



# Presenting The Personalities

## Shirley And Charlie Watts, Halsdon Arabians, Part II

by MARY KIRKMAN

The first thing you need to know about Shirley and Charlie Watts' breeding program at Halsdon Arabians is that Shirley, who is its guiding force, is breeding for a good horse. Yes, her homebreds must satisfy high standards of Arabian type—no question—but also, they must be capable of holding jobs. Watts has been a horsewoman for much of her life, used to riding her horses as well as breeding them, and she knows temperament and conformation as thoroughly as beauty and type.

*Last month, AHT profiled the owners of Halsdon Arabians. This month, we take a look at its world class horses and the breeding program that has made it famous.*

Unlike many people in Arabian horses today, Watts did not intend to become a breeder. She slipped into it naturally late in the 1980s, and more seriously as the 1990s got underway. It all began when an equine advisor asked if she had ever thought of having a stud farm. At the time, with her riding horses comfortably occupying a nearby “yard,” she replied, “No, actually, I haven’t. Don’t think I’d really like one.” But intrigued, she remarked on the suggestion to Charlie, and unexpectedly, he replied, “Why don’t you? It would be a good idea.”

“So, we started buying and we built the stables,” she says. “I still had my own little yard, my riding horses, and I bought a couple of stallions that I put there. And I went to America, had a look around, and bought a couple of very nice mares. It just sort of went on from there.”

“Went on” is an understatement; today’s Halsdon Arabians encompasses 700 acres of lush Devon countryside and is home to nearly 300 horses. “The original intent was to have 20,” Watts says dryly. “I’m not good with math.”

From the start, she has pursued her vision of a horse, adding and blending bloodlines from various other programs as her knowledge grew and her taste developed. Signally, although her preferences have run closest to the Polish program—she has purchased regularly there for more than 20 years and leased stallions to the state studs—other ancestries are prominent in the program as well. Straight Egyptian, Russian and Gainey horses all play roles at Halsdon.

While the pedigrees have evolved over the years, Watts’ methods have remained basically the same. “I just watch the horses and see what they produce,” she says simply. “I would say that most of the mares are Polish, so I do watch what the Poles do. I look to see what



needs to be corrected and which stallions can eradicate the weak points. It was a huge learning curve, to realize what I liked and then to see how I could achieve it, and then to search for the right horses to do it.”

Her travels led her not only around Britain, but through Europe, to North America, on to South America, and eventually to Australia. “I got to see how different they were,” she says, “what they wanted in America and what you want in Europe—what they asked for.” Always, she saw not only how the horses looked, but also how they moved.

Watts is straightforward in evaluating the results of the crosses she tries, and when some don’t meet expectations, she wants the foals to be able to find work as riding or driving horses outside the Arabian





show ring. So, from both a practical and a personal standpoint, it is rare that she repeats a match several times unless it confirms its promise early on.

What she is able to do that many breeders are not, is give all the foals time and space to grow up. That is helpful, she observes, because often the lines she selects do not mature quickly. The predominantly Polish foals especially take a few years to reach their potential, and there she has all the patience necessary.

#### **Establishing The Foundation: The Stallions**

The seeds for Halsdon Arabians as more than just a collection of Shirley's riding and show horses were sown in 1986, when she and Charlie attended the European Championships in Ostend,



Belgium, and were introduced to Pilarka, already a World Champion Mare (1983), and Penitent, Polish National Champion Stallion (1985). The two entries from Janów Podlaski were named champion mare and stallion that year. Immaculately grey, both Pilarka and Penitent represented the famous 'P' line of descendants from the broodmare Piewica, and they drew her attention to the Polish breeding program.

Watts dove into educating herself, beginning with not only the Polish bloodlines, but also the stud masters' practices. Over time, she and her husband began adopting some of the techniques at Halsdon. In particular, they noted how the youngsters, who ran together in pastures by age and gender during the day, gathered at night in barns which were vast open rooms, with feeding troughs lining the walls. Each yearling and 2-year-old knew his or her place on the wall, and trotted there for dinner before sleeping on the thick straw. (It was in looking at this that Shirley first noticed the offspring of a stallion who impressed her to no end. She couldn't miss the quality

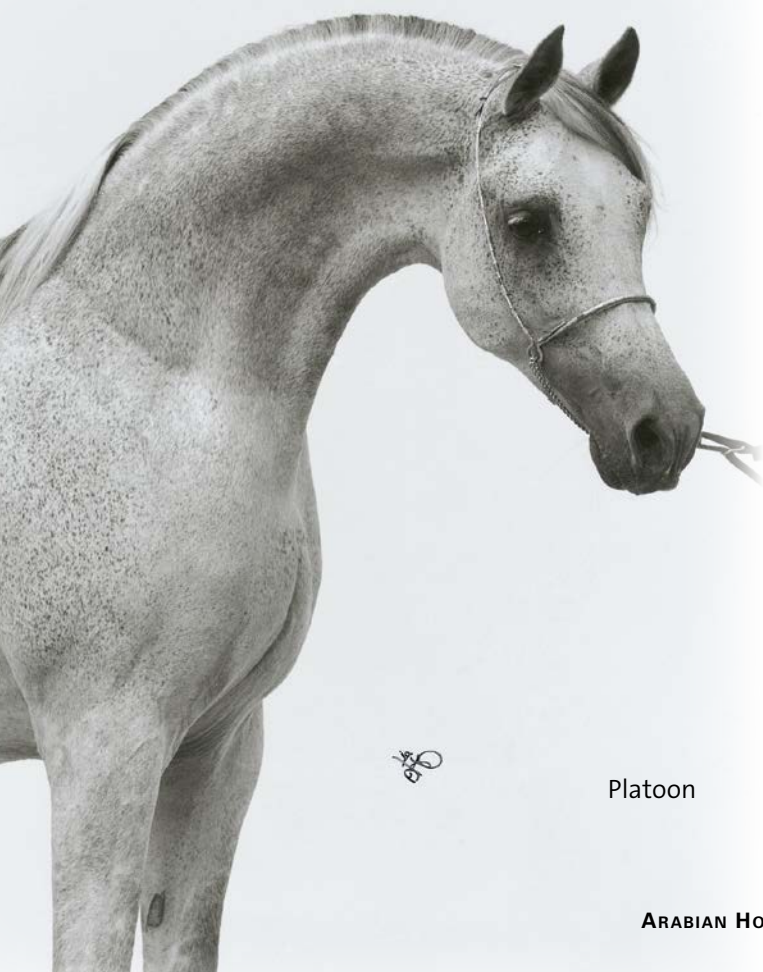
of Piechur's foals, standing one after another on the wall of one of the barns.)

And she studied the 'P' line, factoring in that although Pilarka and Penitent shared a tail female ancestry, they were different in the rest of their pedigrees; the overall concept was beauty and type, but the sources were nearly all different. Significantly, each shimmered with personality, and at the trot, they floated effortlessly over the ground with the economic grace of a truly athletic Arabian. They were the sort of horses she wanted to breed.

At the time, Penitent and Pilarka were not available, but the Wattses were undeterred. In 1989, the young stallion Platoon HT was located in the Netherlands, and he became the first member of the 'P' family to make a contribution to Halsdon.

Platoon was a mix of Polish and Russian blood, which in certain lines, with the transfer of horses surrounding World War II, was essentially the same thing. His sire, Pedent, offered a pedigree that included Palas, two crosses to Negatiw, Bandos and, through the dam line, Piewica (in short, he had enough type for an army). His dam, Padan, reflected a mix of Dutch, Russian and Polish blood that added another cross to Piewica's dam, Wlodarka, further enforcing that influence. In 1990, flying the Halsdon banner, the 3-year-old Platoon HT was named British National Champion Junior Male. And he proved his worth right away, when his son, Mehdar, was 1994 British National Champion Junior Male, and his daughter, Hidden Charm, was the 1996 U.K. International Champion Junior Female.

Next came the horse who would become Shirley's favorite—Piechur, who was 12 when he came to Halsdon. In addition to the youngsters they first had noticed, the Wattses had been impressed by the parade of Piechur's daughters on display at the 1990 Polish National Show (including Premiera, who was Champion Junior Filly that year). It was not long before they pursued the stallion to Weatherford Farms in Texas, where he was at the time.



Platoon

The Banat son Piechur was out of the Bandos daughter Pierzeja, who was a granddaughter of Piewica. He had compiled an excellent racing record during his initial four years in Poland, so his soundness and conformational quality were not in question, and in the United States he had proven his beauty and type as well, earning a U.S. National Top Ten in stallion halter. In his first four years at Halsdon, Piechur added an All Nationals Cup Championship, a European Reserve Championship, and titles in the U.K. and Sweden. Then he focused solely on his stud career—and his growing role as Shirley's riding horse. He would remain her darling until his death at the age of 33.

"He was a wonderful companion," she says. "I used to ride him, and he was such a gentleman. There wasn't a mean bone in his body."





He was also an outstanding sire of mares. Among his daughters was Ernestyna, who produced Ekstern, Polish Junior and Senior National Champion Stallion, and winner of the 2000 Triple Crown as a Senior Stallion (Champion at the All Nations Cup, European Championships and World Championships).

“The daughters were really lovely,” Watts nods, “and what Piechur did with us was sire the most wonderful broodmares—he was a very, very important stallion.” Unfortunately, a past Halsdon manager sold many of the Piechur daughters and granddaughters without the Wattses’ realizing in time the consequences to the long-term breeding program.

However, there would be more from the ‘P’ line at Halsdon, namely the stallion Pilot, a striking bay son of Fawor and a grandson of Pilarka through his dam, Polish National Champion Mare Pipi. Watts had spotted him when he was still on the track in Poland, but was unable to acquire him until the Gucci sale of 1993. He had been named Polish National Champion Junior Stallion in 1988, and in 1996, representing Halsdon, he won international championships in both the U.K. and Sweden. “He’s incredible,” says Watts. “He couldn’t be more Polish if he tried.” The Poles thought so too, leasing him twice to serve as a breeding stallion at Janów Podlaski.

“You have to know what you are doing with such a strongly Kuhailan stallion,” Watts notes, and adds that she has not yet achieved the special level of beauty she loves in Pilot’s Polish foals (despite the fact that, a stunning individual himself, he has been a leading sire at the British Nationals). He has been responsible for some “terrific” horses, though, and is a reliable source of performance ability. So at the last Pride of Poland Sale, she purchased a Pilot granddaughter to introduce his attributes another way. The 4-year-old Pietra, by Eden C, was top five at the Polish Nationals as a yearling and is out of Pepina, a half-sister to 2013 U.S. National Champion Stallion Pogrom. “She’s really, really lovely to bring into the breeding program.”



Pilot



Gai Radiant

The next purchase to have an impact on the Halsdon program was the outcross stallion Simeon Sadik, by Asfour and out of the Sankt Georg daughter Simeon Safanad, purchased from Marion Richmond at Simeon Stud. The knockout black 6-year-old with the dishy, exotic face was already famous and sought after before Watts, who was accompanying Charlie on a Rolling Stones' tour of Australia, went to check him out. She thought he was one of the most beautiful horses she'd ever seen and asked for a price. For Halsdon, he would be named Reserve Champion Stallion at the Salon du Cheval (1997), European Championships (2000), and the All Nations Cup (2000, 2003).

"I don't know if people ever knew this, but he had the most wonderful movement," she says. "He was very smooth, and his movement was sort of rounded—he had this great lift, with spring. People used to go on about his head all the time, yet his conformation was beautiful, really beautiful. You could see the lovely body he'd give [to his foals], and of course, they mostly have his eyes and the kindness of his nature. He was a really, really sweet horse. And he was very playful." She grins. "Some people gave it a different name, but *I* said he was playful."



Simeon Sadik



She adds that in her program, on the whole, Sadik was most successful when bred to straight Egyptian mares, with the exception of one Polish mare. Where he really stood out was in his granddaughters, who play an important role in the program now.

The stallion also gave her a friendship that she enjoys to this day. She laughs as she recalls an incident that happened after his purchase. "We were at a luncheon in Argentina, and the woman sitting next to me said, 'Have you heard about these crazy people who have just paid \$1 million for Simeon Sadik?'" Watts says. "And I said, 'Yes, I have.'"

Finally, in 1997, Watts purchased Gai Radiant, three times a U.S. and Canadian National top ten in western pleasure. By U.S. National Champion Stallion Gai Parada (also U.S. National Champion in Pleasure Driving), the typey grey is out of Zee Radiance, and offers a beautiful, sculptured face and a heritage of beauty and performance ability. "We had some lovely fillies by Gai Radiant," she says. "I used him on anything that needed a bit of prettiness, which he gave." Over the years, most of his daughters were sold, and the old stallion is now retired.

### The Basics Of A Breeding Program: The Early Mares

At the same time that Halsdon was assembling a world class roster of stallions, it was putting together an exceptional broodmare band as well. The results were apparent immediately: by 1994, three of six finalists at the British National Show were Halsdon-bred. In the early days, Watts searched for mares worldwide. Some of her earliest came from the United States, including LM Breathless, SF Hidden Jewel, Krona, Focus Seneca and Gai Beisha, representing a variety of bloodlines. And there was the amazing 1994 import SHF Pearlie Mae, who was selected World, European and All Nations Cup Champion Mare for Halsdon, as well as winning at a number of other shows.

Some of the mares Watts purchased were unproven, credentialed by stellar pedigrees and strong physical presence, but many others came with a staggering array of national and international championships. Nowhere was this more true than in the group she acquired from Poland. In general, but not exclusively, she focused on the familiar 'P' line and also on Michalow's revered 'E' line, which traces to the historic mare Estokada (Amurath Sahib x Saga).



HS Alembard



Pikieta (Probat x Platyna, by Czardasz) was already Polish National Reserve Champion Mare (1987) and World Reserve Champion Mare (1988). For Halsdon, she would continue to win awards, culminating in the 1997 title of All Nations Cup Champion Mare.

Pikardia, by Alegro and out of Pilarka's celebrated daughter Pipi, was named British National Reserve Champion Mare, but that wasn't the reason she became of her owner's favorites. In an *Arabian Horse Times* article at the time, Watts commented that Pikardia was endearing because her attitude toward life was so unfailingly positive and happy.

Egina, from the 'E' line, was by Palas, and out of the Burkan daughter Estrada. She had been named 1986 Polish National Junior Champion Mare, and went on to earn a European Reserve Championship and All Nations Cup Reserve Championship for Halsdon, as well as championships in the U.K.

The straight Egyptian mare Tiffaha (Jamil x Taghreed) also came aboard. Bred by Dr. Hans Nagel, she was a European and World Champion Mare, as well as a Swiss and Israeli Champion, when she came to Halsdon in the late 1990s.

And there were many others, including Ansata Justina, Ceretonia, Donia, Efebia, Egala, Eloranta, Evitaa, Imperial Imphayana, Leila, Palestryna, Persenkowka, Prymka and Passada, Rihahna, Wioleta—the list goes on.

Then as now, Pilarka was always Watts' inspiration. Appropriately, the mare did finally make it to Halsdon.

On one of her earliest trips to Poland, Watts had tried to buy Pilarka, but the Poles would not part with her. In 1990 they did, however, to Paolo Gucci, for whom she was named British National Champion



SHF Pearlie Mae



Pikardia



Pikieta





Egina

Mare and Best in Show at the age of 17 in 1992. But then she fell on hard times; Gucci's Millfield Stud experienced financial troubles, the herd had to be rescued, and in 1997, many became available through a dispersal auction.

For Watts, it was unforgettable. "I think everybody knew we wanted her and let us bid on her," she says. "She was down-at-heel, but she was very arrogant. She still retained her greatness, even though she'd fallen so low and looked so terrible because of bad management. When Izabella [Zawadska, one of the foremost Polish breeding specialists in the world]

came to visit her, she cried when she saw her.

We kept a rug on her for quite a while, but she never, ever lost her arrogance. She would look side to side to say, 'Are you watching? Are you watching?'"

Thankfully, Pilarka recovered her conditioning and lived a happy life at Halsdon. "She'd kill for chocolate," Watts smiles. "She would shake you upside down to see what came out of your pockets! (These horses have such wonderful characters, don't they? I could talk all night about them as people.)

She developed quite stallion-like qualities



Pilarka

when she got old—she could be very imperious, and would strike at the ground if things didn't go her way. She was just a wonderful girl."

#### Halsdon Arabians Now

Thirteen years into a new century, Halsdon has evolved with the generations of horses. Its signature cream-colored barns are covered with vines, as green as the surrounding fields. Urns of colorful flowers accent each structure's entrance, and inside, across wide aisles, the stalls are sizeable, with bars from chest height to allow occupants to socialize with each other. Most offer windows to the outside world. Paddocks and wide, rolling pastures are home to horses that move with fluid ease, full manes flowing and tails plumed.

Some of the old stalwarts are still in residence, though retired (Pilot is 26, Gai Radiant 23). Others were lost only recently: Pikieta died in March 2010 and Egina later that year. Piechur passed away in September 2012, followed by Simeon Sadik in December. And Platoon HT was lost only months ago.

"It's hard to describe what I want, but I know that now we are beginning to really get it," Watts says. "I work very much on instinct, and of course, pedigree, what's gone before. I like to see a pedigree that's got beauty all the way through. There's an awful lot of emphasis on getting an exaggerated head, and I've got a couple of them myself, but I wouldn't buy one just for its head. It has to be good enough on everything else as well."





On the whole, her preferences are easily understandable. “I’m looking for lovely big, wide eyes, with lots of expression,” she says, “and a very graceful neck, good legs and a good body. And they really must move. They must open up their shoulder and bring their hind legs up underneath them—a horse that is going to be a good ride, you know, very forward-moving.”

And there are some traits which for her would stop a mating in its tracks. “I just won’t use a weak back,” she reports. “The horse might have a beautiful head, but what would be the point? I’ve worked hard to get these good bodies.”

She also breeds for temperament. “I want the typical Arabian temperament,” she says. “You know, kind and very gentle. We’ve had horses that have come here that were lunatics when they came to us, but it doesn’t take that long to get them back.” She laughs when she remembers one such head case. “He followed the same routine that the other horses have, and today, I made him a cup of tea with sugar and he lapped it up out of a teacup. Those are the moments—I love them—that are very necessary with horses.”

At present, she has several stallions on the roster at Halsdon. A glance at each pedigree reveals the tapestry of continuing influences in the program, as well as the fresh new contributions.

***HS Etiquette*** (Simeon Sadik x Etenta, by Monogramm), 1998 grey, 2005 European Champion Stallion. “He’s very, very much like his father,” Watts says. “But he has movement like you see in Ekstern and Monogramm. His conformation is perfect.”

***Polon*** (Ekstern x Pianosa, by Eukaliptus), 2005 grey stallion, bred by Janów Podlaski Stud. “He’s about to go back to Poland for the season,” Watts notes. “He’s very laid back, but just like Ekstern in his movements—you get him to trot and it’s wonderful.” Polon’s top female representatives at Halsdon now are the fillies HS Farnaz (x Farida Halsdon) and HS Pachouli (x Peczora).

***Preferans*** (HS Etiquette x Preria, by Ararat), 2005 bay stallion, bred by Janów Podlaski Stud. Watts likes what she is seeing in his foals, and she is especially enthusiastic about his dam, Preria, a Pilarka granddaughter through Pipi. “He was such a dear little chap, very sweet, very





HS Etiquette



Preferans



Lothar El Nyhl

friendly,” she recalls of when she first got to know Preferans in Poland. “He goes from a standstill into this incredible, powerful trot. He reminds me of his grandfather, Simeon Sadik—not as exotic, but he has got his eyes. He might be out in the show ring next year.”

***Lothar El Nyhl*** (Nyhl El Jamaal x AF Lissa, by Delmar), 1999 grey stallion, bred by Antonio Carlos Francisco. “Lothar’s had about 98 percent success getting type,” Watts says. “He’s been wonderful on the Polish mares. The mare’s beauty comes through, but he makes a very subtle difference that gives even more type in the head. He gets better as he gets older. When I first saw him, he was in the field, grazing away, and they just put a rope around his neck and led him in. He’s such a gentleman.”

Today, Lothar El Nyhl is best represented in the Halsdon broodmare band by HS Baheya (x Bint Bolyvia), Dhalka Serondella (x Rezella), HS Emniya (x Emilda), HS Pavia (x Palba), HS Mademoiselle (x SHF Pearlie Mae), HS Minette (x Parys Mist), HS Petite Fleur (x Pieta), HS Portia (x Pernacja), and HS Audace (x Amra).

***Lumiar Amadeus*** (RSD Dark Victory x CA Sabrina, by Sabal), 1990 grey stallion, bred by Baseterra Agropecuaria Ltda. He is the 1996 Brazilian Champion Stallion, 1991 Brazilian National Champion Junior Colt (unanimous), and 1999 U.S. National Top Ten Stallion. “Some of his most beautiful foals took two years to become so beautiful,” Watts offers, “but they always have had the most wonderful conformation and spirit, very fiery, like he is—he doesn’t suffer fools gladly—but with the most wonderful character. We’ve got some beautiful mares now, and without fail, he gives them a bit of athleticism and the most wonderful necks and bodies. You might not think their heads are perfect, and yet in time, some are developing into very beautiful heads, with his huge, dark eyes. Everybody is really knocked out by him. He’s just such a beautiful horse.”

Lumiar Amadeus’ next generation in the Halsdon program is best seen today in his daughters HS Aurelia (x Asra Salaa), HS Divine (x La Diva HJ) and HS Sumatra (x Sweet Khassal).



**WN Star of Antigua** (Monogramm x WN Antigua, by GG Samir), 2002 grey stallion, bred by Wayne Newton. “He is such a gorgeous horse—a fleabitten grey with a huge eye,” Watts says. “I saw his dam [1991 U.S. National Reserve Champion Mare and 1989 Canadian National Champion Mare WN Antigua] in America; she was very beautiful.”

WN Star Of Antigua’s brightest youngsters in the Halsdon program now are HS Ffinella (x Hafati Futurista, by Lumiar Amadeus), HS Miesque (x Parys Mist), HS Pearl Star (x HS La Perle, by Lothar El Nyhl), HS Pretence (x Preria) and HS Rosamunda (HS Ramira, by Simeon Sadik), and his colt from La Diva HJ is turning heads with his upright, look-at-me attitude.

**Alfabia Ajib** (Phaaros x Vishar Farhana, by Cas Jabbar), 2005 grey stallion, bred by Alfabia Stud. Alfabia Ajib reinforces the longstanding Egyptian influence in the Halsdon program, offering two crosses to Ruminaja Ali in the sire line and two to Imperial Imdal through the female side. He is currently on lease to Watts. “He really does a very good job,” Watts says. “He gives enormous eyes, and I picked mares with longish necks for him. We had some lovely foals—particularly from Gelgelah Albadeia and her daughter HS Greta, who both had beautiful fillies, like twins.”

**Ferryt** (Wachlarz x Fortissima, by Fawor), 1998 black stallion, bred by Michalow Stud. “Ferryt has the most wonderful conformation and is used here by people who appreciate lovely conformation,” Watts says. “He has lovely movement and his head is of the old fashioned type.”

**HS Alembard** (\*Eukaliptus x Albula), 2000 bay stallion. “We’ve had so many others, we haven’t been able to use him much,” Watts says, “but I have friends who have bred to him and been very pleased. He’s a smashing horse, with great conformation, great legs, and beautiful eyes.”



Lumiar Amadeus



WN Star Of Antigua



Ferryt





### The Broodmares Of Today

As Watts states, Halsdon's broodmare collection is, for the most part, Polish-based. A thumbnail list would include, among others, Abula (\*Favor x Algeria), Andromeda (Eldon x Aneksja), Agusta (Piaff x Albigowa), Amra (\*Eukaliptus x Albigowa), Baja (Pamir x Bajeczka), Biruta (Ekstern x Balada), Egna (Eukaliptus x Egzotyka), Elandra (Monogramm x Erlanda), Elgina (Ekstern x Egina), Entima (Ekstern x Etalanta), Etnologia, Grobla (Wachlarz x Gryzетка); Hekla (Premo x Harpia), Pampa (Gazal x Palestryna), Peczora (Emigrant x Permiera), Pernacja (Ekstern x Pertubacja), Pieta (Gazal x Pilar), Pinta (Ekstern x Pilar), Preria (Ararat x Pipi) and Sarbia (Ekstern x Samura).

But there are many others as well, some doing outstanding jobs. World Champion Gelgelah Albadeia (Imperial Madori x Anhar Albadeia) represents the Egyptian influence, and the daughters of Simeon Sadik also figure strongly in the array of Halsdon-bred mares in the program now. A selection of those includes:

***HS Bellisima*** (Simeon Sadik x Baija), 1999 British National Junior Female Champion

***HS Cinderella*** (Simeon Sadik x Ceratonia), 2004 European Reserve Champion Yearling Filly

***HS Greta*** (Simeon Sadik x Gelgelah Albadeia)

***HS Ramira*** (Simeon Sadik x Rihahna), 2004 World Reserve Champion Filly

***HS Talullah*** (Simeon Sadik x MA Tatia), dam of HS Tann, one of the top filly prospects for the future, by Al Adeed Al Shaqab

***HS Tessa*** (Simeon Sadik x Lumiar Tosca)

***HS Divine*** (Lumiar Amadeus x La Diva)

***HS Jessenia*** (Lothar El Nyhl x SF Hidden Jewel)

***HS La Perle*** (Lothar El Nyhl x SHF Pearlie Mae)

***HS Shadiyah*** (Lothar El Nyhl x Shadra NA)

***Dhalka Serondella*** (Lothar El Nyhl x Rezella, by Amal)

***HS Empress*** (FT Wuotan x Egna)





HS Greta



HS Shadiyah



Gelgelah Albadeia



HS Empress



HS La Perle

With a herd that large, Watts does not comment on every mare, but she cannot help bubbling with observations as various names are ticked off through the lists.

“Abula is a daughter of [the legendary] Algeria,” she notes. “She was a Polish National Champion Mare, and is very Kuhailan—beautiful Kuhailan. She is very strong, just like Algeria. I liked hearing the stories of Algeria, how the mares would all rush out to the field and then wait to let her go first. They always wanted her to lead.

“And Jessenia—I would say she is one of our best broodmares,” she continues. “Whichever stallion we bred her to, whether we got a colt or a filly, she would produce something that was useful. They were either pretty enough to show, or they would be in endurance or racing. She is lovely.

“And Sarbia—she’s a black bombshell!” Watts laughs. “She’s wonderful—she’s such a trotting machine—she loves it. She’s so charming, it’s like ‘I don’t know when to stop.’ She is very elegant. She just needs to get a bit older; you can’t push them.”

Four mares, known as the farm’s “four roses,” always will stand out for their ethereal elegance. *Emilda* (Pamir x Emanacja, by \*Eukaliptus), bred by Michalow Stud, was a Polish National Champion Junior Mare and twice Polish National Reserve Champion Mare. *Maesta* (Partner x Maskotka, by \*Bandos), bred at Bialka Stud, was named 1999 British National Champion Senior Mare and Supreme Overall Champion. Due to an injury, she cannot breed, but her sheer Arabian type and presence are symbolic of Watts’ standards. *SHF Pearlle Mae*, one of Watts’ early stars, remains luminous even in her later years, and she has left a filly to take her place: HS La Perle, by Lothar El Nyhl. And *Shadra NA* is an \*El Shaklan-bred mare who is the dam of HS Shadiyah, by Lothar El Nyhl—another light for the future.

Then there are the show horses, most notably at present *Etnologia* (Gazal Al Shaqab x Etalanta, by Europejczyk), Silver Champion Mare at the 2013 All Nations Cup and top ten at this year’s Salon du Cheval; and *Alfabia Akiabara* (ZT Marwteyn x ZT Ludbectra, by Ludjin El Jamaal), a 2-year-old who was Silver Champion Junior Filly at the All Nations Cup this year.





### Into The Future

Watts smiles when she reflects on the number of horses at Halsdon. In the beginning, she avoided being a breeder because she knew she would not want to sell what she bred. She has gotten over that, she says. Sort of. She still wants to secure the best future possible for every Halsdon horse.

"I don't really have a problem with selling the horses that are going on to do some discipline," she offers, "because there are riders, endurance riders especially, who generally keep a horse all its life. They usually want just one or two, because they put a lot of effort and money into it. I always get them to ride the horse, and if that horse doesn't go well for them, I suggest another one. The horses are part of our family and we put a lot of effort into making them as well-behaved as possible, so why should they go to someone who doesn't know what they're doing?" Over the years, horses sold from the Halsdon program have compiled an enviable record in an array of professions.

Of late, Halsdon's representation in the Arabian main show ring has been somewhat limited as new crops of homebred foals are growing up; the farm's headliners have been purchased from other breeders. Watts observes that that will probably change soon, as her youngsters mature: it is time to reintroduce other breeders to the Halsdon program. That does not mean she will run a show barn, however. She prefers to entrust her candidates to Tom and Glenn Schoukens at Schoukens Training Center in Belgium. "I think they're very good," she observes. "I've been to their place, and they have a really good team of young people. They know their jobs."





*Now and in the future, though, the guiding principle at Halsdon Arabians is not the show ring, fame or fortune. It is about the human relationships with the horse—the Arabian horse. Watts reflects on some of the horses who have come to the farm over the years, and how life at Halsdon has calmed them, given them a day-to-day pleasure that has become apparent in their trusting personalities. “It’s not rocket science, is it?” she smiles. She remembers the one who loves to slurp tea from her teacup. “They feel the love and kindness that you feel. And I love horses.” ■*



Mr. and Mrs. C.R. Watts

[www.HalsdonArabians.com](http://www.HalsdonArabians.com)