

SCHOUKENS Training Center

at their new facility in Maldegem!



by Talitha Bakker ■ photos by April Visel

Like probably most of you, I visited Schoukens Training Center (STC) many times at their old location. When they invited me to see their new farm, I was immediately enthusiastic and anxious to see this new facility!

The new farm is located in the quiet area of Maldegem in the north west corner of East-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Set in 6 ha of beautiful pastures and several paddocks, they are able to welcome up to 80 horses. All spacious stables with a lot of fresh air and daylight.

The farm contains an indoor arena and a complete equipped AI Center.

Schoukens Training Center is being managed by Cathy Tamsin and Tom & Glenn Schoukens.

For this interview I spoke with Tom Schoukens and Cathy Tamsin.

TA: For the people that did not hear about STC yet, could you give us a short introduction?

CT: We are a professional training center located in Belgium, specialized in showtraining for Arabian horses. We are hosting 80 showhorses, most of which are competing at the top level shows in Europe.

TA: How did STC started as a training center?

CT: Tom & Glenn Schoukens grew up at Pajottenland Arabians, the training center of their father nearby Brussels. Being surrounded by beautiful Arabian horses every single day became a lifestyle for the two boys. Nothing stays forever and Pajottenland Arabians came to an end when Dennis Schoukens decided to immigrate to South Africa. Tom and Glenn were very sad but life went on. The two brothers continued school, hung out with friends, and enjoyed their hobbies and sports, their lifestyle became very different but their dream remained the same "working with Arabian horses".

They worked with them during weekends & school holidays. For a long time they were the favorite young grooms of Fernando Poli on shows as well as on the farms he used to work for. After finishing school Tom and Glenn started working full time at several farms & training centers in Belgium, Germany and the USA.

Driven by their passion, the dream slowly grew into a possibility. In May 2003 Tom & Glenn felt confident & experienced enough to start their own training center. Two young boys without any money, any clients and any securities went to the bank and were able to persuade the bank manager to give them a loan for 12.500 Euro, no need to say that this was victory itself at that time. With that money they rented a small, cozy facility, built 12 stables and bought food, hay and straw, Schoukens Training Center was born.

TA: What was the biggest victory of STC until now?

CT: We have had so many memorable wins. One that is still written clearly in my mind was the world championship in Paris, back in 2009. We were there with Najdah Al Zobair. Sheikh Abdullah trusted this precious bay home-bred Marwan daughter in Tom's hands. She is of a quality very few others have. Najdah came, saw & conquered. Starting her season at the AKAHF with a Gold medal, she was almost unbeatable. After the AKAHF she took Gold in Dubai, Gold in Menton, Gold at the Elran Cup, Bronze in Aachen and last but not least she was named Unanimous 2009 World Champion Filly. That moment, that atmosphere, that genuine happiness in Paris was magic, not only for Tom but also for the complete STC team. Another memorable moment was with Pandora (Padrons Psyche x Bint Bey Shah) – she was bought by us in America for our client of Joy Arabians as a filly foal. As a yearling, we introduced her to several shows. A big win for her was at the All Nations Cup in Aachen, where she became not only class winner, but also junior champion







filly! A moment we will always remember!

TA: *You now moved to the new location in Maldegem, why did you choose to change location?*

TS: *The old location where we had the training center was getting to small for us. It was time to expand. Back then we rented the facility, now we own the place itself. Another reason to move for us was to be able to live next to the horses.*

TA: *What are the benefits of this new location?*

TS: *We think that with this new location, we can now offer the total package to the clients. We have a super training facility, located in the central part of Belgium, equipped with a full service semen collection- and insemination center.*

We live on the farm so we can keep a close eye on the horses day and night.

TA: *What would you like to see differently within showing the Arabian horses?*

TS: *A thing that I would like to see differently is that a new rule/system will be added within ECAHO, to prevent horses to over qualify. A rule to prevent horses that already won many times at the shows to be shown again and again. And to put a limitation of how many times a horse is allowed to be shown.*

Another item that would be on my list, would be the rules of choosing the champion. For me, all the championships at every show, can be like in Paris. That the champion can be chosen, not only from the first placed horses, but also from horses coming out of the 2nd or 3rd row.

A third thing high on my list is to introduce the gelding classes at high level shows, like Aachen and Paris. Maybe with some serious prize money to attract more owners to participate. In this way you are creating a new market. More stallions that will not reach the top as a stallion, will be gelded, giving them a more quiet and social life and are getting a chance of making their owners proud by becoming Worldchampion gelding or Champion gelding at the All Nations Cup in Aachen. In the showworld today, the geldings are in small numbers, entered at a local C-show. Introducing the gelding classes at the more prestigious shows, will stimulate more stallion owners to geld their horse and try to aim for the championship title for the most beautiful gelding!

TA: *How do you see STC 10 years from now?*

TS: *We had an amazing year at STC and boarding some of the most beautiful Arabian horses in the world! I hope ten years from now, STC will still be at the same top level as we are now! □*



SCHOUKENS TRAINING CENTER

POLLEPELSTRAAT 7B

9990 MALDEGEM - BELGIUM

PHONE GLENN: +32 (0) 494 - 14 13 34

PHONE TOM: +32 (0) 495 - 61 12 79

PHONE CATHY TAMSIN: +32 476 800 396

FAX: +32 (0) 50 39 50 08

SCHOUKENSTRainingcenter@HOTMAIL.COM

WWW.SCHOUKENSTRainingcenter.COM