



Polish State Studs— The Emperor's New Horse?

One man's thoughts about the Polish State Stud Debate and the Future of the Polish Arabian Horse

by Chera Sabankaya





Over 300 Ottoman Arabians mares gallop beneath the majestic Mount Shasta in Northern California, one of the largest Polish-bred herds in the world today outside of Poland. (photo by Chera Sabankaya)



The Polish State Studs- The Emperor's New Horse?

Not much different than the small child in the famous fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes" by Hans Christian Andersen (Denmark 1837), anyone who knows Mustafa Sabankaya can testify to the fact he is no stranger to speaking his mind, especially when it comes to matters about which he cares very deeply and sees a need to increase awareness or affect change. While his comments about the Polish State Stud debate may come off at first as being an edgy judgement of the industry, in general, they are actually his attempt to enlighten and stimulate thought, to instill hope within the Arabian horse breeders and enthusiasts around the world who are concerned about the future of the Polish State Studs, the horses, and the Polish tradition of scientific breeding practices.

"Like us, everyone involved seems so confused and upset right now, and I'm not even sure we all know what we're fighting for. A lot of people are talking, but none of us knows the *real* situation."

"Maybe it's different for me. As someone who is sometimes out of the loop, maybe I have a different view on things, but I am still deeply affected, nonetheless. I'm a Turkish immigrant. Not only was my grandfather a well-known breeder, blacksmith, ferrier, and racehorse trainer of Arabian horses he brought personally from the Syrian Desert, but, as a Turk, I'm also a descendant of the Ottoman Empire, responsible for delivering the first great desert horses to both Poland and Egypt during its

military campaigns, becoming foundations of their state studs (see top opposing page). As a result, I've been researching the histories of many Arabian strains, especially those originating from the Ruala Tribe, including Kubailan Haifi, whose blood I've been preserving in my own program, here in the states, for the past 40 years. Along with all of this, I've been following the history of the Kubailan strain as it flows in



Ottoman and Polish Warriors





• Calif of Cairo, from the famed stud of Abbas Pasha of Egypt, imported to the United States prior to 1860.



and out of cultures, including, of course, its propagation in Poland and abroad. At this point, I just can't help but feel some people are overlooking what's truly at stake if the Polish state studs close... I don't know if they are concerned about losing the Polish breeding traditions or their personal interests in the matter. For me, and other preservationist breeders, the most important thing is that the Polish breeding program must continue, and it's everyone's hope that the Polish government never loses its national treasure of such a great genetic power. At Ottoman Arabians, we care so deeply of the Polish breeding program and we have always felt privileged to carry on their hard work and devotion here in the USA."

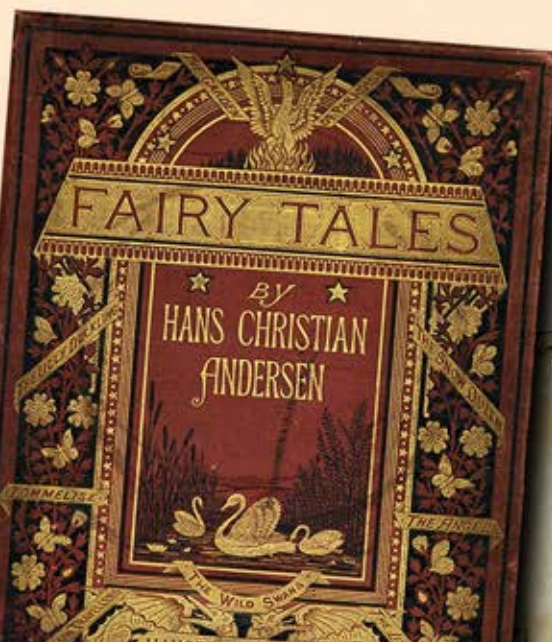
~Mustafa Sabankaya (2017)

Above left: Were it not for Mohamed Ali the Great (Ottoman soldier sent by Selim III to Ottoman ruled Egypt in 1801), there would be no influential Egyptian Arabian horse program at all. This Ottoman officer was sent to Egypt by the Ottoman Sultan to deal with the escalating problems with the Mamluke Dynasty (above right). He started the Arabian horse breeding program in Egypt and his family dedicated their lives and fortunes to continue collecting and breeding the best Arabian horses of the desert, especially his grandson, Abbas Pasha (above center).

For those not familiar with the story of the Emperor's New Clothes, two con artists arrive to the emperor's kingdom, managing to convince him they can construct the finest of clothes in all the land, clothing adorned with gold, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and silk that can only be seen by anyone who was not stupid. Impressed, the emperor willingly gives them large amounts of the kingdom's precious riches to incorporate into the emperor's new clothes. Fearful of appearing stupid when the emperor pranced around naked and they could not see his new clothing, the emperor's staff and local towns folk kept their mouths shut. For various reasons, no one said a word until finally a small child comes forth, yelling out to everyone that the emperor was naked! The crowd reasoned that if an innocent child could see it, then they must all be able to see it, and finally they all came forward, admitting to the emperor what they saw, explaining that he has been tricked out of the kingdom's riches.

This story was originally written as a tale for children, to impress upon them the importance of their courage and honesty to speak up, to appreciate the innocent lens

Below: "The Emperor's New Clothes" children's story by Hans Christian Andersen, Illustrated by Vilhelm Pedersen (Denmark 1837)





Kubailan Haifi imported to Poland 1930

through which they view the world around them, but adults have used it extensively as a metaphor to describe a situation in which people either believe or pretend to believe in the worth or importance of something that is worthless or they fear to point out an obvious truth that is counter to prevailing opinion.

In this story, a whole town fears speaking out on an obvious injustice for fear they would stand out, believing no one else could see (or admit they could see) what they saw.

Scholars have also noted the phrase "emperor's new clothes" has come to serve as a recognizable metaphor for anything that smacks of pretentiousness, social hypocrisy, collective denial, or hollow ostentatiousness. But Mustafa is not using the metaphor in a negative way. Although some might argue with this point of view, he is also not using it to imply our industry is full of pretention or hypocrisy. Instead, he is using it to describe what he sees as the collective failure within our industry, as a whole, to grasp the true value of the strains that came from the desert to Poland, their unique influential traits, and our responsibility as breeders to preserve them for future breeders.

"Who are we to destroy the purity of these strains, denying them to the next generation of breeders? If we don't act now to save the Polish studs, thousands of years of hard work, sacrifice, and dedication stops here (with us)."

Mares and foals at Michalow Stables, photo by Stuart Vesty



Polish Breeding Masters saved the last of the desert-bred horses

Today, many of us think of horses like Kuhailan Haifi and his son, Ofir, as Polish Arabians as opposed to desert-bred Ruala Arabians because it was Poland who brought the horses out of antiquity and into the modern world. They captured and preserved this treasure that likely otherwise would have been lost, as with other small tribes in the desert today. This exposure to the outside world occurred after the horses arrived to Poland, and that is how most of us came to know and refer to them, including Mustafa.

To the right is the beautiful black/bay filly SS Anna Maria with one of Mustafa's four brothers, Nezih Sabankaya. Mustafa bred both her sire, Spark (Gdansk x Arista Blanca by Ariston out of Morwa by Wielki Szlem), and her dam, Almalita (Ariston x Almaa by Krezus out of Aranda). Mustafa has always referred to her as "pure Polish," a term adopted by the Korona Polish Arabian Breeders Society in 1993, in his attempt to inspire other breeders not to limit their use of the Kuhailan strain to just athleticism, but to keep reaching back, trying to pull out more qualities, such as type, from the Kuhailan strain, which he always believed was in there if people gave it a chance. He emphasized the fact he was able to get this filly's color, refinement, and trademark hooky ears by pulling out what he calls the *Witraz-type* without needing to risk dilution by out-crossing to other strains to achieve it. SS Anna Maria represents both a concentrated genotype and improved phenotype of Kuhailan Haifi that has become the stamp of Ottoman Arabians recognized world wide.

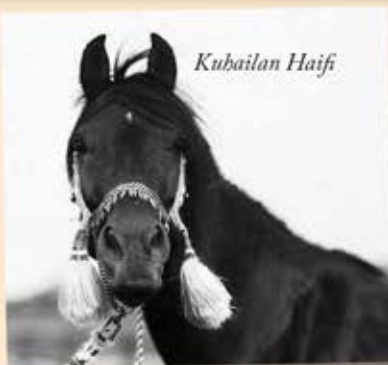


SS Anna Maria (Spark x Almalita by Ariston out of Almaa by Krezus) and Nezih Sabankaya 1991



Above & below left: Spark (Gdansk x Arista Blanca by Ariston out of Morwa by Wielki Szlem); Below right: Almalita (Ariston x Almaa by Krezus out of Aranda)

Above: 2016 colt (Calypso OS x SS Alotof Spark by SS Velocity) continues to exhibit the refined Kuhailan phenotype of bay color, black points, and hooky ears several generations later. This is the stamp of Ottoman Arabians.

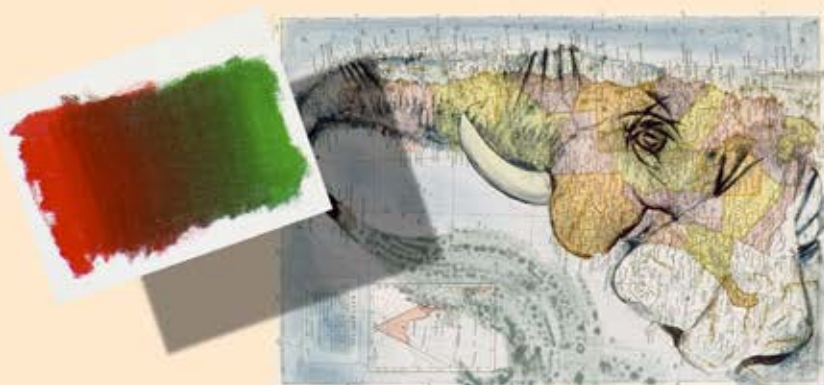


Why worry about the future of the strains?

There were actually several strains of desert horses coming into Poland, with Kuhailan Haifi's being just one of those. Each strain had its own inbred qualities that are both recognizable in successive generations. Mustafa feels quite strongly that each breeder must identify the type of horse that resonates with him or her, and then remain steadfast in preserving and improving it. And the more strains we create within the breed, the better. As long as breeders stay within the established type of the breed, they are encouraged to create their own strains, putting their own stamp on their horses as a way of concentrating various combinations of traits to the extent they can be used by other breeders the way an artist uses concentrated pigments in paints. The more strains there are, the more colors of paint there will be from which artists can choose to create future masterpieces.

The art of breeding truly is an art. It requires having a vision, a lot of luck, knowing horse conformation and biomechanics enough to observe the presence of traits, the courage to take risks, such as in-breeding to set type, and, above all, patience, because preferred traits rarely come out in a single horse in a single generation. However, Mustafa has always said that "the harder you work, the luckier you get," so once a strain is established, it then becomes possible to predict the traits of offspring in a single generation, but this means someone must first take the time to develop the strains.

Mustafa is concerned that, unlike the deeply committed breeding masters of Poland, today's industry is encouraging new, uneducated breeders to mix the blood with no regard for strain or phenotype appropriateness, which would be comparable to taking beautiful crimson red and emerald green paints that took centuries to create and mixing them together, transforming them into a flat, nondescript brown that no one can hope to do anything good with. Arbitrarily mixing strains and phenotypes of horses together based on uninheritable factors, such as how large a horse's marketing campaign is or how many ribbons it has won, will leave future breeding artists with little more than genetic brown paint to work with.



Horse shows, strains, and the elephant in the show ring

In addition to the Emperor's New Clothes story, another metaphor, the "elephant in the room" (that everyone sees but no one speaks of)" also applies here. For years, serious breeders have expressed serious concerns regarding the negative impact of today's industry on the future of the breed. Equally a bad influence on both new breeders and the older, more experienced breeders, alike, our industry is causing them to lose sight of their visions.

Our industry has always had horse shows, and, like many contemporary breeders, the old-time breeders frequently attended them, but not for the same reasons. Rather than going to promote their programs and seek the judge's approval to win ribbons and sell more breedings, these old-time breeders attended horse shows in much the same way we might go to an auto parts store today—they went with a shopping list, so to speak, of all the specific parts, or traits, they needed for their respective programs. This means they had visions of the ultimate horse they were each trying to create. They knew exactly what they had and what they needed in their vision of the ultimate Arabian horse.



Turning the clock forward several centuries, the relationship between contemporary breeders and Arabian horse shows has changed. Today we no longer depend upon our horses to transport us and governments are no longer producing mounts for their soldiers. At least some studs still use flat and marathon racing and 100-day tests to evaluate their stock, but private breeders tend to rely mainly on the ribbons and financial rewards as compasses for their breeding programs.



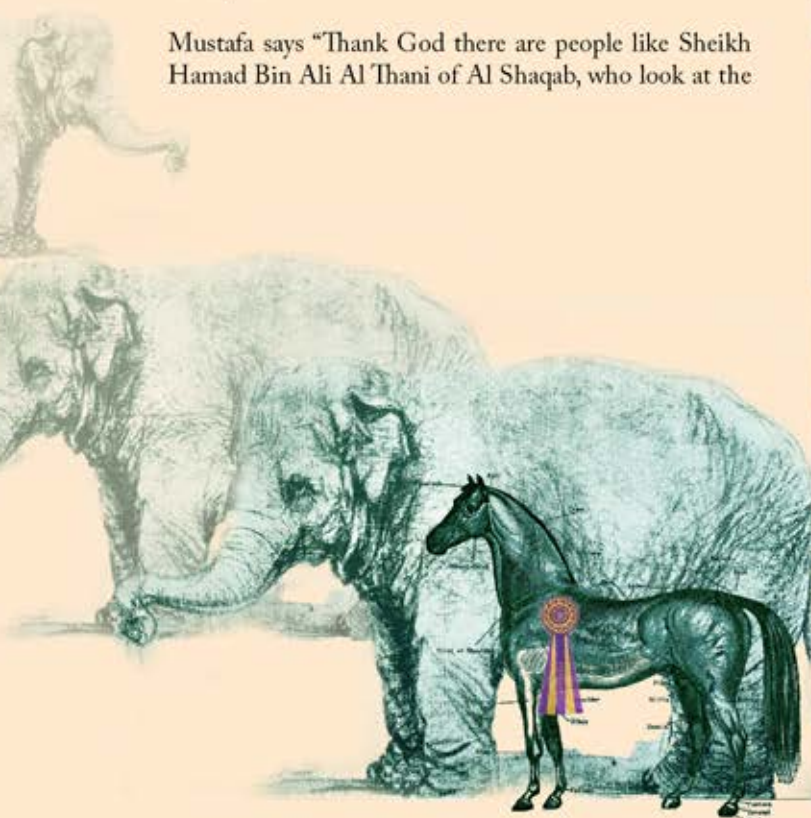
Interestingly, regardless which horses won the ribbons, these old-time breeders had their eyes on the individuals exhibiting the traits on their shopping lists, the characteristics they needed to enhance their breeding programs. This meant that even if a horse got the gate, it was still possible such a horse might possess the exact traits a breeder needed, whereas the champion of the class, albeit a beautiful horse, may have been phenotypically and or genetically completely inappropriate for the breeder's program back home. In this way, the horse shows served as a tool for breeders to compare all of the horses and their individual traits side by side.

Mustafa says "Thank God there are people like Sheikh Hamad Bin Ali Al Thani of Al Shaqab, who look at the

horses shows the way I do... I rarely get to enjoy the luxury of our VIP seats because I am always out in the warm up ring studying horse flesh, where I can see the horses up close and, more importantly, standing at ease, so I can really get a good sense of the real horse. Of the horses I find interesting, I take lots of pictures from different angles so I can then go home to study the images and their pedigrees to see if they might be appropriate to use in our breeding program."

One person Mustafa is becoming more and more fond of is the International Class A judge and founding breeder and manager of Al Shaqab, Sheikh Hamad Bin Ali Al Thani (see photo below) due to his philosophy of breeding toward a vision over the long-term and his desire to create his own stamp within the breed. He said he talks with his friends, Sheikh Abdulaziz and Sheikh Nawaf, about the horses in the shows whose traits might fit into their program, which he points out were not necessarily the winners. Refreshingly, he says that when he talks with horse owners about their horses, he wants to know the horse's name and breeding—he also wants to know why the owner purchased the horse and what are the owner's intentions in terms of using it.

Sheikh Hamad Bin Ali Al Thani and Munira Al Rayyan (Ansata Sokar x Bint Mesoudah M HP) Photo by Monika Luft





Jay Constanti in Tevis Cup 1978, Photo taken from TuttoArabi.com

Jay Constanti was another highly educated judge and breeder who expressed his thoughts on this subject during a Tutto Arabi interview. He points out that American breeders in the mid-1980's, who bred with the intention of marketing their foals, "seemed to flock to breed their mares to the current star stallion," and that breeding so many mares to such a limited number of stallions (that might not even be appropriate for them) created a large number of foals with reduced genetic diversity available to future breeders.

In Constanti's perspective, although European breeders during this same time period were strategically breeding their mares to a wider range of stallions with plans of keeping their foals, today he is concerned that contemporary European breeders are letting go of their previously held sound breeding principles in order to adopt the way of their American counterparts. Constanti's argument supports the idea that reducing the gene pool among a group of horses that may not even be genetically or phenotypically appropriate for one another is essentially the same as trying to set a type with no vision in mind.

A breeder is supposed to reduce genetic diversity only when line breeding to an individual horse or family of horses possessing particularly extraordinary traits. In doing so, the breeder weighs the risks of amplifying the unwanted traits along with the wanted ones, which is why it must be done only with great care and by someone who is very knowledgeable. But instead of individual breeders painstakingly preserving the Arabian horse's ancient attributes through the creation of their own separate visions, stamps, containing exemplary traits, the American approach of breeding to star stallions, as Constanti describes, first dilutes the horses' blood, muting their traits and creating average looking individuals, and then sets their type that way by concentrating the gene pool.



It's like limiting the number of colors an artist can paint with and then mixing them all together—what do you get? A dreadful brown color. Good luck pulling anything handsome out of that.

Strains and visions

Far from the 300 horses and encyclopedia-like pedigree knowledge Mustafa possesses today, the story of his vision began back in the late 1970's, before purchasing even a single horse. Aside from knowing that he wanted to bring Arabian horses into his life, he had no clue as to the type of Arabian he wanted. Friends and family watched a change come over him as he became wholeheartedly consumed with everything Arabian horse. Researching the strains of the desert horse became a fulltime occupation for him—a true labor of love, one might say. Because there was no internet back then, he visited libraries and bookstores, he even called the publishers of Arabian horse magazines to purchase enough back-ordered editions to fill the entire bed of his small pickup truck. And, then, with all of his literary treasures, he locked himself in his study for two whole years.

When he was not in his study, he was out visiting farms on a soul-searching and brain-picking mission to discover which discipline to get into. Of course, each farm had its own experts more than happy to give him their best sales pitch on why he should buy their horses and compete in their disciplines. Although he enjoyed their visits immensely and made many life-long friends, it seemed the more he talked to people, the more confused he became. He eventually became convinced he would have to continue studying until he felt confident enough to decide for himself what he really wanted.





"I was beginning to lean more and more toward what the industry was referring to as *Polish Arabians* due to their success on the race track and in the show ring, as well as public auctions," he said. Fortunately, in the end he did not have to settle on a single discipline, because these horses were (and continue to be) very successful in many disciplines, including halter, driving, dressage, jumping, and working cattle, while becoming especially well known for their success in racing and endurance. Fortunately for Mustafa, who was a new breeder just entering the industry, the horses popular in the show ring back in those days still represented actual strains, with the additional benefit of the Polish-bred horses having the sound breeding principles of the Polish Studs' great breeding masters behind them Mustafa could model.

How Poland got its Strains

It seems contradictory that something so beautiful could be born of something so ugly, but the truth is the Polish-bred Arabian horse we all know and love today would simply not exist were it not for war, especially the turbulent relationship shared between Poland and the Ottoman Turks over the past 600 years.

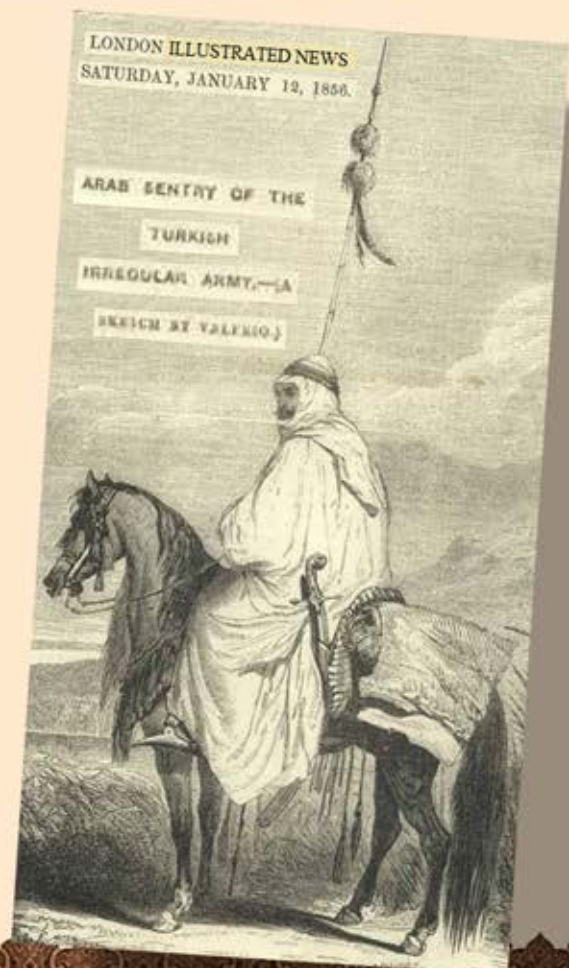
With their genetic origins rooted deep within in the hot, dry, unforgiving sands of the Middle Eastern deserts, Mustafa learned that these hardy, resilient horses penetrated the geographically vulnerable Polish borders between the legs of fierce Mongol, Tartar, and Turkish Ottoman soldiers that rode upon their backs. It was during these invasions that the Polish cavalrymen could not help but notice the way these horses flew across vast battlefields and charged courageously into battle with a seemingly never-ending supply of stamina and bravery matched only by the soldiers whose legs wrapped tightly around their ribs.

Up until then, European horses were heavier and less agile, as they had been developed through the Dark Ages to carry a knight and his heavy armor. Any lighter horses they had at the time came from pony breeds. They had nothing to compare with the small, quick horses upon which the Ottoman invaders were mounted. The Polish government captured these impressive animals and used

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Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu visited Poland last year to celebrate the 600th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between Poland and Turkey with Poland's Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski.

Fortunately, after centuries of bitter conflict between the two countries, a treaty was signed in 1699 declaring a truce between Turkey and Poland. This monumental event was beneficial for the fact that it saved countless lives and restored a new sense of peace to Poland, but it also had the unwanted side effect of cutting off Poland's convenient deliveries of fresh desert horse blood. To make matters worse for the Polish studs, their population of war horses was significantly reduced as they died or were stolen in battle. For this reason, groups of wealthy breeders from various provinces throughout Poland began making treks to the desert to acquire their own source of desert blood. The latest and most influential of these expeditions was that of Bogdan Zientarski, who left for the Ruala tribe in 1930 and brought back the famous Kuhailan Haifi.

Especially then, but even still today, Zientarski is considered by many to be one of the world's leading experts on Arabian horses, and this is why his passage on meeting Kuhailan Haifi continues to inspire breeders today. Imagine a man who interacts with horses everyday, all day long, being so deeply touched by a horse he has only just met that he feels his legs giving way beneath him.

But that was not all Zientarski had to say about Kuhailan Haifi—perhaps even more noteworthy than his initial reaction upon meeting the horse, which could be argued to be purely subjective, was his depiction of the horse's undeniable ability to outrun (and, sadly, outlive) many of the horses that accompanied him on the long trek back to the seaport. Zientarski said that while the other horses dropped from thirst and exhaustion, Kuhailan Haifi reached the seaport as if only warming up, as though ready to do it all over again. For Zientarski, Kuhailan Haifi proved himself to have the qualities he was looking for—the qualities of the true warhorse.

Below is the famous passage Zientarski recorded on this very trip, describing how he felt, both physically and mentally, as he was first introduced to the one and only Kuhailan Haifi. This passage is extremely significant, as it is consistently noted in the world's historical Arabian horse literature.



KUHAILAN-HAIFI
Imported to Poland 1930 and gave the stud at Janow-Podlaski the desired influence of pure Arab blood.

Finally, I hear a neigh, they guide the stallions... they lead the bay Kuhailan Haifi. My legs buckled under me, it is just the horse I am looking for. Not large, big on splendid legs without any trace of cow hocks. A long neck, a noble head, although not very small with distended, thin and moveable nostrils; a splendid high carried tail. I feel the first time in my life, that during the purchase of a horse I am fainting...



Ofir



Witez II



Wielki Szlem



Witraz



"When I came across the famous passage reported by Bogdan Zientarski while on his 1930 expedition to the Ruala Tribe... For me, it was as though this passage came to me directly from God. I knew then and there I wanted to devote the rest of my life to preserving and perpetuating the fine qualities of Kuhailan Haifi by carefully line breeding to him."

~Mustafa

What sealed the deal for Mustafa regarding his decision to focus his breeding program on Kuhailan Haifi was the horse's irrefutable positive influence on the modern Arabian show horse through his grandsons by Ofir, which were Witraz (the sire of Bask and Celebes), Witez II, and Wielki Szlem. Continuing this focus, even his newest love, Calypso OS,

who caused Mustafa's legs to go weak just as Zientarski's did upon first seeing him, not only continues but strengthens the blood of Kuhailan Haifi decades later, due to being 34 times Kuhailan Haifi through his son, Ofir. Of those, 11 of these times goes through the incomparable Ofir daughter, Mammona. Mammona was bred by the Poles, and, like Kuhailan Haifi, became famous as a horse with tremendous endurance for surviving the grueling 1,000-mile trek as a mere suckling at the side of her mother when confiscated by the Russians during World War II.

Mustafa's first horse was a Celebes daughter named Daalda Cama out of Camorra. Within a short time, Mustafa purchased four more Celebes daughters along with many more mares of the Arfa tail female line (Arfa, in photo below, was Bask's full sister).

Bask



Mammona (Ofir x Krucica)



Arfa (Witraz x Balalajka)-full sister to Bask



Collecting the stock

With the Polish breeding masters as his guide and inspiration, Mustafa took the plunge and launched his breeding program, and as you will see below, he really did practice what he preaches in terms of a breeder doing his homework, developing a working understanding of the strains, their positive and negative traits as well as the level of their heritable predictability—today he is speaking from hard-earned experience. He also took risks. But, above all, he had patience, and it paid off. For those familiar with the bloodlines of the Polish Studs, the following section will be an easy read, but for those not familiar, do not skim quickly over the following paragraphs. Instead, try to follow Mustafa's observations and thought processes as he made his breeding decisions, because unlike so many others, he did not breed for the show ring or marketplace.

Selecting individuals to meet a breeding program's long-term goals can be a long, painstaking process. As you will see, despite having the vision in mind, it still took Mustafa decades to get to the point of feeling confident he had a broodmare band of the right phenotype and concentrated genotype capable of not only preserving and perpetuating the blood of Kuhailan Haifi, but also capable

Right: Triple-A-Celeta (bay) with foal running free with Daalda Cama (grey); Below: The five Celebes daughters of Ottoman Arabians (left to right) Moneta, Daalda Cama, Rucella, Triple-A-Celeta, and Sierra all enjoying a lazy oceanside afternoon in Santa Cruz, California.

of creating his own stamp, an improved, concentrated version of the horse, with which he could move forward into the future.

The Mares

With great appreciation for the Poles' breeding and culling practices, Mustafa made the decision to select all his mares from proven Polish racing lines as his foundation stock. As stated earlier, his first horse was a Celebes daughter named Daalda Cama. He purchased four more Celebes daughters shortly after along with many more mares of the Arfa tail female line (see photo above). Arfa was Bask's full sister.



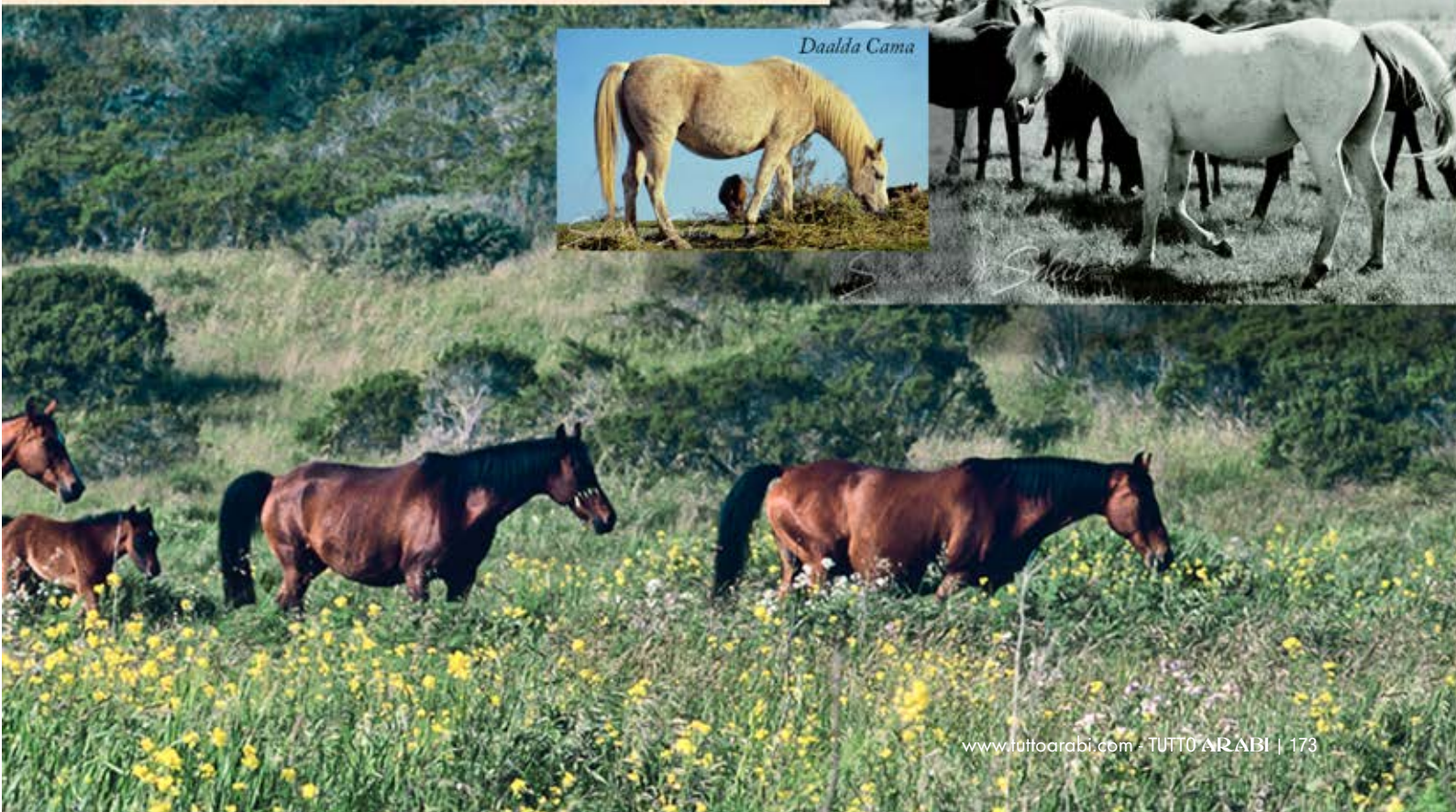
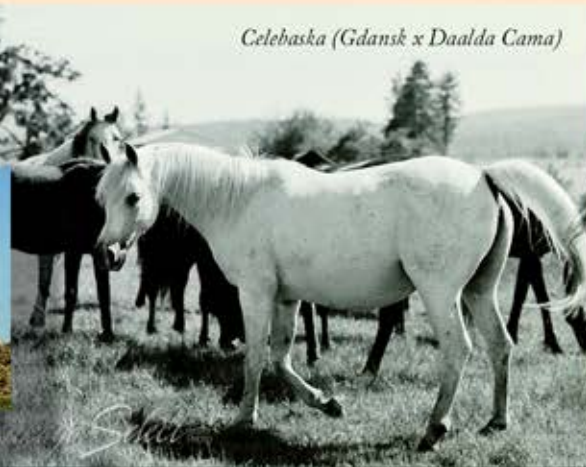
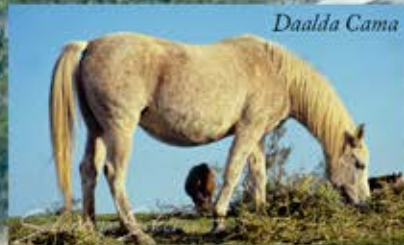


Above and right: Celebes (Witraz x Canaria) was a prominent sire of successful race and park horses around the world. His grandson, MHR Nobility, out of a Bask daughter and tracing further back to Ofir on his tail female line, was one of America's legendary National Champion park horses, who went on to sire countless other successful park horses.

"The most significant for breeding amongst the sons of Witraz 1938, he was a small but stocky horse of considerable beauty. In 1952 he was declared too diminutive to find a place among a stallion depot and had to retire to a circus career which ended in 1965. That year he came to Michalow commenced his stud career, which proved very successful despite the thirteen years of hard work this little athlete had undergone in the circus. Considerable beauty and a wonderful head with a prominent black eye were all his features. Celebes was also very correct all over, showed a lot of type and possessed perfect limbs. I consider him a remarkable horse and sire of valuable mares and stallions." ~Roman Pankiewicz

Right: Celebaska, named for the Celebes-Bask cross, was Mustafa's very first foal from his very first mare, Daalda Cama (below). Celebaska went on to produce strong, good sized foals with a lot of type.

Celebaska (Gdansk x Daalda Cama)





Top left: Fosa (Probat x Finezja by Gedymin); top right: Venetiaa (Banat x Widawa by Gwaryny)

Selective breeding toward your vision not only improves the breed, it provides a compass to follow. It requires discipline and patience, but one can see by comparing the photo of SS Anna Maria (left) with those of the foundation stock, the reward of refinement and fixed type are worth the investment.

In addition to the Celebes daughters, he also purchased Sambor daughters, such as Fitz Janny (out of Trynceza by Tripolis out of Kochana by Wielki Szlem), Sir Wms Dambra (out of Dimatra by Wielki Szlem out of Imatra by Hardy), and Palalaika (out of Halaliencandescent by Bask out of Halali Enchanted by Comet).

Next, he purchased two Orzel daughters out of fantastic race mares, one being Brusally Oraba of the Arfa tail female line through the Oaks winning Abhazja and the other being Brusally Orenka (see photo below), out of Daszenka by Tripolis out of Kazma by the famous Kazmir. Another mare he acquired, Danina, was a classically Polish-bred 1967 chestnut mare by Chazar out of Druchna by Rozmaryn--racing blood top and bottom of her pedigree. Although she had a rather large, plain head, she was shown in the states at age 16 years old with a spectacular body and motion for her age.

Above: SS Anna Maria (Spark x Almalita by Ariston); Below: Brusally Orenka (Orzel x Daszenka by Tripolis out of Kazma by Kazmir); Below right: Chlosta, and Garufa by Faber

Mustafa also purchased two Probat daughters from the Polish auction, Elmona out of Elektroda out of the Faher daughter, Elka, and Fosa (see photo top left) out of Finezja by Gedymin, the Gwaryny son out of Fama by Nabor. Although Probat produced very beautiful get, it was the experience of Mustafa and other breeders within the states that the Probat daughters, themselves, were not necessarily potent reproducers. While their get were correct, the foals did not possess the same level of breathtaking beauty and charisma. For this reason, he chose to sell them back to Europe a few years later. They were shown in Belgium and France shortly after, each becoming national champions.

In 1984, Mustafa felt very fortunate to have obtained whom he considers to be the best Banat daughter of all, Venetiaa (see photo top right) out of Widawa by Gwaryny (bred by Patricia Lindsay of Stocking Farm, United Kingdom, a pioneer in the Polish breeding). It is worth mentioning here that Widawa also produced Warmia by Comet, who, in turn foaled Wizjia by El Paso who became one of the most popular US National champion mares of all time. Venetiaa turned out to be a wonderful producer over the years.





Gdansk (Bask x Gdynia)



Ariston (Bask x Amfibia)

Mustafa purchased two Faher daughters (see photo bottom right on opposing page) late in their lives. He was terribly disappointed that he was unable to get them in foal (due to their old ages), but says he feels very honored to have had them on the farm.

Lastly, Carycyn was one of the best-bred Comet sons. Of special interest for Mustafa, he was Kuhailan-bred top and bottom multiple times with Kuhailan Afas on top and Kuhailan Haifi on the bottom. Despite believing the pedigree does not make the horse (he believes the horse makes the pedigree), Mustafa said he was willing to purchase this mare by pedigree, alone. Cyreta (see photo below) was out of a Celebes daughter named Atena out of a Pietuszok daughter named Ala, who was then out of a Witraz daughter named Alga. Cyreta had additional Kuhailan Zaid blood on the bottom. As a mare, Cyreta was feminine and correct, and had a coat like satin, but she was rather average in type with nothing particularly special, but also nothing wrong, to note about her. Fortunately, she turned out to be a very good producer for Ottoman Arabians. With Spark, Cyreta produced two very large, big-moving, strong mares named SS Sparks Amore and SS Andria who went on to produce high quality, extremely Kuhailan foals for the program.

Left: Cyreta (Carycyn x Atena by Celebes); Center: SS Sparks Amore (Spark x Cyreta) shown age 23 in foal



The Stallions

Mustafa felt once the decision was made to line breed to Kuhailan Haifi, there was no choice but to work through his grandsons, Witraz and Wielki Szlem, because this was as close as one could get to him genetically speaking. He began searching for the most proven Bask sons possible. Due to their dam lines, Ariston and Gdansk were chosen for this purpose. Ariston's dam, Amfibia, was both national top 10 halter and park horse, and she was by Sedziwoj, who was one of the best race horses of that era, always running neck to neck with Sabellina. Sedziwoj also sired Kluszyń, out of Kochana, the Wielki Szlem daughter, who was a memorable park horse. (Mustafa points out he obtained the Sabellina blood through her son, Sambor.) Gdansk's dam, Gdynia, was said to be one of Dr. LaCroix's favorite mares. Like her son, she won many halter and performance championships in the show ring.



Spark (Gdansk x Arista Blanca by Ariston)





SS Sparkle

SS Sparkman

SS Thunderbolt

SS Karagem

SS Alotof Spark

SS Raven

SS Calypso Nabeg

SS Sparkle and SS Sparkman

Mustafa liked Ariston so much, he actually mortgaged his house to purchase 10% of his syndication shares. Anxious to cross his blood with Gdansk, Mustafa also purchased a two-year old Ariston daughter named Arista Blanca out of Morwa by Wielki Szlem from Tom Chauncey's public auction so he could breed her to Gdansk, which he did the following year. It must have been a message from God, because the resulting foal was a powerful black/bay colt named Spark. Spark would forever change Mustafa's life by putting such a distinct Kuhailan stamp on his program, as evidenced by the photos of several generations of Sabankaya-bred horses on these two pages. Over the years, Mustafa bred well over 100 Spark foals.

Ariston was chosen because of his mother more than anything else. Amfibia was a world-class mare with sufficient motion and Arabian type to earn national top ten awards in both park and halter. She was known to have one of the longest strides of any horse, including thoroughbreds, that anyone had ever seen. Like his mother, Ariston had a spectacular carriage with strong, snappy hocks that reached up well underneath his body, which consisted of a well sprung-out barrel like that of a pregnant mare, very good shoulder, prominent withers, and a neck that earned him the reputation of having one of the best necks in the business. He also had a very masculine, protruding breast bone, causing his neck to appear as though it came out of his body much higher than it actually did, like that of a rooster. Another characteristic about Ariston Mustafa remembers fondly was that his skin was thin and coat as shiny as silk—he never grew a winter coat.

Gdansk was a perfect example of the well-known Comet-Witraz cross, which made park horses. He and his full brother, Cognac, were both national champion park horses, each producing national champion park horses. Gdansk was line-bred to Amurath Sahib on both sides of his pedigree and therefore looked quite a bit like him. He had a long, upright neck with a flat, but athletic topline. He was narrow between the front legs and had the fullest and longest mane and tail.

During one of Mustafa's many visits, he asked Dr. LaCroix, importer of Bask, "Who is your favorite Bask son?" and he said, "Probably Gdansk," which was not something to take lightly, with about 500 Bask sons around at the time.

all photos these two pages by Sabankaya



Rucella (Celebes x Ruta)

Spark (Gdansk x Arista Blanca by Ariston)

Rucella (Celebes x Ruta by Czort by Wielki Szlem) teases the young Spark (Gdansk x Arista Blanca by Ariston out of Morwa by Wielki Szlem) on the expansive bluffs above the Pacific Ocean 1987. Little did Mustafa know at the time these two would create such refined Kubailan offspring generations later. The beautiful SS Calypsos Butterfly (Calypso OS x SS Royal At by SS Atilgan) (right) is 1x Rucella and 3x Spark.

Mustafa bred Arista Blanca to Gdansk a second time to produce Spark's full sister, Last Dansk (photo right), who was not only extremely potent of the old Polish type in terms of big motion and clean throat latch, but was also capable of producing refined type and hooky ears, as you can see in the 3x Gdansk grey filly she had at age 32 years old (far right), SS Gdiamond, by Spark son, SS Sparks Diamond. She's another pure Polish beauty just like SS Anna Maria). Her sire, SS Sparks Diamond (below right), looks like Comet and is by Spark out of Defina (Sir Wms Dambra by Sambor, a Wielki Szlem grandson, out of a Wielki Szlem daughter named Dimatra).



Last Dansk (Spark's full sister)



SS Sparks Diamond



*SS Calypsos Butterfly
(17x Bask, 36x Ofir)*

Flamenka

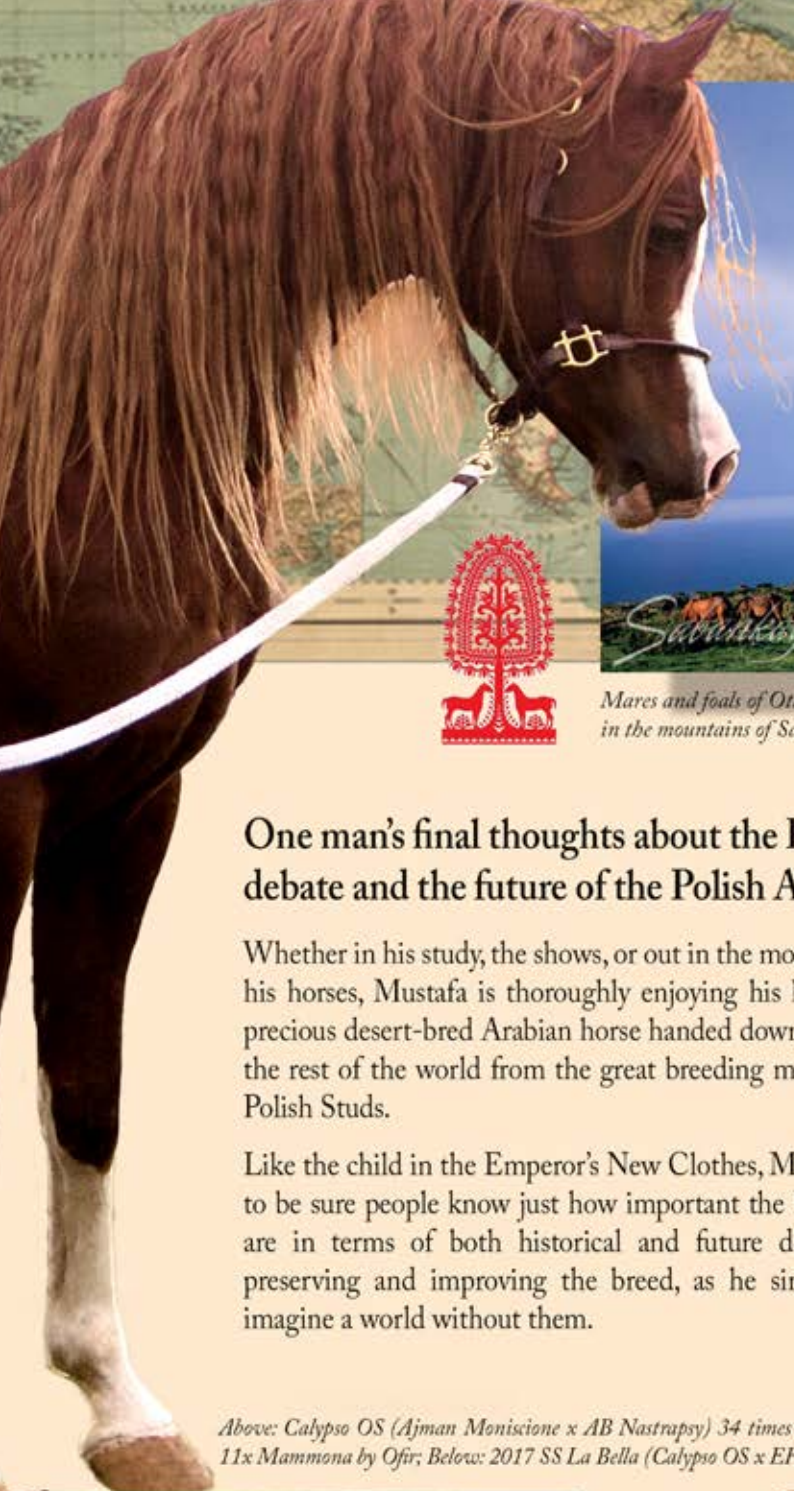


*SS Jingle Bells
(pure Polish)*

SS Jingle Bells (left) is yet another pure Polish beauty by SS Anna Maria's full brother, SS Arkadash, out of Flamenka, who gave birth to her at age 32 as a Christmas surprise. Flamenka is by Gedymin out of Florida by Elkin, a Wielki Szlem grandson, out of Fantazja going back to Forta.



*SS Gdiamond
(pure Polish)*

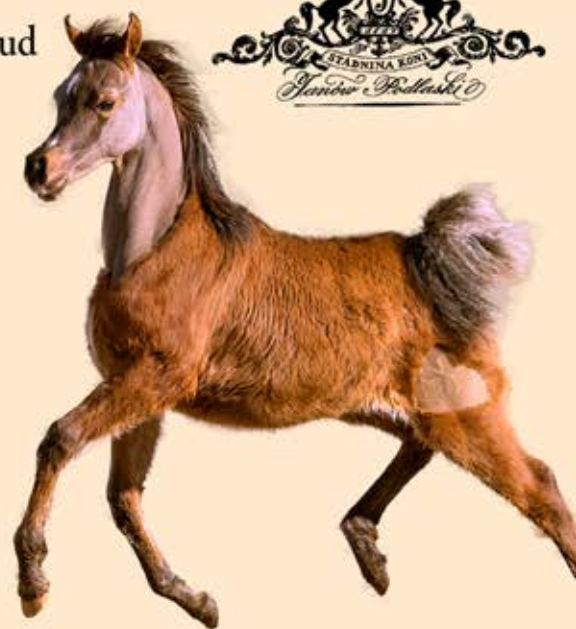


Mares and foals of Ottoman Arabians enjoy green grass and fresh spring air along the Pacific Ocean in the mountains of Santa Cruz, California (1988)

One man's final thoughts about the Polish State Stud debate and the future of the Polish Arabian horse

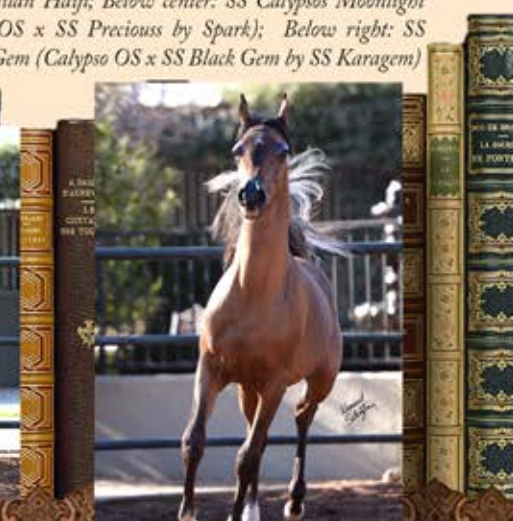
Whether in his study, the shows, or out in the mountains with his horses, Mustafa is thoroughly enjoying his life with the precious desert-bred Arabian horse handed down to him and the rest of the world from the great breeding masters of the Polish Studs.

Like the child in the Emperor's New Clothes, Mustafa wants to be sure people know just how important the Polish Studs are in terms of both historical and future dedication to preserving and improving the breed, as he simply cannot imagine a world without them.



Above: Calypso OS (Ajman Moniscione x AB Nastrapsy) 34 times Kubailan Haifi, 11x Mammona by Ofir; Below: 2017 SS La Bella (Calypso OS x EF Bella Contessa)

Above: SS Calypsos Ruyia (Calypso OS x SS Rubia by Spark) 48x Kubailan Haifi; Below center: SS Calypsos Moonlight (Calypso OS x SS Precious by Spark); Below right: SS Calypsos Gem (Calypso OS x SS Black Gem by SS Karagem)





Polish Cavalry marches onward in World War II



Michalow Mare Barn (photo by Anette Mattsson)

Today he has a tremendous amount of fondness and gratitude in his heart for the Polish State Studs, whose model he is doing his best to follow. Not only did they rescue horses like Kuhailan Haifi and his offspring out from the antiquity of the desert, they were an inspiration of legendary proportion to millions of breeders throughout the world by creating horses such as Witraz and Bask that forever changed the breed. In Mustafa's mind, the Poles' love and sacrifice for the horse will live forever.

Mustafa Sabunkaya



Ottoman arabians