





A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE



A GLORIOUS REEMERGENCE

The New Team of Al Shaqab and the Return of its Beloved Leader, Sheikh Hamad

Words By Jeff Wallace - Photos by G.Grasso, L. Abraham, G. Jacobs, J. Müller, A. Azzali, A. Visel

"We must dare to be great; and we must realize that greatness is the fruit of toil and sacrifice and high courage." | Teddy Roosevelt

Fate has a way of somehow providing the greatest endings to the greatest stories. Yet, perhaps it's more than that ... perhaps it is destiny.

Sheikh Hamad would most certainly credit those perfectly fallen pieces in the perfect places to a higher power, because every bone in his body believes that a hunger for the Arabian horse is something he was born with... something so intertwined in his very being from birth that the two are inextricably woven together for life... he and Arabian horses. His story is one for the ages.

"My earliest thoughts in life were about horses," he would tell you. He remembers his first experience riding was "about 7 years old" and it was "Bedouin style" (i.e.



Great win Darine Al Rayyan (Ashhal Al Rayyan X Aisha)

bareback). Even as a young person in Doha where he grew up, he was passionately driven for the Arabian horse, demonstrating an uncharacteristic maturity for his age when most are only beginning stages of their life's work. But he knew. There was no question. It was with the Arabian horse.

SHEIK HAMAD
and Marwan Al Shaqab



GAZAL AL SHAQAB
ANAZA EL FARID x KAJORA



Gj

Like many of us who worked our way up the rank in horses, Sheikh Hamad did his share of hard work in the barn to earn the respect and permission of the stable owners, particularly if he wanted to ride one of the famous horses in the stable. In fact, he was such an astute rider that he says he developed his eye for conformation from the back of a horse... the curvature of the neck, correctness and balance from the movement he felt in his seat. He loved riding so much that he studied at the Federation to be a professional jockey, as was a common thing to do.

In his brief time learning English while studying at Cambridge, he also purchased a handful of Arabian racehorses in England. But he quickly found that his choices were more beautiful than they were fast. This was a pivotal moment for the young Sheikh Hamad. He realized his eye was for beauty rather than speed... a functional beauty that could redefine the standards of the Arabian horse.

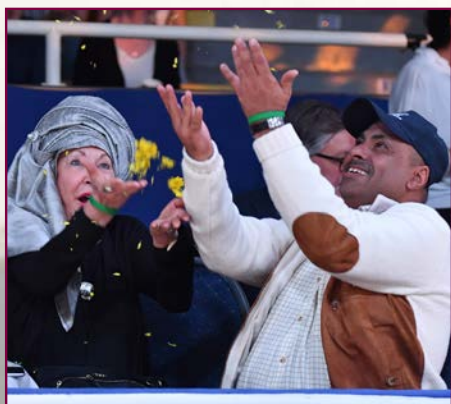


Sheikh Hamad, Sultanat Al Shaqab and Micheal Byatt

Around that time in 1988, HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, was looking to expand his family-owned and operated Al Shaqab Stud into a higher-profile organization. In a profoundly demonstrative action in his own right, he recognized the zest, passion and giftedness of Sheikh Hamad and gave him the opportunity of a lifetime: Manage His Highness' stud farm. Sheikh Hamad responded to the call. Soon, they were buying horses from Egypt and Europe, and racing them as was the common thing to do. But Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani soon found himself experiencing a similar key moment as his young protégé had... he found himself drawn to Arabian horses bred for beauty and type over speed.

SHEIK HAMAD

and Micheal Byatt in Al Rayyan



Sheik Hamad and Judi Forbis
in Aachen 2016

Perhaps this common ground was part of their destiny together. It prompted Sheikh Hamad's first trip to the United States in 1991 at just 27 years old, where he saw the possibilities of his vision for beautiful, functional Arabian horses materialize. Within 10 years of Sheikh Hamad's leadership aligned with HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani's vision and support, Al Shaqab bred three world champion stallions— Gazal Al Shaqab, Al Adeed Al Shaqab and Marwan Al Shaqab. These three incomparable studs have single-handedly changed the face of the modern Arabian horse. It stands as an unparalleled feat.

However, all good stories have a villain. And in this story, the villain was Sheikh Hamad's health. It seemed hardly possible that anything could impede on the resounding success Sheikh Hamad had brought to Al Shaqab... now a household name in the global Arabian horse industry. And yet, serious illness forced him to look death in the face and fight the battle of his life, forcing an absence from his community, his career, and the horses that gave him his daily breath of life. It was a dark chapter, one that no



AL ADEED AL SHAQAB

ANSATA HALIM SHAH x SUNDAR ALISAYYAH



one dared whisper how it would end.

Sheikh Hamad dug deep with all he had, relying greatly on his faith and unwavering belief that good would come. His infectious passion, optimism, vitality, and faith were put to the test. Many would say it was those character traits that ultimately saved his life.

When the announcement was made this past summer that Sheikh Hamad was returning to his post at Al Shaqab while also managing Al Rayyan Stud, metaphorical applause could be felt in ripples around the world, as if cheering for their comrade who was returning to the one position he was designed for. It seems to be a glorious ending to an other-worldly story.

And yet, the story is far from finished. He has been hard at work, putting together a legendary team of people to bring Al Shaqab into the limelight of its next glorious chapter.



Sheik Hamad in Milan

Want to know the best part?

This story is a complete surprise for Sheikh Hamad. His devoted team is fiercely loyal to their infectious leader, and wanted to publicly articulate their feelings toward him, as well as the Emir Father Sheikh Hamad, and what it's like to make your life's work the work of Al Shaqab.

Teddy Roosevelt, 26th president of the United States, once said, "We must dare to be great; and we must realize that greatness is the fruit of toil and sacrifice and high courage." If the level of greatness parallels the amount of toil and sacrifice and courage demonstrated by an individual, this chapter of Al Shaqab under Sheikh Hamad's leadership may reach heights of greatness we've never seen before.

Sheikh Hamad, welcome back to your destined role. May the reign of Al Shaqab see its brightest days ahead, where greatness dares to be made.

FADI AL SHAOAB

BESSON CAROL x ABHA MYRA



MESSAGES TO A LEADER: THE NEW TEAM OF AL SHAQAB



LUCA OBERTI

Working with Sheikh Hamad means a lot to me ... he is an extraordinary breeder, with a gifted eye for picking the right horses to show. He is building an incredible team of people representing a mix of old and new friends who, I'm certain, will be strong under his leadership! I'm so honored to be part of his return to Al Rayyan and Al Shaqab, and I promised him I would to put all my knowledge into helping him and our team reach new heights. I'm certain I will continue to learn much from him, not just about the Arabian horse, but also as an honest and generous person.



PAOLO, SUSY E WOODY

Looking back thirty years ago, Al Shaqab was special from the very beginning. Every year it becomes more and more clear how remarkable and far-reaching one single horse (Gazal Al Shaqab) and his potential genetic power, could be. I don't know if it was just luck, or a gift from God, or the capacity of what one human being can do, but something did happen there to create something so strong that it will be deeply embedded in the history of the Arabian horse.

Gazal and Marwan have become an incomparable line today that everyone would like to have in their breeding programs. With just one line, its potency has been able to improve the type and balance

of Arabian horses today. And that has been hugely helpful in the world market.

Susy, Paolo and I are excited to welcome Al Shaqab horses at our training center. Working together with Sheikh Hamad and the rest of the team will be a new and beautiful adventure. From the very first meeting, we felt like we were with old friends working toward the same objectives. Sheikh Hamad is a great man and a knowledgeable horseman who knows how they should be bred and managed.

As a person, he has many qualities, but his unique ability to relate to people in a warm manner is one of his best attributes. It makes him one of us.

Viva Sheikh Hamad.



SANTIAGO FORNIELES

As a breeder myself, working with Sheikh Hamad is like getting a PhD in breeding... and getting paid for it! It is a privilege. He has a different view in breeding than anyone else I know. He is bold, takes risks, and is not afraid to try new things. To me, that is a great quality, because our industry standard is one that follows trends. Sheikh Hamad is not afraid to use stallions that are not in the headlines, as he continuously thinks forward two generations, not just one. He looks at future foals, and is already

planning who he is going to breed them to. This is what makes him a master at what he does, and it is something we all can learn from!

There is also another side of Sheikh Hamad that not many people know about. He is a very religious man who truly believes that horses are a gift from God. He believes that if you are good to horses, they will give back to you, in the same way that if you treat people well, God gives back to you. And that's why he is such a kind, respectful person to everyone... whether it is the cleaning guy or the manager.

The vision of HH The Emir Father was to have the best Arabian horses in the world. The summary of this vision will be seen during the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Al Shaqab in February 2017. Imagine the parade of stallions: Al Adeed Al Shaqab, Gazal Al Shaqab, Marwan Al Shaqab, Kahil Al Shaqab, Hariry Al Shaqab, Fadi Al Shaqab, and Wadee Al Shaqab, plus the leased stallions WH Justice and SMA Magic One. If that is not the vision of perfection realized, I don't know what is. It will be priceless, the summing up of 30 years of global breeding in one arena.

Being on the Al Shaqab team is a dream come true. I don't mean that in a shallow, cliché way. It really is. I have the privilege of working with world-famous horses. It's amazing. But I'm also excited about the new team being made. Al Rayyan and Al Shaqab are now a super power under the direction of Sheikh Hamad, so just being part of this mega team is amazing. Working with Rinaldo, Mitch, Alessio, Ziggy, Herón, Abdoulwoahed, Khaled, Matias and my wife Milagros on a daily basis is wonderful. We have a huge task and a big responsibility, but our team is ultra-talented and I believe we will breed many more champions.

DR MILAGROS BADARACO

In March of 2015, I arrived at Al Rayyan (along with my now husband Santiago Fornieles) from Argentina to fulfill the position of assistant vet for the farm. I came from Argentina with the position of assistant vet. One month later, the senior vet at Al Rayyan had to go back to his country. So that day, Sheikh Hamad called me to his office and said to me: I didn't bring you here to put the entire farm on your shoulders. I don't expect you to make miracles. I just want you do your best, and that will be fine with me. So until Dr. Matias Freije arrived to Al Rayyan, I was left with the responsibility of heading one of the most important, historical farms in the world. In just one month, fourteen mares became pregnant, and today – just 1 ½ years later – I am once again heading Al Rayyan because Dr. Matias will now work with Sheikh Hamad in Al Shaqab. Why do I tell this story? Because I feel my personal growth during this almost two years is a direct reflection of Sheikh Hamad's generosity and trust in his team members. He gave me the opportunity to grow like nowhere else, and for that I will be eternally and sincerely grateful.

KAHIL AL SHAQAB

MARWAN AL SHAQAB x OFW MISHAAHL





ALESSIO SCARAMELLA

Working for this KING of a person is really something that everyone dreams of during his lifetime. It is an honor to support a leader who knows so much in our breeding and showing world. He is honest and generous man who, at the same time, is always available when his team members need anything. I've worked for Al Rayyan as trainer for one year now, and I am so excited to assist him in his Al Shaqab adventure as well. We are building a new family, and I am dedicated to giving our leader all the support he needs. Thank you, Sheikh Hamad, for this great opportunity!



MITCHELL TAFF

Working with Sheikh Hamad is truly an honor. To work with someone with so much knowledge and respect in the Arabian Industry – not just in Middle East but all around the world – is an experience of a lifetime. I can honestly say that Sheikh Hamad has a special touch, a special connection with horses, from foals to senior horses. He gives every horse an opportunity to thrive in their own areas of ability. I'm grateful he has allowed me to continue training horses in Doha. Most afternoons, Sheikh Hamad

comes to watch me school horses. It is always enjoyable to have him there watching, asking questions, or just talking about horses.

There is one great story that I always enjoy telling. We were presenting some young horses to Sheikh Hamad one afternoon. We had one young filly that just came from the paddock to start training and conditioning, as we believed she had tremendous potential. We walked her outside to show Sheikh Hamad. She was a bit hot and fresh. Sheikh Hamad took the lead and instantly the filly relaxed, walking calmly. I was shocked at how instantly he connected with her... and with all horses. This is not an unusual occurrence. He has a special connection with Al Adeed. He can just speak with him like a horse whisperer, and his body language is incredible.

Being the head trainer of Al Shaqab in Doha is a tremendous privilege. It's an honor to be able to train all the horses for the shows, and then watch them successfully compete in Europe or America. For a long time, it was a goal of mine to train for Al Shaqab. Now that has happened, and being able to train some of the best horses in the world is a privilege. However, we continue to reach higher in our goals, and I think it is possible with Sheikh Hamad's leadership.

The vision of Al Shaqab by the Emir Father was to continue breeding the Arabians in Doha, as well as to breed the best Arabians in the world, which I think has been achieved. And with Sheikh Hamad back, I can see this vision becoming even stronger.

FARHOUD AL SHAQAB

AL ADEED AL SHAQAB x JOHARA AL SHAQAB



FALAH AL SHAQAB

FADI AL SHAQAB x JOSEPH JUST EMOTION





JEFF WALLACE

For me, Sheikh Hamad has always been the pinnacle of passion. The way he wears his passion and glides through the world of Arabian horses; the way he touches people; the way he creates from the ground up is just amazing. He is someone who is totally one with the horse. Sheikh Hamad motivates me, and is an inspiration to me.

He is a mentor and a friend... and I consider him my friend for life.



GIACOMO CAPACCI

I was very fortunate to meet Sheikh Hamad bin Ali Al Thani at a young age. He made me a part of his team more than fifteen years ago. Since then we have shared many emotional moments, difficult challenges, amazing victories and countless laughs.

The world of Arabian horses is not just a lifestyle, but also, a way of life—in this life it has been a great honor to have the privilege to keep some of the breeds most precious Al Shaqab horses at Giacomo

Capacci Arabians for more than 10 years. Sheikh Hamad has given me an opportunity that I will always cherish. I am so thankful that together with Al Shaqab we achieved such a number of great results that a trainer could wish for.

Watching how the Emir Father HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani has been creating and developing his country, I am now certain he had a similar vision for creating Al Shaqab. I truly believe that the results are beyond expectation, when considering the massive impact Al Shaqab has had – and continues to have – on the Arabian horse breed.

WADEE AL SHAQAB

MARWAN AL SHAQAB x OFW MISHAAHL



© J. Müller



RINALDO LONGUINI **AL SHAQAB SENIOR TRAINER**

Sheikh Hamad is the kind of person that will always fight for you, be there by your side when you need him. I can say this out of personal experience. He stood right by me when I needed it, and he showed me the class act he is as a person and a human being. I am happy to work for people with his values.



ZIGGY WELLENS

It is always truly enlightening to work with people in the Arabian horse world who have knowledge and experience from the past. Now I have the chance to work closely with Sheikh, the breeder of the legacy sires Gazal Al Shaqab, Marwan Al Shaqab and Al Adeed Al Shaqab during the foundation years of Al Shaqab here in Qatar. A globally recognized equine venue that was founded in 1992 by the Emir His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, it is a program dedicated to the preservation, promotion

and perpetuation of the Arabian horse and its heritage.

It truly is an honor to be a part of this journey under the new guidance of Sheikh Hamad, a gentle and knowledgeable horse person who has recently re-joined the helm of Al Shaqab. I look forward to working with him to execute his vision for the Al Shaqab stable and continue its and legacy on a global scale.



MICHAEL BYATT

Sheikh Hamad first and foremost is a man with enormous humility. And secondly, he is a man with integrity; he is who he is, flaws and all. The combination of humility and integrity make Sheikh Hamad bin Ali Al Thani a potent force. He is humble enough to seek answers and vision, and when he finds them, he is not one to take all the credit. He shares the gifts that are bestowed upon him. And in doing so, in being a selfless man, he gains so much more. And as we have all seen, we all gain so much

more. I think the entire Al Thani family, all the brothers, cousins, all of them, have been a privilege to know and to be a part of. The Arabian horse world would not be the same beautiful place without each of them.



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