

Winter Season on

Katharin

*The ground is still frozen and lightly covered with snow.
The horses' coats have grown in densely, protecting them against the cold.
No matter what the weather, they can work off excess energy outdoors in their pastures.*



Dr. Hans Nagel

by Monika Savier ■ photos by Monika Savier

ennhof Stud

The Latest News from Hans Nagel's “Long-Term Experiment in Arabian Horse Breeding”

Visiting Katharinenhof stud near Bremen in North Germany is always worth the journey. Dr. Nagel's horses are in high spirits in winter, despite their heavy coats, and with the low temperatures, snow, and rain, they display all of their cheerful temperament and of their natural beauty. The foal crop of 2010 is weaned, and without their dams at their sides, it's even now possible to make out their respective characters. But what is more: for those who have followed the “closed breeding concept” of Katharinenhof stud, the foal crop shows where the stud's breeding is headed.



Quite humbly, when Hans Nagel talks of his lifetime's work, he refers to it as a "long-term experiment in Arabian horse breeding". But moreover, it's an artistic synthesis of a whole range of top-level scientific subjects: there is genetics in it and reproduction science from the animal husbandry field, there is historical research in it and behavioural psychology. His lifetime's work is embodied in nine generations of Straight Egyptian Arabians by now, home-bred on his Katharinenhof stud near Bremen in North Germany, and in their famous offspring distributed all over the five continents of the world. Until today, they are the gene pool he used to realise and genetically consolidate his personal breeding goal. What he aspires to is top-level quality in the Arabian horses he breeds. This is why he started out on his very own path 40 years ago -but his eventual destination is not the journey along this path, but accomplishing his breeding goal. "If you have such an idea to breed, it's very important to know where you want to go. If you start from somewhere and you don't know where to go, why do you start in the first place? So you should first think about that. You need an idea and an objective and this is a very personal choice. You have to define your standard. In the course of history, Arabian horses were used for so many purposes..."

NK ABLA

(NK Jamal El Dine x NK Aziza by NK Hafid Jamil)



*Four lovely daughters sired by NK Jamal El Dine
(NK Hafid Jamil x Ansata Ken Ranya by Salaa El Dine)*

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NK NADEER

(NK Hafid Jamil x NK Nadirah by Adnan)



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Nagel also represents that utopian dream of finding, by means of his Arabian horses, a universal language, a common idiom shared at least by all those whose lives are touched by horses.

Boldly using methodics for his own ends, he developed a logical framework for successful breeding of his own in the 1970ies, within a few generations creating and genetically consolidating that very distinctive "Nagel look" in his Arabian horses. They are easily recognised as products of his breeding.

His breeding goal was to maintain the fabled Arabian type as found in the horses of the South, the Nejd region. "A chiselled and hardy horse, none too big, a beautiful and well-tempered, typey Arabian horse. Chiselled, hardy, and none too big - these represent the exotic element, that hint of the original, barren country of origin of these horses. Beautiful - that means a harmonious horse, physically well-proportioned and with an elegant lightness throughout. Well-tempered - that's the character and the disposition to feel attached to people. Typey - that's displaying the prominent, unique traits of Arabian horses such as

the slightly dished Arabian face, big black eyes, small ears with their characteristic shape and position; a proud tail carriage; and "koheilan", that black, fully pigmented skin all over."

With his strategies and breeding goals, some considered him a role model for Arabian horse breeding world-wide, while others went into opposition to his "long-term experiment", more often than not trying to protect their own markets. But no matter what, during the 1980ies, top horses raking the champion titles of World and European Championships were from Nagel's breeding. There were the Hanan sons Jamil and Asfour, there were Tiffaha, Narbey, Sherif Pasha, and many others.

It was in 1967 when he met the filly Hanan on the occasion of a visit to the Egyptian state stud of El Zahraa. He writes: "A spark caught at that moment, a vague idea grew out of nothing into the vision of a horse of my own, my own breeding operation. Who was that filly? How might I get her and keep her for good?" He did get the filly, and Hanan did not only change the

NK KAMAR EL DINE

(NK Hafid Jamil x Ansata Ken Ranya)





MoSa

NK LINA

*born in 2010 out of
NK Kamar El Dine x Muneera Al Ariba)
full sister to NK Nasr El Dine*



MoSa

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NK NASR EL DINE

(NK kamar El Dine x NK Muneera Al Ariba by Ken Asam)

Nagel world, but with her pedigree, she went on to become a cornerstone and milestone of many studs all over the world. The "Hanan Dynasty" (Judith Forbis) was born and his long-term experiment was ready for takeoff. Stallions from five Egyptian lines were bred to Hanan and the other Katharinenhof stock mares, producing five beautiful daughters and two excellent Hanan sons: Jamil, and later, Salaa el Dine. They were the foundations of his breeding.

In a next step, he mated half siblings which were first-generation descendants of Hanan. However, he was still on the lookout for improving his breeding. „Later on I un-

derstood that a horse needs to have, among others, a good shoulder, a good croup, and certainly the type. By the time we were all learning and I was looking around for where to find a horse with type, a good shoulder, and a good croup. Finally I found this horse, he was Ansata Halim Shah and I was imagining that Halim Shah might be the horse I was searching for."

In a trans-atlantic exchange, Jamil went to the US to take up residence with Judith Forbis, while Ansata Halim Shah stayed in Katharinenhof stud for two years as a sire. This joint strategy of two great Arabian breeders from two continents proved to be a stroke of luck for future



NK NOUR

(NK Hafid Jamil x NK Noha by NK Jamal El Dine)



NK NABAWIA

(NK Nadeer x NK Nabeelah by NK Nahaman)

breeding all over the world.
"Jamill (Madkour I x Hanan), 1975-1986, known for his big black eyes, short sharp ears, long neck and overall harmony. He blended beautifully with the linebred Ansata stock creating a new era in the Ansata program".
(Judith Forbis)

Until today, there is no mistaking that positive influence Jamil had in Arabian breeding. Big round black ears, a great presence, combined with a playful self-assurance – all of these served to make him an iconic stallion even up to today.

When Jamil came back from the US, he served another 6 mares in his Katharinenhof home before dying from causes still unknown. Nagel was not to be discouraged, however:

"I had lost my stallion Jamil and I was desperately searching for an alternative when my mare Hanan, sired by Ansata Halim Shah, produced me the little Salaa El Dine. Later on, Salaa El Dine became a stallion that

produced both, mares and stallions, in very good quality, just like his father Halim Shah had done. Salaa El Dine influenced my breeding to a much greater extent than all the other stallions have ever done. The one son I particularly liked was ADNAN. Adnan was somewhat of a copy of old Ghazal but with the advantage of having a good back."

Towards the end of that second series of experiments, there were 13 offspring to be counted, all of them tailing back to Hanan maternally or paternally, and all of them being, as Nagel writes, typey and chiselled Arabians, without even a single undesirable exception.

He had set a breeding goal for himself, and he never lost it out of sight. In the course of several more generations, Nagel created a closed stock population with their positive traits, phenotype as well as genotype, firmly consolidated by their close and repeated pedigree relations.

"Mares are for maintaining a breed, stallions are for improving it". If I keep to this saying, then any stallion

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NK NERHAM

*was born in 2008,
her sire is NK Jamal El Dine
and her dam is
NK Nabeelah by Nahaman*



NK NEFISA

*(NK Nadeer x NK Aziza by
NK Hafid Jamil)*

I ever use needs to have some excellent trait which will improve my breeding. It's not always possible to know that, sometimes you just have to give it a try".

He went on experimenting, without introducing fresh blood. There were his stallions

Salaa el Dine (Ansata Halim Shah x Hanan)

Nejdy (Salaa el Dine x Lotfeia)

Ibn Nejdy (Nejdy x Gazalla)

who put their respective stamps on his breeding goal for years. The most prominent inheritor among them was Salaa el Dine, producing the most beautiful offspring particularly out of Jamil mares. Sadly, his son Nejdy died early, but he left his son Ibn Nejdy in his tracks, who in his turn will be unforgettable as the sire of NK Hafid Jamil (Ibn Nejdy x Helala).

Says Nagel: When considering his dam, bay Helala of the Bukra line, as well as the features of his sire, it is very hard to find out where NK Hafid Jamil received his features from. He looks different from both of them, simply a new Arabian type. He is presenting himself as a proud horse, his head in fact unique in Egyptian breeding: small, broad in the forehead, a very fine muzzle with huge nostrils, black eyes, small ears, connected to a very well-formed neck. He has an excellent shoulder, is broad in the chest, but weak in his top line. In total: a horse which has a perfect front part, but is faulty in his hind section, with a relatively short croup and straight hind legs. Again, inherited from the Hadbans. Certain important breeders would never have used this horse. However, he was offered his chance with high-quality mares with good strong hind-quarters. It was definitely tempting to use this horse for his magnificent head and his neck/shoulder-formation." But NK Hafid Jamil, presently serving as a sire in Saudi Arabia, is not the only sire represented by brilliant offspring on Katharinenhof stud. There are his prominent sons

NK Jamal el Dine (NK Hafid Jamil x Ansata Ken Ranya)

NK Kamar el Dine (NK Hafid Jamil x Ansata Ken Ranya)

NK Nadeer (NK Hafid Jamil x Nadirah)

who are the leading sires there today, proudly presenting their enormously typey offspring. With regard to NK Nadeer, Nagel writes:

"NK Nadeer was a gift for the stud and in many respects a copy of his sire. To be sure, he is correctly built and fully harmonious, a horse completely rounded in front and back. It was not difficult to decide that NK Nadeer would stay at Katharinenhof as one of the most suitable follo-

wers of Salaa el Dine. Apparently due to his dam and his grandfather Adnan, he was able to overcome his sire's conformation shortcomings, at the same time maintaining all the other positive elements, mainly the unique type presented by these horses. He has the typical Hadban look, a square horse, long on his legs, a wonderful tail carriage, and his type an attraction in itself."

Regarding NK Jamal el Dine – who is very well ridden on top of everything else – and NK Kamar el Dine, Nagel writes:

"The two full brothers, Jamal el Dine and Kamar el Dine, are of two different types. They will both be kept in the stud for further breeding."

"Jamal el Dine greatly resembles his ancestor Jamil. He is a tall horse, his conformation is acceptable, he even has a high croup and his hind legs are a legacy of his sire. However, his neck is of a brilliant shape and well attached to head and shoulder. A feature which ought to be even more widely consolidated in the herd, since it is one of the weak elements in many Egyptian horses as previously mentioned."

"Kamar el Dine has a wonderful bay colour. He is an elegant horse, a little bit long in the back, but with a good croup, a perfect mover, with a wonderful masculine expression. With him, finally a stallion was born with a highly appreciated colour, which is useful to make sure that pigmentation problems will not arise or could be handled immediately with proper breeding."

The offspring of these sires is much in demand and not readily for sale, as the long-term experiment on Katharinenhof is the overriding consideration. However, a visit to the stud, meeting and assessing Nagel's long-term experiment personally, is worth every breeders' time.

Again and again and ever patient, he encourages the countless visitors from Europe, from the Middle East, the US, and Australia. He encourages them to breed, to maintain this precious breed of horses. He tries to interest them, to motivate them, to encourage them to define a breeding goal of their own. He is a role model for small breeders: his stock was deliberately designed not as a numerous population offering a playing ground for grand experiments, but as a small herd on a private stud, based on a concept of quality, not of numbers, and managed with a well-grounded expertise in genetics. This made for successful implementation of his concept. A concept serving as a fascinating model for most private breeders, as the lessons of experience collected here are most probably conferrable and practicable to small studs everywhere. □

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NK HAFID JAMIL

(Ibn Nejdý x Helala)

NK Hafid Jamil is the leading sire of Katharinenhof stud. The picture shows him in summer 2010. This excellent 15-year-old Dahman Shawan stallion is presently leased to Saudi Arabia as a sire. His sons, NK Kamar El Dine, NK Jamal El Dine, and NK Nadeer, have taken over his job at his home stud for this season.