

# WE, WOMEN

by Giorgia Mauri

I have been asking the women of the Arabian horse to express their message to the girls and young women who are entering the world today with the aim of encouraging them to take their own path and pursue their dream, whatever it may be. Intimate portraits of strong women determined to achieve their goals and happy to share their experiences, passion, enthusiasm, foresight, emotion and the desire to tell their stories have been emerging from the interviews. These generous women and their stories represent the soil on which tomorrow will sprout the lives and stories of our daughters, our granddaughters and our future. It is important to mark a path now, to try to draw a map of thoughts and words of the **women of today** that will help the **women of tomorrow** to find their way in the world. This project is dedicated to Blanca, my daughter, and to all the women who write, thanks to their tenacity, the history of this world every day.

# MARGOT CHAZEL



Marketing, Communication and Event Businesswoman

I am Margot Chazel, I am French and I am currently starting my own business in marketing, communication and events.

My family is in the business of Arabian horses for 3 generations now. My grandmother which started as a breeder and rider is a show organizer for many years. My father is a rider, trainer and a broker. They are both also involved in different Arabian Horse associations. They have been my inspiration since I was a child and transmitted me their passion and respect for the Arabian Breed.

Luckily more and more women today are getting involved in the field. The Arabian Horse world is filled with wonderful opportunities and I never felt being a female was an issue.

Proposing myself in this world has not always been easy, especially coming after 2 very successful relatives but I believe that one can overcome any obstacles if you put your mind to it.

Thinkin about qualities or characteristics I think one must have in order to pursue her/his dream or to undertake a project she/he cares about, I would say that first you have to be a dreamer. Everything starts with a dream (and that's never overrated!!) Second, you need to work hard, hard work always pays off!

And most importantly to never give up!! There will be good and less good days. But you need to keep going.

My message to future generations of young women to encourage them to take their own path, whatever it may be, is:

**THERE IS NO PROJECT TOO BIG, OR TOO SMALL!  
TAKE CHANCES AND STAY HUNGRY,  
THE WORLD IS FILLED WITH OPPORTUNITIES  
AND INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCES!  
LAST BUT NOT LEAST... ARABIAN HORSES  
WILL NEVER STOP TO AMAZE YOU!**

# SUNNY SASSUDELLI



Photographer

I'm Sunny, my nickname in art and life. My family name is Sassudelli, my unusual name is Sunita because I was born in India and I was adopted from an Italian family when I was very young. Since my early childhood I had only one huge passion: horses!! I drew horses, talked about horses and, as soon as I had a chance, I learned to ride.

I also dedicated my master's degree thesis in photography to the horse world, creating a photographic project between horses and architecture. After completing my studies, I began to shoot show jumping ... but I ended up in the world of the Arabian horse. All happened by pure chance, a stud manager asked me if I could be able to shoot Arabians in a stud... and from there my adventure in this beautiful world began! I consider myself very lucky to be able to combine study and passion ... photography and Arabian horses. And I realize that every day I learn something new about these wonderful desert horses and I feel more comfortable to immortalize them. Share great time with them closely gives great emotions and satisfactions and that is a great honor for me!

Nowadays even for a woman it is quite easy to undertake an artistic path, in my case as a photographer, without many obstacles, something for gender equality still remains to be done, but in any case I feel in the Arabian industry there are not different opportunities related to gender.

In fact my brief but intense experience means that a photographer has the opportunity to get involved at an international level. It is certainly not easy, but from what I have been able to see there are several photographers who have a family which can enjoy working all over the world and this has

given me the strength to continue this path. Being a woman it's easy to have misunderstandings ... and meet some people who wish to carry you forward in your career very fast, but I prefer to continue my way, perhaps slowly and without shortcuts, but in the end I can be proud of myself, and build my own way with commitment and passion, at least as far as I'm concerned!

Luckily for me, I met many positive people, who helped me to realize my dream, which is to get a job related to my passion. Especially as a beginner I not only had encouragement, but also people who discouraged me and did not give me the opportunity to get involved but despite everything here I am, with perseverance, passion and desire to be a photographer to continue my journey. This year because of Covid circumstances my expectations have not been fulfilled, indeed many times this discouraged me, but I realized that in the most difficult moments you have to understand how lucky you are to be able to do what you love. To continue this work I have to improve my personal research on technique and photographic poses.

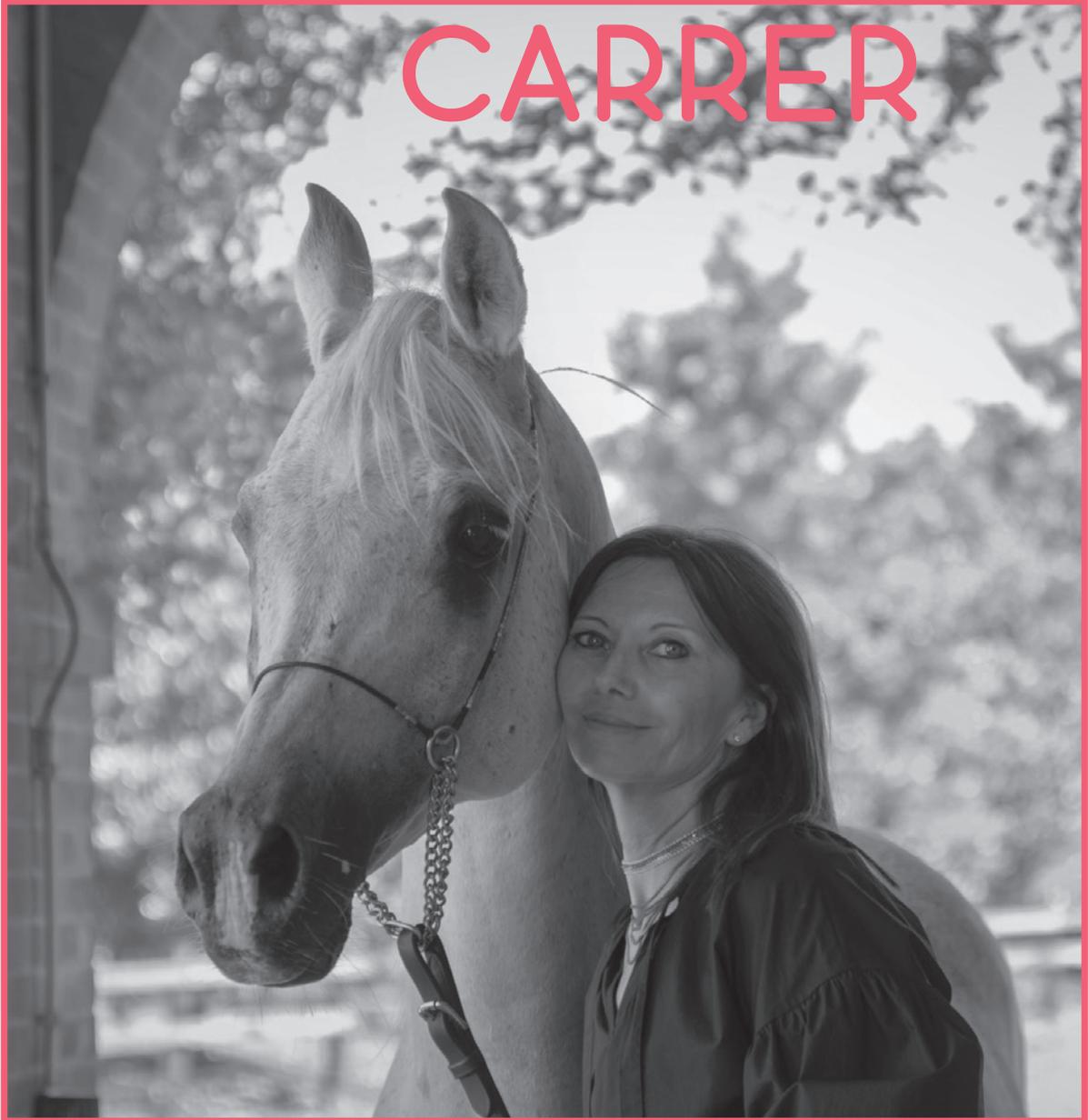
I always have a positive attitude and keep comparing with some famous photographers and shots, in order to broaden knowledge and be able to propose something unique, because to create a picture is a personal way of seeing using both my sensitivity and mastery of my photography studies.

Another thing that may seem commonplace is that being spontaneous and humble helped me a lot. It also helps to be friendly with everyone, as well as smiling ... yes people like to see happy faces! it sounds something simple but it's not!

I would like that my experience could help anyone who loves Arabian horses and has a talent for photography to follow it, I'm sure they won't regret it!

**BE THE ARCHITECTS OF YOUR HAPPINESS,  
FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS AND THEY WILL COME TRUE!**

# CHIARA CARRER



Breeder and Architect

My name is Chiara Carrer, I was born in the province of Venice; now I live in Refrontolo in the province of Treviso, in the hills known for the production of Prosecco wine. I am an architect by profession.

I discovered the Arabian horse about fifteen years ago thanks to my husband, Vincenzo Pellegrini, current President of the ANICA Association. My husband had already been passionate about Arabian horses for many years and right then he was deciding to start his own small breeding farm: so we lived this adventure together and I became passionate about this magnificent creature, beautiful, full of charm and history.

I think that being a woman does not bring with it a different way of approaching the world of the Arabian horse. As far as I'm concerned, I can say that my relationship with horses has always been characterized by the love I have for animals in general, rather than by aesthetic attraction or genetic quality, aspects that have helped to consolidate my passion and that are at the basis of my breeding choices: my husband always says that if it were up to me, we wouldn't sell any horses, especially the less beautiful or lucky ones, for which I have always nurtured a form of protection. Whether or not this is the result of a sensitivity that is more feminine than masculine, I don't know - maybe not - but it is certainly the way I live my personal passion for the Arabian horse and I hope that it transmits something positive to the people with whom I deal.

I had the good fortune to be supported by the greater experience and knowledge of my

husband, but I think quietly to have matured over the years a good aesthetic sensitivity that allows me to give my contribution, even technical, to the breeding choices of our breeding, Assa Egyptian Arabians, of which I am administrator. I felt well received by breeders who are also my friends and with some of them - among which I would like to mention our dear and unforgettable friend Federico Fogarin of Guasimo breeding farm, who unfortunately is no longer with us - I have built a true relationship of friendship and mutual esteem. With reference to the world of Arabian horses and to a breeding project, in my view breeding is a long-term challenge, one must not be in a hurry and one must have the ambition to pursue one's own personal project, accepting possible failures and trying to make them temporary. So there can be no breeding project without passion and perseverance: unfortunately it is an adventure that requires economic resources and therefore everyone must find their own dimension to live their passion to the fullest. I hope that my experience and my story can be an inspiration for a future generation of women in this world. It's a passion that has many aspects common to the female world: care, custody, aesthetics, sensitivity. Many times these aspects are underestimated, but they are the keys to being a good breeder and to fully live your passion as much as technical, genetic and historical knowledge. I hope that my simple, empathetic and relational approach, in the essential direction of care and respect for the animal, will be perceived as a breeding value and maybe some young woman who wants to undertake this adventure will like it.

My message to future generations of young women to encourage them to take their own path, whatever it may be, is:

**PUT YOUR HEART INTO EVERY PROJECT OF YOUR LIFE,  
AND HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR POTENTIAL.**

# ANTONIA BAUTISTA



Breeder and Stud Manager

My name is Antonia Bautista, born in Mallorca, Spain.

I'm a breeder, continuing the family tradition since 1991. We breed mainly Arabian Horses but also some Andalusians for show and dressage. I'm also the manager of Al Shiraa Arabians (UAE) since 2011 and I'm a judge as well, currently in the National list.

I was introduced to the Arabian Horse World by my father, when he bought me my very first horse at the age of 4. By coincidence, this horse was an Arabian mare called Parrandera. She was huge, fleabitten with the most beautiful Spanish eyes. She was bred by Navarro Rincón. We all fell in love with her sweet character, how expressive and curious she was... We soon realized Arabians were different than other horses and my father started to investigate about the breed.

One year after, we would go together to Yeguada Militar (State Stud in Spain) and we would come back with 3 mares and one stallion. And since then we never stopped breeding Arabian Horses.

I never asked myself what it means to me to be a woman in the Arabian horse world. I was born in a family where they never made differences between men and women. So for me the fact of being a woman was not better or worse than being a man in any field. Maybe it's not the kind of answer that everyone expects in these days of radical feminism, as I never felt I had more difficulties or more help because of being a woman. This question was out of the table in the kind of education I received.

I see myself as an individual, that I know what I want, where I want to go and I try my best to get it. And I have to say that I never felt disrespected or belittled by anyone in the industry, at least in what I do. And I do the same, I value people for their human qualities, for their talent, for their hard work... never for their gender.

I never had difficulties or obstacles to do my job for being a woman. I had difficulties as everyone else... a deal that didn't go through due to lack of honesty, losing some titles that were important at a certain point, some strong different points of views when judging, some regrettable breeding decisions... but none of them related to my gender. On the contrary, I had help from colleagues, both men and women, that selflessly pushed me on the right way at the beginning.

Lots of patience, dedication, creativity, passion, determination and resilience... and all this done with integrity. These are the qualities or characteristics I think one must have in order to pursue a dream or to undertake a project she/he cares about.

I never ask myself if my experience and history could be an inspiration for a future generation of women in this world. Maybe my daughter will be able to answer in the future!

What I know is that I wake up everyday and try my very best in every field I touch. If I can leave this world better than I found it, I will do whatever it takes.

**TO THE NEW GENERATIONS I WOULD TELL THEM TO BE PATIENT, THAT SUCCESS DOES NOT COME FOR BEING FASTER THAN OTHERS, BUT FOR TAKING THE RIGHT DECISIONS AT THE RIGHT TIME (TIMING IS EVERYTHING!). BE BRAVE EVEN IF YOU FAIL, BEING A COWARD WILL NOT BRING YOU ANYWHERE. I WOULD TELL THEM NOT TO BELIEVE ALL WHAT THEY SEE IN THE MEDIA. TAKE A PLANE, A DRIVE OR A TRAIN TO GO TO SEE FARMS, CHECK THE STALLION YOURSELF BEFORE YOU BREED TO HIM. RESPECT AND SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE THAT KNOW MORE THAN YOU, BUT STILL LEARN TO MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS. BE RESPONSIBLE OF YOUR ACTIONS IN ANY LEVEL, AND YOU WILL AVOID MISTAKES IN THE FUTURE.**

**AND THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT AT THE END OF THE DAY, IS NOT WHAT OTHERS THINK OR FEEL ABOUT YOU, BUT HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF.**

# JENNIFER DHOMBRE



**Breeder and Official Artificial Inseminator**

My name is Jennifer Dhombre, very soon 32 years old, breeding, caring, educating horses for 17 years, and official Artificial Inseminator.

I was born as a horse addict. Even if nobody was in this industry around me, I discovered arábians throughout its legends at 7 years old and knew I wanted to be a breeder. My family members have been my greatest supporters since ever and they helped me to buy my first Arabian when I was still a teenager. I made international trade studies but decided to accomplish my dream about Arabian horses so I abandoned the silver spoon in my mouth and definitely put my feet into mud.. For me the secret of happiness is not about a luxury way of life but between the ears of an Arabian horse, despite all the work it needs days and nights: this is definitely My luxury way of life.

Being a woman in the Arabian horse world is not easy. I must say that I don't know if men or women are the most critical.

First physically, I am blond fair hair, I started very young and people were immediately judging me because of my appearance. If I was not dressing perfectly, that was maybe because I did not belong to an elite class of people so no need to talk to me (how stupid?), if I was dressing too much probably I was just one more stupid kind of pretty girl and definitely not a horse woman ready to put her feet in mud (no comment). Still for many people, I am a woman breeding some great horses but probably for glory not for love or passion (False. I am crazy animal lover, rescuing horses, cats and dogs for years and rejecting some ill treating practices of our own industry..). I can also be frightening because everyone understands quickly that I cannot be corrupted, and that I do work for the breed only and for my animals.

I am typically the kind of person who does not correspond to her image so that is terrifying me, the way how people think they know you just at first sight and specially when you are a (young) woman.

I was asked in this interview if I have found any difficulties or obstacles in proposing myself in this world. My answer is: indeed yes. Being a young woman, not that ugly, and coming from a family with good way of livings, makes you immediately identified as a not interesting person except for the

profits and benefits people think they can get through you (before realizing you are intelligent, oops you are ruining their plans). People easily judge you and think that if you look pretty and maybe got money so you have no values, no idea about hard work, and so working into an industry where a majority of powerful people are men, is like being a cheep into a wolf pack willing to eat you. Men are first trying to get you because you look good, and of course you refuse but must not offending them. And you must prove much more than any men your own values, strength, intelligence, spirit, knowledges... This always makes me smile. Most of the people are still quite shocked when they see me doing vet stuffs, inseminations, collections, births assistance, working days and nights without sleeping or when they hear me speak about genetics, farm, business and management strategies, marketing, horsemanship, because I am "just one blond woman walking on high heels during the shows" so this should not be my stuffs. Some dared to say me they think that a pretty woman is most of the time a frivolous woman. But woman have as much skills as men specially with horses, and this is high time for this world to get to know and accept it.

Personally, all that I did, I did it with my head and heart and I feel proud about the fact that never ever no badly intentioned men (or woman) could compromise or corrupt me. My valor and my virtues are my self respect. And I know I am not the only woman / person to respect herself.

No pretention but I hope my experience and history can be an inspiration for a future generation of women in this world, not only as a woman, but as a human being. What matters is who you really wanna be. I choose to stay honest and true, but I don't give the chance to everyone to get to know me for who I really am, only to some priviledge people who share the same kind of humanity and valors than I do.

We must admit that our Arabian horse industry is now endangered by too much money, politics, and schemes and unfortunately this is not only because of men. I don't find my place into all that except my passion. I believe that we can all together change our industry, change this world, before this is too late. We owe it to the Arabian Horse.

I am nobody but a true worker, a true passionate, a true animal lover, a true woman and

**ALL THAT MATTERS IN THIS WORLD IS WHO YOU WANNA BE: DREAMS DON'T DEFINE US, WHAT'S DEFINE US IS HOW WE DO MAKE THEM COME TRUE. WHEN YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT ONE CHOICE TO MAKE, LET'S ASK YOURSELF WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN YOUR CHOICE AS A CHILD, WHEN YOUR SOUL WAS PURE.**

# KAMILA KOZLOWSKA



Writer and Journalist

According to Honoré de Balzac, a famous nineteenth century French novelist, "the three most beautiful sights in the world are a ship in full sail, a galloping horse, and a woman dancing". I must admit that I have never been a great fan of sailing. I love to dance but whether it is a beautiful sight is not for me to judge. However, I cannot help but agree with Balzac on what he said about the beauty of a horse, especially when the horse in question is a purebred Arabian, exhibiting its unique traits that make it so distinct from any other horse breed in the world. There is something very special about Arabian horses that no words can describe. To me, they are the most amazing creatures on earth, capable of touching my soul with as little as one look of their huge hypnotizing eyes. Sometimes, I think that I am fascinated with Arabians because they represent all the attributes that I strive to embody myself: confidence, class and charisma.

My name is Kamila Kozłowska, I come from Poland but I currently live in Chichester, a charming city in South-East England, and it is not too far from the truth when I say that Arabian horses are the greatest love of my life. For the past few months, as a journalist and part of the Alim Editrice team, I have been on the most amazing journey of my life; the journey to make my dreams come true.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be involved in the project regarding women in the Arabian horse industry. Luckily, I have never experienced gender discrimination myself but I have heard many stories about women who were denied equal opportunities at work. That is why, I strongly believe that this serious problem should be widely discussed and dealt with appropriately. I am very grateful to Giorgia Mauri, the originator and leader of this project, for the unique opportunity to share the most personal piece of writing that I have created so far: my own story and what it means to me to be a woman in a man's world.

I once read that passion for horses is usually inherited by every second generation and it is not something you can acquire or learn; you need to be born with it. My grandfather was a great horseman, which could explain why I was born with the love and passion for horses. I cannot remember the time in my life when these amazing animals were not occupying my thoughts and dreams. My first memory associated with Arabians was an old photograph by Zofia Raczowska, hanging on the

wall in my grandfather's room. I was five years old when I first noticed the beauty and noble presence of the stallion captured in the photo. He was distinctly different from any other horses I had seen. At that time, Poland was still under the Communist regime and, with only few private breeders in the country, Arabians were very thin on the ground. No wonder that the image of the gorgeous grey horse had been imprinted on my memory long before I had the opportunity to see a real Arabian. Years later, when I was cleaning my grandfather's room shortly after his death, I removed the pale and weathered photo from the frame to find out that it represented the famous Polish stallion Bandos (Negatiw x Bandola), born in 1964 at the Janow Podlaski State Stud. Since then, I had dreamt about visiting the world-renowned Polish studs.

Soon after, I became an Arabian horse aficionado, collecting books and magazines about the breed. Yet it never crossed my mind that one day I would become a journalist myself. In 2005, I started attending the championships and breeding parades in Poland and abroad. I will never forget a very special presentation featuring some of the most recognised Polish beauties that belonged to the meritorious family of Milordka, better known as the world-famous Michalow 'E-line'. The presentation was accompanied by a poignant commentary by the late Izabella Pawelec-Zawadzka, who was often referred to as the First Lady of Polish Arabian horse breeding. She possessed that special talent of telling the history of the Polish Arabians in such a way that could melt even the coldest of hearts. I was glad it was dark and no one could see the tears running down my face. I was deeply touched by the story of great horsemen who were ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of saving the purebred Polish horse. Also, from that day on, the magnificent Michalow-bred Arabians have become very close to my heart.

On the whole, everything was going great. In 2010, I became a member of the Polish Arabian Horse Breeders Association and I wrote my first coverage of the championships for one of the Polish equine magazines. Unfortunately, that was my first and last article that was published at that time, not because my work was poor and rejected by the publishers, but because all my inner demons were awakened and kept telling me that it was just a young girl's dream and not the way to make a living. Sadly, I did not find the courage to fight these fears and

I eventually lost the battle. After working in a few different industries in Poland, I was still unsure about what I really want to do in my life. With a BA degree in the English language and literature, it made sense to try my luck in the United Kingdom. After moving to South-East England in July 2015, I started a successful career in a business totally unrelated to horses, which seemed like the right thing to do at the time. Again, everything was going well: I was developing fast, I got promoted a few times and I started another degree that was meant to boost my career even more. However, one day I woke up realising that none of these things could make me happy. I was lucky to have the most amazing friend who spent hours encouraging me to change my life and finally made me believe I could do it.

First steps are always difficult, especially if you had already tried and, in your own mind, you failed. Nevertheless, in December 2019 I decided to go to Paris for the World Championships to see whether the world of Arabian horses was still my thing. The show brought back all the amazing memories from the past and awoke all the unfulfilled desires, but I had no idea what to do or whom to approach. On my way back from Paris, I was thinking about the next move but soon, the situation got complicated again. The world-wide pandemics shut the world down at the beginning of 2020.

Just before the first lockdown in the UK, I was planning to attend the annual stallion parade at Jadem Arabians. Before my trip to Belgium, I wrote an email to Christine Jamar, a world-renowned breeder and the woman I have always admired, asking for a private conversation after the event. The parade was held on 8th March, the International Women's Day. It seemed like perfect timing to start a series of interviews with successful women of the Arabian horse industry. Also, I knew very well that Polish Arabians had always been close to Christine's heart so I was thrilled to hear that she would be more than happy to meet me. The initial idea was to do an interview and then to start my own blog. However, on my way back from Belgium, I decided that I would try to get the interview published in a magazine. I was enormously excited when I received an email from Simone Leo, saying that he found some space for my article in the upcoming issue of Tutto Arabi. From then on, our cooperation has developed in a direction that I

could not have dreamt of on my way from Paris in December 2019. Simone has continually shown appreciation for my work and has supported me in achieving my goals: my first article published in Tutto Arabi, my first piece of work for the 'Arabian Stallions of the World', my first cover story for Desert Heritage Magazine. Apart from journalism, I have been involved in other exciting projects and I look forward to what the future has in store. So far, my journey has been full of pleasant surprises!

In August 2020, my story came full circle and, after a few long years of not attending the Polish Nationals, I finally went back to Janow Podlaski. There, I reunited with my old friend, Sylwia Ilenda, a very talented artist and photographer. I first met Sylwia almost 16 years ago, right at the beginning of my journey. Our reunion resulted in the above photo of myself with one of the priceless pearls of the Michalow Stud - the enchanting Emandorissa (Abha Qatar x Emanda). In this photo, Sylwia perfectly captured not only the ethereal beauty of the mare, but also the happiest version of myself, which is when I am surrounded by horses. At the same show, I was lucky to meet another amazing woman of the industry who, for 47 years, was responsible for the breeding programme of the Michalow Stud and bred some of the world's finest representatives of the Arabian breed, including the exotic Emandorissa. I am more than sure that Urszula Bialobok needs no further introduction. Our meeting will hopefully result in a fruitful collaboration and another of my greatest dreams will become reality. But shush! I will say no more as I do not want to jinx it.

No doubt that the Arabian horse industry is male dominated, in fact, the whole world is! Are women still treated differently to men? Personally, I have never experienced a situation where a man would show lack of respect or any signs of contempt towards me. Actually, it has been quite the opposite; my feminine energy seems to help in effective communication and building long-lasting relationships and I hope it will continue to do so in the future. Regrettably, I have heard so many stories of women who were less fortunate than myself. Therefore, it is crucial that the issues related to sexism and gender discrimination are not swept under the rug but treated seriously and addressed accordingly.

Is it more difficult for a woman to become successful in this world? I think it very much depends on the individual characteristics of a person. In my opinion, if you are ready to work through your fears of not being good enough and to follow your heart in pursuit of your own dreams, your gender does not really matter and you can become successful in any industry. Your passion, determination, hard work and engagement will bring a desired outcome sooner or later. At the end of the day, the Arabian horse industry is full of accomplished women: world-renowned breeders, experts, judges, stud managers, photographers and journalists.

What is my advice to young women that would like to become successful? Be yourself, be strong minded and clearly communicate your boundaries but, at the same time, be kind and treat people in a way that you would like to be treated yourself. Believe that you can achieve everything you want and have clearly established goals, but also stay open to opportunities that may come your way. Learn to perceive all your failures as chances to grow and learn from, and celebrate all your accomplishments, no matter how small they might seem. Most importantly, bear in mind that you are part of something bigger than your own personal success, and think about how your individual aims could have a positive impact on the future of the breed.

When I spoke with Christine Jamar about her recipe to become successful in the world of Arabian horses, she gave me a priceless advice to never give up. Today, I am ready to add my own bit to it:

**ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR HEART. IT WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN. IN THE END, WHAT MIGHT BE THE WORST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN? YOU MAY NOT SUCCEED. TO ME, SPENDING THE REST OF MY LIFE REGRETTING THAT I HAVE NEVER TRIED WOULD BE A MUCH BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW THAN A FAILURE. DO I REGRET THAT I HAD WAITED SO LONG BEFORE FINDING THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT I LOVE FOR A LIVING? I BELIEVE THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON. WORKING IN OTHER INDUSTRIES TAUGHT ME SO MUCH AND MADE ME GROW AS A PERSON. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS I HAVE LEARNT FROM THIS EXPERIENCE IS THAT IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MAKE ONE'S DREAMS COME TRUE. I MIGHT HAVE LOST THE INITIAL BATTLE WITH MY INSECURITIES, BUT NOW I FEEL LIKE I FINALLY WON THE WAR. ALTHOUGH THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF MY JOURNEY, I AM ALREADY HAVING THE MOST AMAZING ADVENTURE OF MY LIFE AND I CANNOT WAIT TO FIND OUT WHERE IT WILL LEAD ME TO. BUT I AM ALSO TRYING TO ENJOY EVERY STEP OF THE WAY RATHER THAN SOLELY FOCUS ON MY FINAL DESTINATION. IF YOU FIND THE COURAGE TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP YOURSELF, YOU NEVER KNOW, MAYBE OUR PATHS WILL CROSS ONE DAY.**

# ANNA MARIA RAFFA



Groom

Hello, I'm Raffa Anna Maria, a girl like many others who works in the field of Arabian horses; my experience began in the world of Arabian horses in 2006, the year I bought my first Arabian saddle stallion. Previously I had already had other horses but not Arabians.

My passion, as for other people, has been in me since I was born, since I was a child in fact I remember being fascinated by these magnificent animals.

I remember of my very first experience with an Arabian horse in a riding school I attended as a child. Though I had no experience with horses of this breed and despite my inexperience with horses, especially Arabian ones, I got from that Arabian horse's glimpse and from the chance to ride him a unique feeling that has stayed with me.

Now that I've been working in the world of Arabian horses for years, this feeling comes back to me and accompanies me every day. Today it's amplified by having the opportunity to care of a horse since

its birth. I share my passion with my husband, Diego Zoppellaro, who is a trainer. We run together our training center, Zoppellaro Arabian Training Center, which is not only our work but represents our whole life.

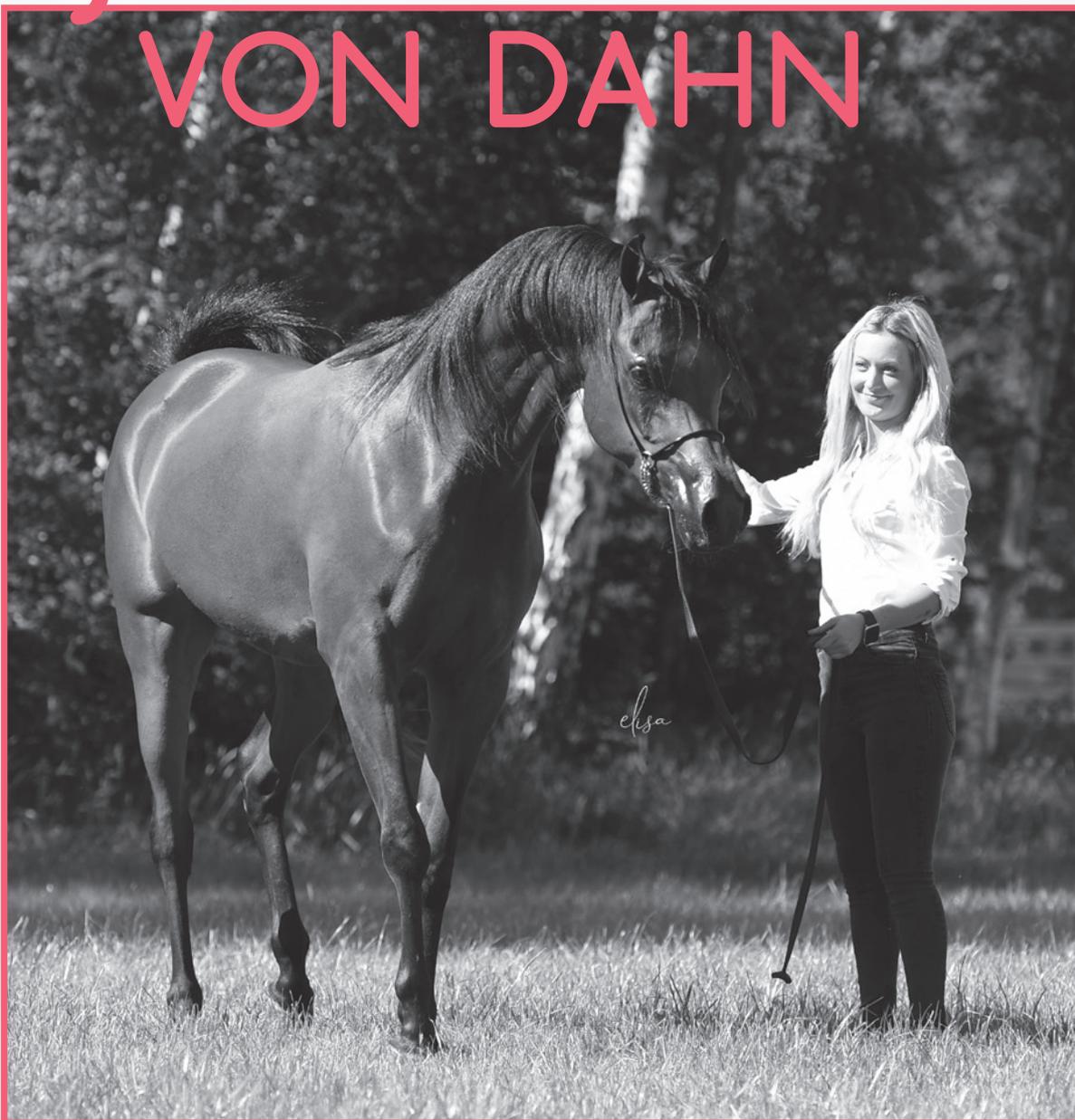
Most of the horses that I take care of daily are not my property, but I get attached to each of them and each one will always be in a part of my heart, some more than other. Each one has a reserved part in me.

In my life and in my future projects I hope there will always be and I am convinced that there will always be these magnificent and unique animals because the horse PSA is and will always be part of my life.

In the future I would like to pass on to my children and to all the people I can the passion I have for this beautiful animal that can give a lot. Passion can push people to struggle as I did to follow my dreams and be able to get to work in this world in which women have a role often considered marginal but in many ways essential.

**I HOPE IN THE FUTURE WOMEN WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE MORE RECOGNITION IN THEIR WORK BECAUSE MANY ROLES ARE PERFORMED BY WOMEN EVEN MORE ACCURATELY THAN BY MAN, SUCH AS BIRTH ASSISTANCE AND POSTPARTUM CARE BECAUSE IN MY EXPERIENCE WE WOMEN HAVE MUCH MORE PATIENCE AND WE APPROACH QUIETER AND MORE NATURALLY.**

# JENNIFER VON DAHN



Stud General Manager - Privilege SFQ

My name is Jennifer von Dahn, I am 35 years old and I was born in Sweden. I moved to Belgium around 5 years ago to work at Privilege SFQ.

I met Raphael Curti at a show in Europe a few years prior to that. I was offered a position as a groom at Privilege and I jumped at the chance to join a group of talented and inspiring people.

I have never looked back once, Privilege is my home.

I have worked my way up and beginning of this year Raphael promoted me to General Manager. As Privilege has grown and gained success all over the world I am humbled by the big responsibility. It is hard work but immensely rewarding and I considered myself having the best job in the world. The horses are everything to me - they have built me up as a person. They have given me so much. I am lucky to be surrounded by such supportive people as well. Raphael in particular but also our clients who put their trust in us.

I come from the world of race horses, trotters to be more specific. I started at a very young age and for many years I went to school during the day and trained horses on the tracks at night.

After many years in the business I decided to try something different. But it did not take long for me to realise that it is with horses I belong.

I posted an ad on a website in Sweden and Magnus Tingshagen from MT Training Center contacted me. He offered me a position and I worked for them for around 5 years. It was a big leap from racehorses to showhorses and I learned so much from Magnus and his wife Janicke. I fell head over heels with the Arabian Horse and the exciting world dedicated to them.

To me being a woman today is not harder than being a man, there is no difference in what I can

do as a woman in comparison to a man. I am lucky to be surrounded by individuals that do not look at me and see gender. I have been judged on my capabilities. Unfortunately that is not always the case for all women. The world is changing and we are heading in the right direction. There are many successful women out there excelling as managers, handlers, trainers, breeders and so on. I believe women are more and more standing up for gender equality and the mindset is different to what it may have been before.

I have never found any difficulties or obstacles in proposing myself in the Arabian horse world. I have met few individuals who question my authority based on my gender but those individuals do not bother me. I have proven myself enough to the people that matters and I will keep doing so.

No matter in what business you enter you will always be questioned. Your intentions, capability and strength among other things. How you respond and how it affects you will determine if you succeed. Of course it requires some talent and luck as well. Especially in our business. In our line of work you have to have a certain feeling and a heart for the horses. If you don't you might be successful short term but you will never last. My priority has always been in having pride in my work and love for my horses. Everything else is less important to me.

The qualities one must have in order to pursue a dream and to undertake a project in my opinion are strength and passion. The mind is a powerful tool. Your desire to live your dream is what will push you through the hardship. Understand that you can not accomplish your dreams without some hardship, it's how you grow from it that will determine your success to reach your goal.

I would like to think my experience and history can be an inspiration for a future generation of women in this world.

My message to encourage them to take their own path, whatever it may be, is:

**LET YOUR PASSION CONSUME YOU.  
IF YOU ARE PASSIONATE – YOU ARE UNSTOPPABLE.**

# URSZULA ŁĘCZYCKA



Horse Judge, Journalist and Promoter

My name is Urszula Łeczycka, I come from Poland and I am an Arabian horse judge, journalist and promoter since 23 years now, so for more than a half of my life.

From being just a passion of a young girl an Arabian horse became a major part of my professional life even if everyone around told me you can not live from the hobby. I started as voluntary at Polish Arabian Horse Breeders Society and I may proudly say that I was a personal assistant to one of the world's biggest authorities in Arabian horse community - Mrs Izabella Zawadzka since my first steps into this field until her sudden pass away few years ago. For me she was one of the greatest women I ever used to know and a woman that influenced not only an Arabian horse breed worldwide but she also encouraged many of world greatest breeders to start their historical breeding programs. She surely defined my way of looking onto Arabian horse as to the piece of art but also she taught me a lot about the diplomacy, culture and this unique humanity that only a woman can bring into this difficult business world.

I started as Animal Science student, travelling for a few following summers to Michałów and Janów Podlaski farms to work as a groom. Now I can be proud to say that I groomed some of the worlds greatest stars of the breed during my student vacations. I did brush and cuddle Kwestura every 6:00 am, I was riding Palas daughter Premia, foaled with number 1000 in the breeding history of Michałów Stud, I was visiting Wilejka, one of the last living El Paso daughters at her pasture daily before she left to her last home at Marsha Parkinson's in the US... Later I had a chance to spend one summer working at Jadem Arabians and get to know some of its first stars. When I graduated my studies I was the author and creator of Polish most popular website about the breed in our country - Polskiearaby.com (now under a different ownership). Since 2008 I run ArabHorsePromotion.com, the agency recognised in the international community nowadays, that is an author of most of the Arabian horse websites in Poland and many around Europe and overseas. When I was still a student I started to organise and coordinate some first trips of Polish private Arabian horse breeders in post-communism history of our country to the US and I assisted them with importing great horses such as some first Padróns Psyche, Enzo, Da Vinci FM and Marwan Al Shaqab daughters to Poland. I ended up as the first person from Poland and one of the very first from Europe who began a large Arabian horse export to Iran

in post war history. The name of Lord Bey Shah Memorial show that is still in the calendar of Iranian events comes from the name of Polish National Junior Silver Champion Colt that I exported from Poland to that country. I have also been breeding Arabian horses but even if I was satisfied with all of the foals I bred (the fillies are now in Morocco, Israel and France), I decided that breeding for myself its not actually what I want to do. Since I was a child I had a dream to have a farm, with horses of course. When I was ready for it I sold my flat in the centre of Warsaw and with the help of my husband we created TK Arabian Center - Arabian horse training and pension where we keep and breed the horses of our clients from different countries. I realised another dream that is now being run by my husband and give us a place to live and a job to do. Now, since my daughter will be ready to hopefully go and play with other children, starting from 2021 I am ready to take new challenges for myself, I look for new interesting ideas and opportunities that this world may bring to me...

I am not saing all above to advertise myself but to show that it was all possible for a young 20-30 years old girl without any horse backgrounds in the family. Except of my grandfather who was born at Jarczowce - the village in current Ukraine where Count Juliusz Dzieduszycki ran one of the very first Polish Arabian studs and imported most of the Polish damlines existing until today from the Middle East to Jarczowce from where they found their place at Janów Podlaski and all around the world. But unfortunately it seems my family had no relation with Count Dzieduszycki's horses. And with no horses at all. From the moment I stepped into Mrs Izabella Zawadzka office saying that "I would like to learn everything about Arabian horse" until now I have faced so many funny, difficult, happy and sad moments but everything I achieved until today I achieved thanks to my own passion, hard work and patience. Arabian horses are expensive hobby and where it comes to big money thats where big business starts. And like in every business you meet great people - the visionaries but you also have to deal with gameplayers that you would prefer to never meet. Hopefully in all my experience so far there were more people of that first kind. Arabian horse comes from the Middle East and still, being a woman in that part of the world may bring you more difficulties to get through the mens world of breeders than in the other parts of the globe. But the history of great woman breeders shows that with respect to the culture and to the people you can still achieve a lot even if you need to pass more

obstacles than a man at the same point. Hopefully we are fortunate to live in times when brains not the muscles are the power that gives us equal chances in this world. Even if some may ask you to not pass the door of their stable as they believe that woman may bring bad luck stepping into the horse stable... Actually, when I was writing down my thoughts for the purpose of this article I realised that I may mention at least the same number if not more names of the great woman – breeders and judges that did or will remain on the cards of Arabian horse history than a men! Of course all I had a chance to learn and achieve wouldn't be possible without some fantastic people that I have a privilege to call my friends and I would probably never met them without an Arabian horse. The magic of that breed is that it usually gathers the people with sensitive hearts and artistic souls around. In my opinion without those two features you can not be a good breeder or a good judge.

Its hard to mention all those I have met during the years but if I may recall a few moments I would never forget there would be hours spent with Mrs Zawadzka or the magical dinner when I was invited by late Director Ignacy Jaworowski and his wife while they were retired and still at Michałów Stud. Having a delicious mushroom soup we spent an evening talking about the present and past of Michałów Stud horses with one of the greatest breeders in the history. An unforgettable moment for a young student I was. Or a chance to judge one of my first shows in Brasil – next to Murillo Kammer and Michael Byatt – two great horsemen, breeders, animal and nature lovers in overall. Two days spent on talks about the horses we judged, listening to their precious comments on each of them and with the great satisfaction that my evaluation was quite

similar to those men whose names are already written in the history of the breed. One of my first probationary judged shows with Dr Nasr Marei and our funny, secret talks about one particular horse legs will stay in my memories for ever...

Nowadays I can have a pleasure to say that I can travel around the globe having Arabian horse friends in most of the countries. Some countries I can call my second homeland thanks to Arabian horses and the people who breed them. One of such countries for me is Morocco. From my first visit there several years ago I made friends with amazing, open minded people and got totally stolen by the history and beauty of this country. I keep coming back to Morocco as often as I can, unfortunately my next trip has been cancelled because of global pandemic but I hope to come back there as soon as it is possible to visit my friends, have wonderful evenings at the old souks or at the lovely farms hidden between Atlas and the Ocean. That's what you can call a power of passion.

Since exactly one year ago the most important achievement and the best goal of my life is my beautiful, smart daughter Emilia. She is now my whole world and I cherish every moment spent with her teaching her how to look onto this world. Its too early yet to find out her future hobbies but whatever it would be I think that mother plays a key role in every child life. As women and often also mothers we are responsible for transmitting our passion into our children so in case they decide to follow our footsteps, we can be the pillars for the Arabian horse community in the future. If my daughter would ever decide to relate her future with Arabian horse, as a profession or just a hobby I would like to teach her that

**FIRST OF ALL YOU NEED TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, KNOW YOUR PERSONAL BORDERS THAT ONE MAY NOT CROSS AND RESPECT THE BORDERS OF OTHERS. BE PATIENT, HARD WORKING AND CONSISTENT IN FOLLOWING YOUR DREAMS EVEN IF YOU FACE SOME DIFFICULTIES – THEY NEVER LAST FOR EVER. ONE DAY YOU FALL DOWN – THE OTHER DAY YOU MEET THE PEOPLE WHO BRING YOU TO THE TOP. I YOU ARE PASSIONATE, PATIENT, STRONG AND RESPECTFUL – TO THE HORSES, TO THE PEOPLE, TO OTHER CULTURE – THEY WILL PAY TO YOU DOUBLE ONE DAY AND YOU CAN LIVE THE BEST JOURNEY OF YOUR LIFE.**

# WE, WOMEN

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