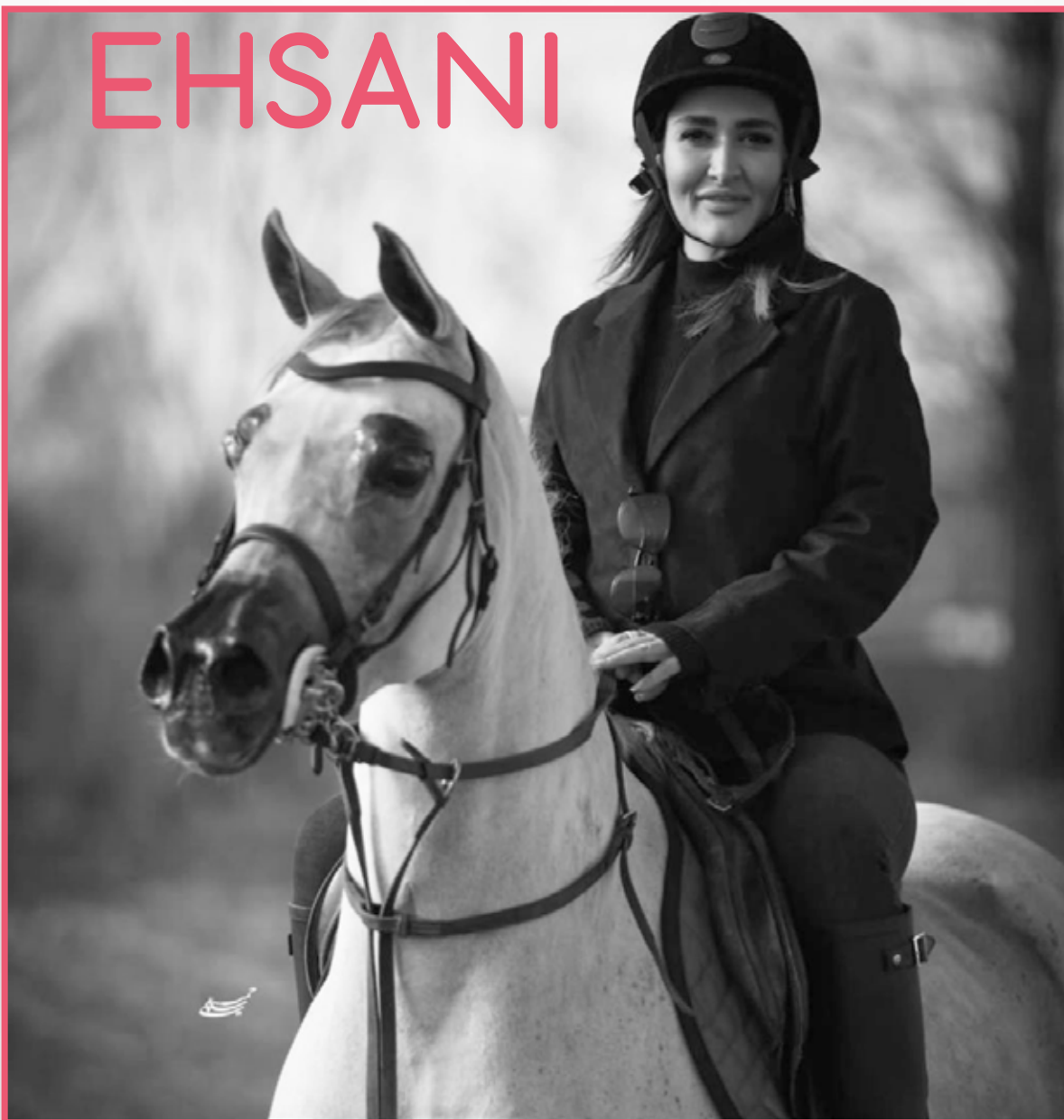
I had also started a boarding & breeding center in Ahwaz which I am continuing to direct in the province of Yazd where I currently live.

I was blessed with horse loving friends, who have always been supporting me.

I have spent a fruitful life among a breed I have cherished the most since I was born and I wouldn't change it for the whole world. As time passes by, my love for horses has grown stronger, at the point that I don't see myself living without them: they are part of my family.

**FOR THOSE STARTING IN THE HORSE BUSINESS, BARE IN MIND THAT YOUR LIFE WILL CHANGE. YOU NEED REAL PASSION AND DEDICATION AND YOU ALSO NEED THE FINANCIAL ABILITY. NOT EVERYDAY WILL BE SUNSHINE, BUT IF YOU ARE ONE OF THESE CRAZY LOVING HORSE WOMEN, THEN DON'T HESITATE. LIFE SHARED WITH HORSES IS A BLESSING.**

# NEGIN EHSANI



Breeder - Owner - National DC



As long as I can remember, my father has always kept Arabian horses and my passion for them started right from childhood.

My first mare, Setareh which meant Star, was a beautiful black straight Iranian whom I loved dearly. Her sire was the charismatic Samarcand which belonged to Mary Gharagozlou.

We started by owning and breeding Asil horses and my father had acquired very influential lines. After a while we decided to breed show horses and we purchased foreign bloodlines.

My family has always been supporting me and encouraging me, in every circumstances.

My passion and dedication for Arabian horses has been limitless and I am always looking for ways to improve my choices for breeding. I like to think that the breeding program I have chosen to follow had the expected results. I have entered my horses to many National shows and they have been able to win many championships.

One of my best memories, was when one of my first breedings, Veis Pasha, a beautiful chestnut colt, won as a 2 year old in our National Championship.

Veis Pasha, a double Magnum Psyche grandson has been the pride of my life. He loves to compete and show off his extraordinary movement which he always gets unanimous 20's from judges.

I am always looking to produce not only show Champions but also charismatic horses with correct conformation and sound legs.

The horse industry is not without any difficulties but the joy of spending time with these beautiful creatures is worthy of our time. In adversity, we need to fight back and learn from our mistakes and start over..

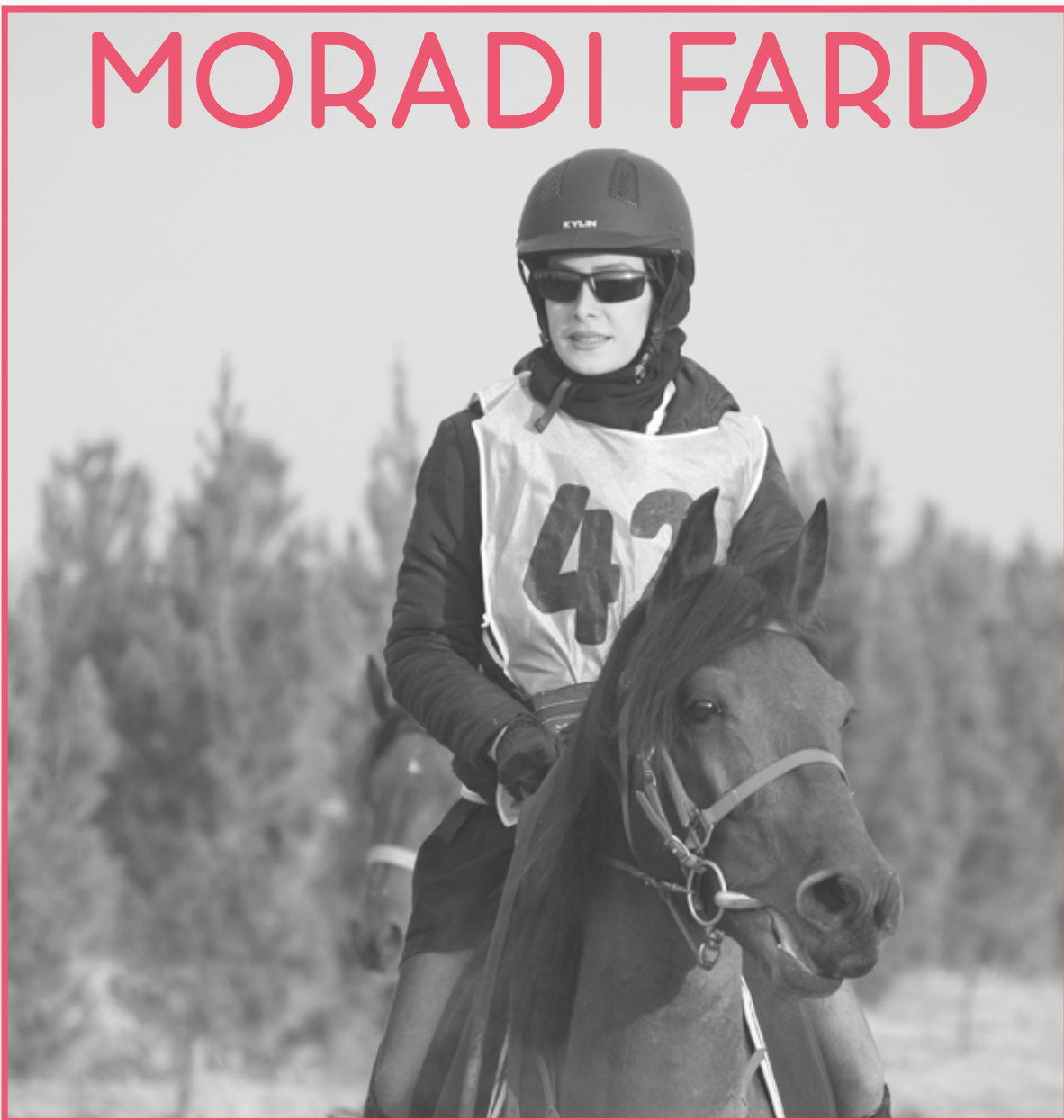
My horses are a source of happiness and joy and my life depends on their well being. During my involvement with horses, I have met extraordinary people, that have been a source of inspiration. I hope, I can become one for newcomers and be able to share my experiences, wishing that they would not repeat the mistakes I made.

I had the privilege to have known Mary Leila Gharagozlou when I was a little girl. She was someone I wished I could resemble one day. Everything about her was mesmerizing and fascinating. My father knew her very well and respected her a great deal.

**MY MESSAGE TO YOUNG GIRLS, TO MY OWN DAUGHTER AND WOMEN IN THE WORLD. WE HAVE A LOT OF ABILITIES AND SKILLS, MAYBE EVEN MORE CAPABILITIES THAN MANY MEN.**

**DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE RISKS AND STAY STRONG. NEVER GIVE UP YOUR DREAMS. CONTINUE YOUR HARD WORK WITH A HEART FULL OF LOVE.**

# GOLNAZ MORADI FARD



Breeder - Endurance Rider - Veterinarian - National Endurance Judge - Trainer



I grew up in the province of Lorestan, in a region where horses were an important, if not the principal aspect of its culture. The unparalleled bridle bits and harness fittings that have survived the centuries, remain to tell the tale of this ancient province.

My grandfather used to keep & breed Asil Arabians and as I was growing up, I became infatuated about horses.

I started riding when I was 8 years old and as years passed, I found that Endurance riding was my principal interest and I decided to learn more about this discipline.

I began competing in 2003 and I tried to enter every possible event. My first endurance riding mare was a mixed Egyptian & Iranian bloodlines who taught me a lot about metabolic issues, acid lactic, choice of gear, training, and everything else. Nevertheless, my best horse, one that I loved competing with, was a straight Iranian stallion named Shahab. He was the easiest horse to deal with, always ready to please, passing vet checks

with flying colors. It was a blast riding him to the finish line. All my successful long distance CEI's were won thanks to Shahab.

My fondness for horses was so profound that after graduating as a geneticist, I decided to continue my studies as a veterinarian.

It's been 5 years now that I have finally become a veterinarian, specializing in Equine reproduction. I also have a breeding center in Lorestan, and with my husband, we are breeding race & endurance horses, mixing French bloodlines with Iranian ones.

I am also an endurance judge and a level I horse trainer. In 2008, I was the highest ranking endurance rider and one of the National Endurance team member.

I don't see a big difference between a man and a woman in succeeding a horse business. One needs a lot of passion, dedication, commitment, work, zeal, and in addition a capital would help a lot.

Perhaps it would be more difficult for a woman who also needs to take care of her family.

**I PERSONALLY HAVE HAD SWEET & BITTER EXPERIENCES KEEPING HORSES, BUT I HAVE LEARNT THE HARD WAY AND WHAT WOULD MAKE ME HAPPY, IS TO BE ABLE TO PASS THEM TO BEGINNERS. IF YOU THINK YOU ARE READY TO SHARE YOUR TIME WITH HORSES, DO IT AND TRY TO BENEFIT FROM OTHERS EXPERIENCES.**

# SAMA SAFARI



## ECAHO DC - Breeder - Equestrian and Artist

Qashqai means 'horse with white forehead' and is the name of a tribe in Iran. The Qashqai is renowned for its brave warriors and beautiful textiles. We are one of Iran's national minorities. We speak Turkish. This is me with Qashqai dress.



I was born in the historic city of Shiraz, known for its beautiful gardens, flowers and famous poets and where the old ruins of Persepolis sits. I am a 23 years old artist, illustrator and painter. I have always been attracted to the beauty of the Arabian horse and while i was visiting khuzestan province, I was captivated right away to their beautiful head and demeanor.

In 2012, my father surprised me by buying my first Arabian mare from Belgium. Ariana (BE) is a Monther Al Nasser daughter. This was the start of my passion for Arabian horses until today.

I became a National DC for Arabian horse shows and invited as such to some countries. I am also involved in show jumping and sometimes act as announcer in competitions.

My parents belong to the Qashqai tribe, one the most important nomadic tribes in Iran. The Qashqais are renowned for its brave warriors and

beautiful textiles. They are also famous for breeding the Dareshuri horse, a famous breed in Iran that has its own enthusiasts.

I have not yet encountered any difficulties in doing what I like, and in my opinion anyone who wants to achieve something, will find a way to do it. I don't think difficulties or any obstacles will have any effect.

Anyone who wishes to be successful must be patient, strong, hopeful, and never give up.

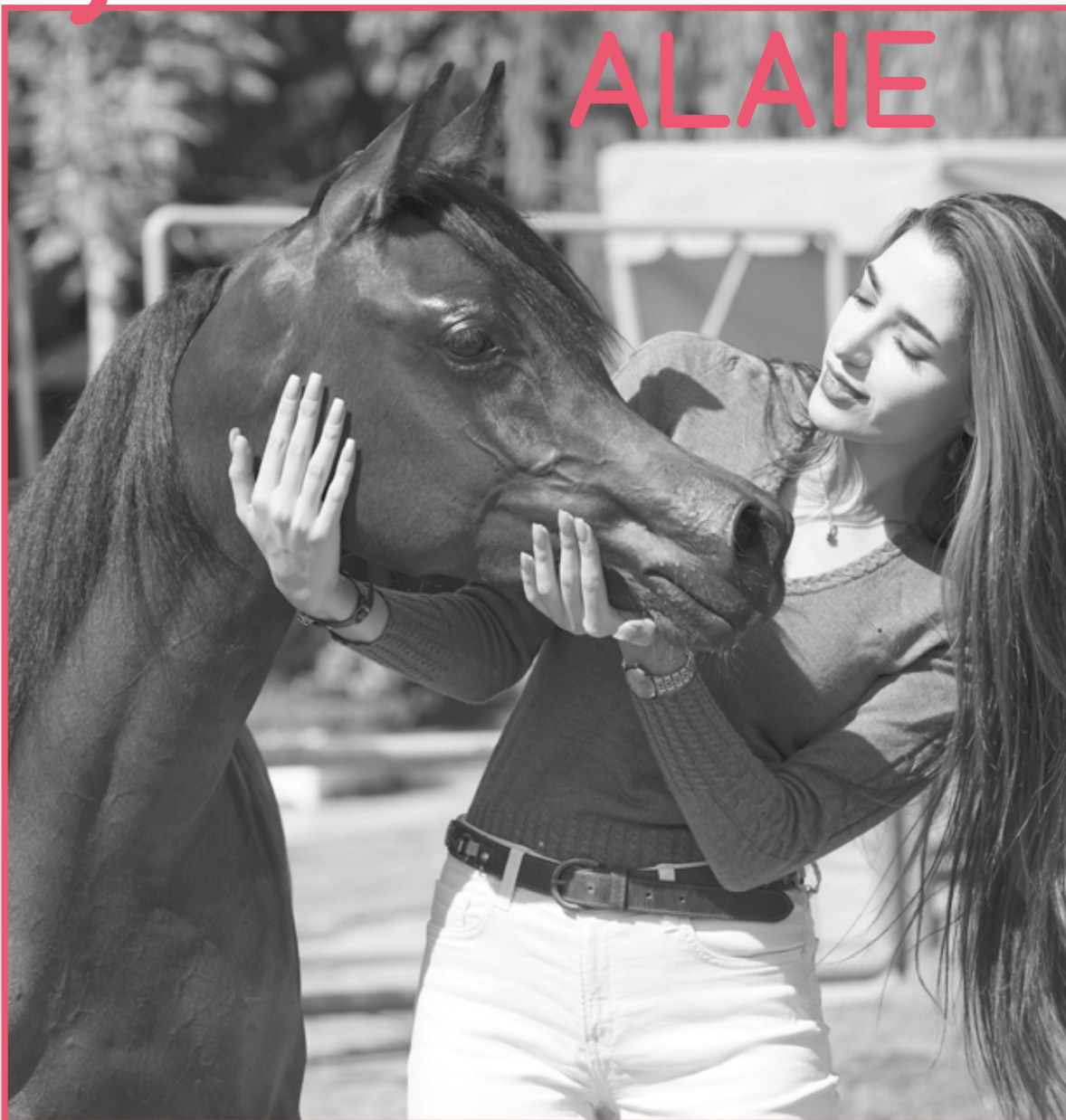
And believe it, if something is meant to happen, it will.

I am still very young and I have a long way to go. I hope to be able to inspire other women in this world when the time comes. First I need to acquire more experience myself and try my best to succeed in what I am pursuing.

**MY MESSAGE TO NEWCOMERS: ANYTIME YOU START ANYTHING YOU TRULY DESIRE, NEVER GIVE UP BY STAYING STRONG AND POSITIVE, YOU SURELY WILL REACH YOUR OBJECTIVE.**

# JUAN

# ALAIE



Breeder and Trainer

I'm a rider and breeder from Iran. I was born on September 14 in 1997. I started with arabian horses in age of 3. I have a Arabian horses farm in Kordan region. My business is breeding and training horses.

Since the day I knew myself, all my wishes and desires have been horses and the dream of having a big farm with my own horses. Even though my family wanted me to become a doctor like them, I followed the path of my passion and I am living my dream.

This is definitely not easy in a country like Iran and in a male society. Sometimes the jealousy and sometimes the suppression of horsemen in Iran's horse society has caused many problems to me as a young girl. But I wish for better days..

Due to my young age and patriarchal society, I often faced many problems, but because I have

been a rider since childhood and I am a well-known girl in my country, I have been able to be very successful. But when it comes to introducing myself to the world, I still have a long way to go.

I definitely have to act strong and follow my heart and be patient to be able to overcome the problems. I think that the positive feature that women have over men is that they never give up on their heart's desire and they will go on for the goals and success, no matter how long and difficult it is.

I'm sure my story will inspire next generations. I'm planning to write a book one day when I will reach old age and publish all the memories and difficulties of my life. Until today that I am talking to you, I have had a very exciting and full of ups and downs life. It will be an interesting story for everyone.

**BELIEVE IN THE DREAMS AND LOVE THAT GOD HAS PLACED IN YOUR HEART. IF GOD HAS DESTINED SOMETHING IN YOUR HEART, HE WILL ARRANGE THE PATH OF YOUR LIFE TO ACHIEVE IT IN A WONDERFUL WAY. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS BELIEVE AND NEVER GIVE UP.**



# KIMIA

# GHASEMI



Psychology Student - Translator and Journalist

I was born in the 26th of November in the year of 2003 I'm an Arabian horse breeder and lover from the ancient country of Iran . I'm a student of psychology, translator and journalist; I have to say I'm so happy and honored for interviewing tutto Arabian .

I've always been an animal lover since I was a little girl and my father has a big farm so I can say I grew up taking care and feeding the domestic animals inside our farm but I always felt like that there is something missing in our farm when I was looking at my grandfather's picture on the wall with his beautiful black purebred Arabian stallion, it was the Arabian horse we had been missing in our farm next to the other kinds of animals . So I started educating about arabian horse bloodlines and the famous founding mares or stallions since the age of 11 and as I grew up I started my journey with purchasing my first Arabian horse.

In all industries and communities there are ups and downs when you are a newcomer, when I entered the Arabian horse community in Iran I was a little bit shocked because I didn't receive back the energy and enthusiasm I was giving to people but as the time went by people started to know me and my pure intentions for the future of our community I'm still struggling to make a name for myself.

Being confident and having volition. A powerful woman is a woman that is confident in herself and her choices, in all around the world you should try very hard and carefully as a woman to make a name for yourself but I think that at first you should believe in yourself, because this path of success is full of challenges and obstacles and you will only overcome the obstacles when you have volition and you never doubt yourself or your decisions.

I'm still a young woman in this big community and I think that I'm just too young to be an example for anyone else but all of us as a woman need to read the life history of successful females in the world and their challenges and difficulties as a guideline. I hope in the future I can be a good example for younger girls that have just entered the Arabian horse world.

Women are inherently built with strength, perseverance and character. There is one book that inspires me the most when I feel I'm at the bottom and since I can't tell the whole story of that book I leave a quote from it that inspires me the most it says that "It's not about being perfect. It's not about where you get yourself in the end. There's power in allowing yourself to be known and heard, in owning your unique story, in using your authentic voice." Michelle Obama, "Becoming".

**IT'S NOT ALWAYS FOLLOWING OTHER PEOPLE AND THEIR IDEAS; SOMETIMES IT'S ABOUT BEING A DIFFERENT PERSON FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD AND HAVING A NEW IDEA TO PRESENT IN THIS LIFE. THANKS FOR TUTTO ARABIAN FOR HAVING ME .**



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 Chiara Carrer  
 Antonia Bautista  
 Jennifer Dhombre  
 Kamila Kozłowska  
 Anna Maria Raffa  
 Jennifer Von Dahn  
 Urszula Łęczycka  
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 Sandra Platzeck  
 Raquel Jacobas  
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