

# Al Rayyan Story

By Jeff Wallace

A backwardness and lack of cultural achievements, coupled with a general decline, are the signs we connect with a part of history referred to as the Middle Ages; a phrase was coined to describe this unique period, the Dark Age, a particular time in history characterized simply as a period of intellectual darkness, but followed by the immensely influential classical era, known as the «Light of Rome.» These words, "the middle," describe the story of Al Rayyan farm... not the beginning and certainly not the end. This is the story of the creation of one of the finest collections of straight Egyptian Arabians in breed history. It is also a story layered with exquisite, yet imperfect circumstances, within the passion and living art form of horse breeding.

Like historiography, breeding Arabian horses is a living process. After the end of the Dark Age, the rise of the Italian Renaissance began. When thinking of Al Rayyan Farm in this sense, HH Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Khalid Al Thani laid an amazing foundation for a straight Egyptian breeding program in the late 1980s and bought the best he could get. Today, it is by far one of the most marvelous collections of Egyptian Arabians worldwide. A look



into the pedigrees makes it easily clear that someone invested a lot of thought into breeding such a remarkable herd of silver shimmering mares of ethereal type. However, after a dark, tumultuous, transitional period, HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, took over the stud farm in 2014. He didn't hesitate to appoint Sheikh Hamad bin Ali Al Thani as director, and within a heartbeat there was light again.

Just how special the Arabian horse is to Sheikh Hamad can be easily seen at Al Rayyan Farm, where today, he has rung in a new age, shaped by changes and achievements.

HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani  
with Al Adeed Al Shaqab



**DARINE AL RAYYAN**  
(Ashhal Al Rayyan x Aisha)  
2002 Grey Mare





## DARINE AL RAYYAN

(Ashhal Al Rayyan x Aisha)

2002 Grey Mare

Talk to Sheikh Hamad about Al Adeed Al Shaqab and you will immediately feel the special bond between man and stallion. It's not because Sheikh Hamad calls him "his boy." It's the way he speaks about him. "This is the most perfect Arabian stallion for me in the flesh; a living incarnation," says Hamad. "And, that he is one of the few Ansata Halim Shah sons born in Qatar also makes him special. That's why I was always very jealous of Ashhal Al Rayyan, because he was a strong competitor for Al Adeed at the shows and in breeding. Now the situation has changed completely! I am proud to be associated with Ashhal and to have his marvelous get in a program that I oversee because the blend of Al Adeed Al Shaqab and Ashhal Al Rayyan is simply magnificent."

Both stallions, now legendary sires, have a strong connection through Ansata Halim Shah, a stallion that Judi Forbis says was the greatest breeding stallion she ever made. Al Adeed Al Shaqab is a direct son of the great

Halim Shah, while Ashhal Al Rayyan carries several crosses to this stallion of global greatness. Al Adeed also offers the blood of \*Morafic and \*Magidaa through his maternal grandsire, Ruminaja Ali. Once again, both stallions have had an enormous influence in straight Egyptian and non-straight Egyptian breeding. At Al Rayyan, it is in the blending of these two towers of power that some of the most exquisite foals have been born to a renewed and world renowned breeding program, thereby making the future look like one full of triumphant highs.

### The Foundation Mares – World Class Treasures Inside Al Rayyan

The priceless foundation of Al Rayyan lies within the magnificent mare families so carefully crafted by founder Sheikh Abdulaziz during the 1990s. Today, under the direction of Sheikh Hamad bin Ali Al Thani, these families continue to thrive, solidifying the finest future for the farm. We present you a focus of five world class mares, treasures of today and tomorrow.





### NAWAAL AL RAYYAN

(Ansata Sokar x Nadrah Al Rayyan  
in foal to Al Adeed Al Shaqab



### SULIMA AL RAYYAN

(Ashhal Al Rayyan x Selma Al Rayyan)  
in foal to Hilal al Nakeeb



## RAYYANA A LALIA

(Ashhal Al Rayyan x Asrar Al Rayyan)

["The most precious gold to be found on earth is the Arabian mare." | Dr. Marsafi]

Rayyana Al Alia (Ashhal Al Rayyan x Asrar Al Rayyan by Al Adeed Al Shaqab to Ansata Delilah through Ansata Samantha)

Darine Al Rayyan (Ashhal Al Rayyan x Aisha by Ansata Halim Shah to Haman through Ghazala)

Sulima Al Rayyan (Ashhal Al Rayyan x Selma Al Rayyan by Al Adeed Al Shaqab to Ansata Delilah through Ansata Samantha)

Nawaal Al Rayyan (Ansata Sokar x Nadrah Al Rayyan by Ashhal Al Rayyan to Ansata Bint Bukra through Ansata Nefer Isis)

The Essence of Al Rayyan – Sheikh Hamad

If you look at Sheikh Hamad while



**FAHAD AL RAYYAN**  
(Faress Al Baydaa x Tahadeel)

standing at  
Luca Oberti Arabians











## MAJDAH AL RAYYAN

(Ashhal Al Rayyan x Maida  
bint Bint Mohssen)  
in foal to Hilal al Nakeeb

2015  
Qatar National  
Silver Champion Mare

he is speaking to you, you easily feel the truth deep inside his words, as he speaks from the heart. For him, breeding is about listening to subtle intuition. It is important, he will say, to know when to make changes in your program, as current type and style will take a different direction every few years. "As breeders we need to feel the nudge of time and change, and sense the important relationship between these two factors"

"Life should be fun and playful," is one statement from Sheikh Hamad, and "breeding is a feeling and always from the heart" is another.

"Breeding horses is also like drilling for oil – you just do it, until you find it" says a smiling Hamad.

"In the beginning, I learned a tremendous amount from Sheikh Nawaf. He is not a fierce competitor,



but a quiet leader who doesn't run around at a show to figure out how to win constantly," Sheikh Hamad says with deep respect. "He is someone that takes his wins, and says thank you, and in return, takes his losses without getting angry. Sheikh Nawaf has done a lot for Qatar and a tremendous amount for the Arabian horse in this country. He is truly a humble man who just does good things without talking about it."

"I have known Michael Byatt for 30 years now. In the early years of managing Al Shaqab Stud, we accomplished many great things together, and still share a very deep bond of friendship. Michael has an amazing eye and is more of a friend than a business associate; he has my full confidence. We understand immediately what the other is thinking, and create success easily together because of the synergy that exists between us."

## MAYASSA AL NASSER

(Ansata Hejazi x Bint Saidah al Nasser)



**RASHEED AL RAYYAN**  
(Ansata Nile Echo x RN Farida)



**DURRA AL RAYYAN**  
(Ashhal Al Rayyan x Dana Al Rayyan)



While other famous straight Egyptian farms use non-straight stallions on their mares, Sheikh Hamad is absolutely clear when making this point for the present and future of Al Rayyan. "I would never do that!" he says emphatically. "It is not nice to rollover the work of Sheikh Abdulaziz, as his intention was always to maintain a straight Egyptian program. Therefore, I would never disrespect his wishes." A Nod From the Past – Bart Van Buggenhout  
 "I am forever grateful and full of love toward the horses of Al Rayyan. I remain their biggest fan. It is success that I wish the team of Sheikh Hamad and Santiago, as well as wishing for them the joy and happiness that my 14 years at Al Rayyan brought to me.

My respect will always be with Sheikh Abdulaziz and his entire family, including many friends of those throughout the Middle East who also love the horses of Al Rayyan Farm."

The Heartbeat of Al Rayyan – Santiago Fornieles

"I think Sheikh Hamad has the humility to hear what horses are saying. That is the reason I love heading up his team. Every day I learn something new, and every conversation we have about breeding is an intellectual challenge for me. When my WhatsApp sounds, I know Sheikh Hamad is wanting to share a new and brilliant breeding idea, and in return, shows me the respect of listening to what I think about his fresh new idea. Let's face it, he bred Marwan Al Shaqab, Gazal Al Shaqab and Al Adeed Al Shaqab. So when a team leader has such an infectious spirit, it's contagious! It's more than a team. It's family, both symbolically and literally."

However Long the Night, The dawn will break and start anew.

The beginning of a mixed blood program.

An exposition of artistic, cultural and social dynamism, coupled with an inventive genius, mark the Modern Era of history.



As Sheikh Hamad honors the efforts and purist visions of Sheikh Abdulaziz before him, within the straight Egyptian collection of Al Rayyan Farm, the time has now come to venture out and create a world-class mixed blood breeding program of its own.

The influence of Sheikh Hamad in the creation of such mixed blood legends like Gazal Al Shaqab and his son, Marwan Al Shaqab, as well as several other world class mixed blood show and breeding horses comes with staggering results. His creative and risk-taking side, coupled with his full embrace of equine romantic fantasy, and lastly, his true sense of inventive genius, will open not only a new chapter of Al Rayyan, but will beautifully broaden and exaggerate the new era of light. You see, Al Rayyan, like a delicate rosebud in the morning sunshine, is now unfolding as it should, with simple perfection.

Sheikh Hamad has always loved what is deemed the original golden cross, the blend of Spanish and Egyptian blood.

This golden cross created the legendary \*El Shaklan, whose son \*ZT Shakfantasy played quite an important role in the first phase of the mixed blood program carefully crafted at Al Rayyan. It was followed by a plethora of foals born from many hand-picked mares all over the world to create the first layer of the foundation stock. Other foals will come by important sires such as Showkayce and Audacious PS, both grey sons of Fame VF, also playing an important role, as he is the maternal grandsire of Hamad's brilliant creation, Marwan Al Shaqab, alongside the Emir of Qatar, during the early developmental days of Al Shaqab. The Polish-bred stallion Equator was also used during phase one, as his stunning, contemporary bay breed type and extraordinary carriage are beyond valuable to the greatest of breeders. Lastly, Hamad's beloved Marwan Al Shaqab, of course, plays father to several special mixed blood foals, both now and soon to come.

Quite some years ago, Michael Byatt joined Sheikh Hamad on a mare and embryo buying trip through America,



**JAWAHER AL RAYYAN**  
(Ashhal Al Rayyan x Jalila Al Rayyan)





## MENOUAH AL RAYYAN

(Fares Al Rayyan x Bint  
Mesoudah M HP)

2016  
SE World  
Silver Champion Mare

representing Al Shaqab. Mares such as White Silkk, dam to World Champion stallion Hariry Al Shaqab, was purchased on this special journey while many embryos resulted in beautiful colts and fillies, now top breeding and show horses for the Al Shaqab program. The gorgeous dark bay OFW Mishaahl was another superior purchase. She is the dam to the World Champion trio of Khahil Al Shaqab, Wadee Al Shaqab,

and daughter, Sultanat Al Shaqab, all sired by Marwan Al Shaqab.

Given the results and global impact of this inventive tour from the past, there is every reason, with the exceptional quality of mares and stallions chosen, that the coming foals will later breed history in the most positive ways, under the glowing spotlights of Paris and beyond.



## SAHLA AL RAYYAN

(Ansata Sokar x Sundos Al Rayyan)  
in foal to Hilal al Nakeeb



Old Rayyan Road, Doha - Qatar  
Director: Sheikh Hamad bin Ali Al Thani  
Managers: Alessio Scaramella & Santiago Fornieles  
[www.facebook.com/alrayyanfarm](https://www.facebook.com/alrayyanfarm)  
Contact: +974 5012 9944