

Marajj

The Global Superstar

by Samantha Mattocks

*photos: Gregor Aymar,
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Marajj's star has once more been on the ascent since 2015. From siring two Gold World Champions at the Paris World Championships to taking the coveted US National Champion Stallion title, 'Marajj' has been the name on everyone's lips. Owned by Sheikh Mohammed bin Saud Al Qasimi at his Albidayer Stud in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, Marajj is standing once more this year at Michael Byatt Arabians in Texas, USA. Marajj's is a life that is one to be celebrated and at just 13 years of age, there is still much to come from this superlative sire.

to continue his amazing story that began back in 2004 when he was born in the USA. For Marajj, a proud and noble stallion, this trip marks life going full circle as he goes back to the land of his roots, and thus further his appeal even more.

In October 2016, Marajj took the famed green shavings of centre ring of the Tulsa Expo Square in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Having won his class, Marajj was vying for the title of US National Champion Stallion, the highest accolade that there is to win in the United States. Entering the ring with his usual confidence and charisma,

Marajj wowed judges and audience alike to take the honours. Sheikh Mohammed was there, and he proudly led his stallion around the ring for the walk of fame. Marajj's US National Championship rounded off what had been an incredible year for Albidayer Stud.

Less than a year earlier, Marajj had the honour of siring two Gold Champions at the prestigious World Championships in Paris. The Junior Female Champion was D Shahla (ex FT Shaella by Shael Dream Desert), bred by Dubai Arabian Stud. The Gold Senior Female Champion was the ethereal Salwa Al Zobair (ex Esklawa by Eukaliptus), bred from Marajj's first foal crop in the Middle East by Al Zobair Stud. Their championship titles not only marked an outstanding achievement for their owners, but underlined the quality of Marajj as a true sire of note.

Marajj's pedigree offers some of the most beautiful bloodlines in the industry, and of which merge together in one amazing Arabian. Marajj's sireline is one of the most famous in the modern age of breeding as he is by three-time World Champion Marwan Al Shaqab (ex Little Liza Fame by Fame VF), a son of World Champion Gazal Al Shaqab (ex Kajora by Kaborr), a son of Anaza





El Farid (ex Bint Deena by Ansata Ibn Halima), a son in turn of Ruminaja Ali (Shaikh Al Badi x Bint Magidaa), and going further back in this line to the great 1934 stallion, Nazeer (Mansour x Bint Samiha). Indeed, Marajj was from Marwan Al Shaqab's first foal crop in the United States. Looking to Marajj's damline, his dam RGA Kouress brings in a strong Polish influence. She is a daughter of Kouvey Bey (Bey Shah x BA Precious Memory by Aladdinn) and out of Angophora (Eukaliptus x Belbowrie Baskana by Bask). This combination of bloodlines has proved to be potent as seen not only in Marajj himself, but also through his offspring.

Born in 2004, Marajj was bred by Joel Desmarteau of Markelle Arabians, based in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Having fallen for the many qualities of Marwan Al Shaqab when Joel saw him show as a yearling, and already liking Gazal Al Shaqab after seeing him in Paris, he made the decision to breed his mare, RGA Kouress, to him. "Marajj was a beautiful foal from the moment he was born," recalls Joel. "He had a lovely short face, beautiful eyes, and an inquisitive spirit. He was one of the first horses that I had bred and straight away, I knew that Marajj was special."

The following year, in 2005, Sheikh Mohammed and Marajj crossed paths for the first time. Dawn Martin, Manager of Albidayer Stud, tells me that Sheikh Mohammed wanted something special for Albidayer Stud. "He was told about a young superstar colt. It was January, right before the Scottsdale Show, and Sheikh Mohammed immediately recognised the potential that Marajj offered and purchased him.

"Marajj ended up being the talk of the town as he showed in Scottsdale just a few weeks later. He was named unanimous Junior Male Champion, and

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Marajj

2004 bay stallion

		ANAZA EL FARID* b 1988 ARABIAN AHR #423140	RUMINAJA ALI* gr 1976	SHAIKH AL BADI* BINT MAGIDAA*
	GAZAL AL SHAQAB* b 15.3 1995 ARABIAN AHR 528133		BINT DEENAA* b 1979	ANSATA IBN HALIMA* DEENAA*
		KAJORA* b 15.2 1979 ARABIAN AHR 224546	KABORR* gr 15.1 1970	NABORR* BINT KHOLAMEH*
MARWAN AL SHAQAB* b 15.3H 2000 ARABIAN AHR 599438			EDJORA* gr 1968	EXELSJOR* EDESSA*
		FAME VF b 1982 ARABIAN AHR 268987	BEY SHAH* b 1976	BAY EL BEY* STAR OF OFIR*
	LITTLE LIZA FAME* b 1987 ARABIAN AHR 383742 // QASB 736		RAFFOLETA-ROSE* b 1971	RAFFON* LETA ROSE
		KATAHZA* b 1981 ARABIAN AHR*224369	AZA DESTINY* b 1971	AZRAFF* BINT BASS HISAN*
			AFHAR RAHZA gr 1969	AL-MARAH RADAMES* ZAKIEH
		BEY SHAH* b 1976 ARABIAN AHR 134556	BAY EL BEY* b 15.1h 1969	BAY-ABI* NAGANKA*
	KOUVAY BEY* b 15.2H 1991 ARABIAN AHR*467123		STAR OF OFIR* b 1970	BASK* LLANA*
		BA PRECIOUSMEMORY* b 1985 ARABIAN AHR*343221	ALADDINN* b 15.0 1975	NUREDDIN* LALAGE*
			ROHARA AMBER FYRE b 1979	FYRE BASQUE* IVANHOE TSATANETE
RGA KOURESS* b 1995 ARABIAN AHR 523818		EUKALIPTUS* gr 15 1974 ARABIAN PASB# 3007, AHR# 200635	BANDOS* gr 1964	NEGATIV* BANDOLA*
	ANGOPHORA ch 1981 ARABIAN AHR*244746		EUNICE* b 1959	COMET* EPIGONA
		BELBOWRIE BASKANA* b 1977 ARABIAN AHR*154813	BASK* b 1956	WITRAZ* BALALAJKA*
			ANHAR b 1973	KAROON* NESMA*

everyone was talking about this amazing colt from Marwan's first US-born foal crop. It is fair to say that Marajj helped with the hype going about Marwan – he just came out and wowed everyone.”

After a winning start, Marajj continued to shine, awarded the unanimous Region 7 Champion Sweepstakes Colt and US National Champion Top Five

Sweepstakes Colt titles. Immediately after US Nationals, Marajj was exported to Sharjah to his home at Albidayer Stud. In 2006, Marajj made his Middle East show-ring debut, taking the Junior Male Championship at both the Ajman Show and the Qatar International Show. At the Dubai International Arabian Horse Championships, Marajj was named



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Reserve Junior Male Champion and from there, he went to Europe. He won his class and went Top Five at the All Nations' Cup, and was then garlanded with the Reserve Junior Male title at the Paris World Championships. Knowing that Marajj truly had the potential to go all the way, and following in the famous footsteps of his sireline, he returned to Paris the following year to be named Junior Male World Champion outright as a three-year old.

Between Marajj's World Championship shows in 2006 and 2007, he returned to the United States as he had so many breedings to fulfil, booked following his sensational Scottsdale win as a yearling. While he was there, they took the opportunity to show Marajj at the first Arabian Breeders' World Cup in Las Vegas in 2007, where he took the Reserve Junior Male Championship title.

As the focus had been on showing rather than breeding – and then fulfilling his obligations in the United States – there was little opportunity for Marajj to sire any stock immediately following his arrival in the Middle East. At that time, Dawn was manager of Al Zobair Stud, owned by Sheikh Mohammed's brother, Sheikh Abdullah Althani, who stabled all of Albidayer's horses at that time for showing and breeding. "Marajj was only here for a few months and was showing at the time, so just before he left for Europe we tried him with three mares," explains Dawn. "The only mare that took was Esklawa (Eukaliptus x Ekstaza) and the result was Salwa Al Zobair. It is special that Gazal Al Shaqab sired a World Champion from his first foal crop, Marwan Al Shaqab, who then in turn sired a World Champion in Marajj from his first foal crop, and then Marajj sired a World Champion from his first! Salwa Al Zobair was a great advert for Marajj, and she was the first big winner in the UAE for him. Her titles include



Reserve UAE National Champion Filly and Sharjah International Gold Senior Female Champion.”

Returning to Europe in his two-year old year, Marajj was bred to Miss Yahsminah Elamal (by Antar Elamal WN), resulting in his second foal, Maharajah HDM. Bred by Haras del Mar of Spain and now owned by Mystica Arabians in Australia, Maharajah HDM also helped promote the immense qualities of Marajj as a sire. At his first show, in Scottsdale, he followed in his sire’s footsteps and was named unanimous Junior Male Champion. As a two-year old, Maharajah took the Junior Male Championship at the inaugural Al Khalediah International Arabian Horse Festival and ended the year taking the Silver Junior World

Champion Colt title in Paris. Two years later, in 2010, Maharajah’s full brother, Maharani HDM, would go Reserve Junior Male Champion in Scottsdale for owners Al Mohamadiah Stud from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

As soon as Marajj’s first foals hit the ground, everyone recognised that he had the potential to be a sire of note and everyone wanted to breed to him. However, rather than opening up his book, Sheikh Mohammed chose to wait until all the breedings that had already been booked were fulfilled. As a result of this, Marajj has a relatively small number of progeny on the ground compared to his contemporaries. However, those that he has sired have excelled, and Marajj’s name continues to inspire excellence.



Marajj's first foals for Albidayer Stud included the 2008 grey colt Marjan Albidayer (ex Pustynna Droga by Laheeb), who would go on to take many German National Championship titles with new owners. Marajj's oldest daughter at Albidayer Stud is Marami Albidayer (ex Marsina by Marsin), who offers a powerful blend to Marajj over Russian bloodlines. Now eight years of age, this incredibly showy bay mare is so refined and elegant. She has won many titles across the Middle East, including Gold at the UAE Nationals and Silver at the Breeders' Cup at Boutheib. Her progeny includes the three-year-old filly, Maram Albidayer, sired by AJ Barzan (Vervaldee x PA Pryme Tymes Legacy). Another Marajj daughter is Mayasah Albidayer (ex Mattaharii by Magnum Chall HVP). Her full brother, Mazin Albidayer, was sold to Athbah Stud in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, taking the Bronze Junior Male Champion at the Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz International Arabian Horse Festival (PSIAHF).

A Marajj daughter mare with a real 'look at me' attitude is Samarah Albidayer, a six-year-old bay mare out of Psyche Illusion HBV (Padrons Psyche x NV Cocoa). She is a huge mover, and her attitude is typical across all the Marajj offspring, as are their beautiful, big eyes, their exotic beauty and great functionality. Also noteworthy and a huge, correct mover with an exotic look is Murhaf Albidayer (Marajj x Magic Mon Amour). This super three-year old deep bay colt possesses many of the same qualities as his sire and he has already won titles across the Middle East.

As well as Dubai Stud, who leased Marajj with great success in 2012/2013 having seen how well he crossed with their mares through foals such as D Shala, many other studs have also been quick to utilise the potency of Marajj. In particular, Al Hawajer Stud in Sharjah has used Marajj several times, resulting

in Sh'hab Al Hawajer (ex Illuminate by Imagine), a stallion that is regularly placed in the medals at shows across the Middle East, and the 2013 Dubai International Arabian Horse Gold and Silver Yearling Male Champions Bad'e al Hawajer (ex Valentyna F by Psytadel) and Nashmi al Hawajer (ex Maniba Bint Ibn Narav by Ibn Narav). Both colts have continued to shine. Dion Arabians bred the Marajj daughter, My Fair Rose-D (ex WH Marissa Rose by Magnum Psyche), who has won countless titles in Europe since she was a foal. The Osterhöf Stud in Germany bred the full sisters Maryah OS and Nastya OS (ex AB Nastrapsy by Psytadel), who have truly shone in the show-ring for owners The Royal Cavalry of Oman and the Ajman Stud respectively. Nastya OS has been regularly placed in championships across Europe and the Middle East, including Gold Junior Female Champion at the PSIAHF in 2013.

"For the relatively small number of foals that Marajj has sired – less than 300 – there certainly is a lot of depth in terms of the quality of his stock," says Dawn. "He has had champions in well over 20 different countries around the world, and he has a great hit rate! We only breed a few foals a year at Albidayer Stud, so we are happy that others recognise the many attributes that Marajj offers a breeding programme, and share his qualities with the world."

Marajj is a horse that you never tire of seeing. From his huge eye, perfectly dished face, swan-like neck, fantastic body, and great limbs to his nature – which is inquisitive, intelligent, gentle and kind – he really is 'all horse', and one that you can just spend time with, admiring his great qualities. He has also been ridden, underlining how Marajj really is the complete package.

In 2015, Marajj's life turned full circle once more as he went to stand at Michael



Byatt Arabians. With Michael, Marajj was shown twice, first at the Arabian Breeders' World Cup in Las Vegas, where he won his class and took the Silver Senior Male Championship, and then the US Nationals. A score of 395 points secured Marajj's place in the final, and his name was then added to the history books when he was named US National

Champion Stallion on what was a glittering night for this incredible stallion and all his connections. The emotion and sheer joy on the faces of Sheikh Mohammed and those around him was clear to see, and this was a poignant win for all at Abidayer Stud. Marajj always has been one of the greats, and now he has this coveted title to prove it. ○

