

The Problem with Paris

Memories & Dreams of Mindy Peters Filtered Through a Parisian Prism

by Evie Tubbs Sweeney

Oh, Paris!

"La vie en rose means seeing life through rose-colored glasses. But only in Paris where the light is pink does that phrase make sense." | From the film "Sabrina"

"You are always a good idea," as Audrey Hepburn once said.

"Why Paris?" some may ask. Paris needs no reason. Paris is its own reason.


"You vibrate as a city with love," as the poets alleged.



Kendyl Peters and her 9 time National Champion mare, **Davinci's Reflection WA**



Vonia Rose MP
(Marwan Al Shaqab x Veronica GA by Versace)



MINDY PETERS ARABIANS

Paris is luminous beauty, and everyone adores her for it. Paris is a lover of all things that move our soul, a mecca for the journeyers of love. Paris is a celebrator of the impossible; the Eiffel Tower stands proudly alongside those who rise above.

For over three decades now, it is no wonder that she hosts the world's leading event for the most beautiful Arabian horses. Channeling the energy of Paris itself, the show is a breathtaking blend of class, elegance, heart-thumping energy, and an effortless poise.

The Arabian Horse World Championships is just one part of a horse exposition like no other. The Salon Du Cheval brings together the world's finest horses over four days of separate competitions for all breeds and disciplines, as well as offers a fusion of shopping entertainment and equine expositions rivalling Cavalia. How appropriate that the world championships for the oldest breed of horse be hosted alongside the breeds it birthed in one of the oldest, most beautiful cities in the world, infusing its historic light over the event.

It was the early 90s. Mindy Peters was in her early twenties, working in the Arabian horse industry in California at the time. As a third-generation Arabian horsewoman in her family, Mindy was drawn to the energy of beauty. Although her Iowan farm girl roots were humble and rural, her prism was slowly evolving with Paris in her sights.



Mindy Peters and friend Om El Exquisit

Memories of Paris

The problem with Paris is that once it taps you on the shoulder, you are never the same.

Mindy received that tap in 1992. She and her friend, Lacey Baird, packed their suitcases in anticipation of an adventure that awaited them. At that time, the Salon Du Cheval was held at the Porte des Versailles.

The memory is still vivid. It was as if she'd walked into an extraordinary impressionist painting, vivid with dramatic colors and vibrant scenes. It felt like a horse fair of sorts... and how a charming horse fair would have felt many, many years ago. Dozens of breeds stood in rows of stalls, basking in the comfort of fluffy straw so deep it tickled their bellies. And the smell.... Oh, that lovely, earthy horse smell! The glorious scent of horses and tradition, all memorialized into one beautiful scene.

It was the perfect complement to the Arabian Horse World Championships happening back in Paris, a nod to the beauty that was not only possible, but also expected.

“There was a physical feeling in the air,”

Mindy recalls, “That is the only way I know how to describe it. That feeling that is very much still alive today. It is an electricity, a high vibrational energy resulting from the realization that you are witnessing the best of the best, some of the most beautiful living creatures alive on the planet today. It is an experience that every Arabian horse lover needs to experience at least once.”

But of course, even in France, sometimes things happen that can swiftly bring you back down to earth. Mindy recalls her second visit to Paris as “the time when crème brûlée saved my life.”

On this trip, she traveled with her former husband, noted trainer Steve Heathcott, who was showing the glorious white stallion, Piruet, for owners Cecile and Richard Philstrom. Mindy and Steve arrived two weeks early to familiarize Piruet with his new surroundings and prepare him for the World Championships. Fortunately, Richard and Cecile owned a lovely home in nearby Marseille, where Mindy and Steve called their interim home prior to the show. Shortly

after their arrival, however, Mindy contracted a dreadful stomach virus that left her nearly incapacitated for much of their two weeks in Marseille. Doctors were called; friends expressed concern. Nothing seemed to resolve her illness.

But the show must go on. The World Championships were now only a few days away. Mindy and Steve drove Piruet to the showgrounds in Paris. They only stopped once to quickly fuel up before hitting the road again. Now, like countless things in France, the most ordinary things are unusually chic... even gas stations. Mindy was now suffering not only from the stomach bug, but also from no food for nearly two weeks. Based on her heart palpitations, she knew she needed to eat something, and get it down fast. “I remember thinking,

“If I don’t eat anything, I’m literally going to die in France!,” she recalls with a laugh.



**Mindy and Baraka MP -
Champion producing mare**

The gas station was more of a gourmet market, deli, and bakery. It didn't matter that it was morning time; a delectable array of fresh desserts lined the display. She spotted crème brûlée: eggs, milk and sugar... a winning breakfast! Quickly, she grabbed one and gingerly consumed it while sitting on the sidewalk, weak in strength. Surprisingly, it settled fine. She ate another one... and another, and another.

“I literally ate ten crème brûlées!” Mindy said, chuckling, yet still with a trace of detectable relief in her voice.

Surprisingly, after a few minutes she felt better. It was that day that crème brûlée from a French gas station saved her life. And Piruet? He was named World Champion Stallion with Steve at the lead just two days later.



Straight Russian mare
DA Magnifica

Dreams of Paris

Mindy can often be spotted ringside thumbing through the show program reviewing pedigrees. It's sort of family habit, you could say. The story originated in the cornfields of Hartley, Iowa. Mindy's grandfather, Ed Brinkert, was a self-made entrepreneur with no formal education who made his start launching a highly successful feed company after studying feed formulas in the evenings. Like many entrepreneurs, when Ed was passionate about something, he did it big. And with the gentle prodding of his middle daughter, Shelley, Arabian horses became his greatest passion. A first breeding in 1957 turned into a lifelong family affair. By the 1980s, their program, MaRoSh (short for each of his daughters, Margo, Roxie and Shelley) Arabians was one of the largest, most active breeding farms in the state of Iowa.

Shelley stayed active throughout her teenage and adult years keeping the farm going and tending to every need themselves. It wasn't until her niece, Mindy, was an early teenager and delved into the family farm that she finally had a true sidekick. The two formed a close bond as they worked the farm together, traveled to horse shows, and divided up every equine-related chore known to man. At the same time, Mindy poured herself into absorbing pedigrees alongside Shelley and her grandfather. Mindy's adventurous journey eventually brought her from the farm land of Iowa to the magical California coast, where she has remained since. Mindy has stayed actively involved in every aspect of Arabian horses, taking her to Santa Ynez, a long stint in Hollywood, virtually around the world, to Santa Barbara and now back to Santa Ynez, her true home. With mentorship from Arabian horse legends such as

Sigi Siller and Sheila Varian, Mindy has developed one of the most sought-after boutique breeding programs in the world.

Her unique program is a trifecta blend. Mindy's diverse broodmare band is the foundation of the pyramid, made up of a composite of blood from Bey Shah, Om El Arab, Brazilian blood, specific lines cherished by her grandfather, and a sprinkling of Egyptian as well. She combines them not only with the world's finest stallions of today, but also up-and-coming stallions whose qualities are recognizable to a breeder's eye.

And yet, Paris is never far from her mind. It is the ultimate goal – not only to see her homebred horses in the ring, but also one day even to participate as a judge in its center ring.

Seeing horses that carry her program's blood is a feeling of satisfaction that cannot be articulated. Take Bettina MP, an Arabian Breeders World Cup Bronze Champion Filly, now owned by Linjawi Arabians. Sateen LNJ, second at the Prince Sultan Arabian Horse Show for owner Al Khashab Stud, is out of another homebred mare, Sateen La Rouge MP. Another example is Elegant Moon MP, who unceasingly carries the torch of Mindy Peters Arabians as a brilliant producer of multiple Middle Eastern champions. Of course, we would be remiss to not mention the beautiful Sweira Aljassimya, who was named Unanimous Gold Champion Filly in Menton as well as World Champion Top Ten Yearling Filly in Paris. Sweira is out of Mindy's homebred mare, Baraka MP. And the list could go on and on.



Wafat

Rarely will one find young horses at Mindy's farm. In high demand, they are often sold quickly to breeding or show homes. People knock on the door of this boutique breeding program in search for something special, and they generally find it.

It is a point of pride for Mindy. Like all true breeders, the satisfaction lies not in titles, but in the pleasure of seeing your homebred horses purvey the earth. One of Mindy's greatest joys is seeing her horses go to other breeders and watching them have success. Like-minded in their passion, a relationship generally ensues, developing like the ripple effect of a drop of water, edging beyond its limitations.

"I have a friend from Kuwait who purchased a mare from me over ten years ago," Mindy said. "He recently messaged me to say that out of his band of thirty mares, to this day, that mare he bought from me is his best producer. Every foal has become a champion. It's a great feeling. It's the ultimate feeling as a breeder, really. My addition – my ultimate joy – in breeding is witnessing other people's success with the horses I had the privilege of breeding and personally foaling out. It's what I live for."

While Mindy represents the third generation of breeders and Arabian horse enthusiasts, her two children now

represent the fourth. Her son, Jordan Heathcott (28), and daughter, Kendyl Peters (21), are both continuing the tradition sown by their great-grandfather in Iowa. Jordan enjoys a budding career in acting and film directing when he isn't helping his father train Arabian horses. Kendyl quietly dabbles in breeding small numbers of both halter and performance horses. An accomplished rider and horsewoman herself, with over 12 national titles to her name, Kendyl is clearly following in the footsteps of her mother.

Paula McLain once said, "Though I often looked for one, I finally had to admit that there could be no cure for Paris." Over the centuries, Paris has demonstrated a mighty capability in bringing things together – cultures, people, ideas – under the spell of her unifying pink light.

How fitting that this year, Kendyl will be attending her first Salon du Cheval... and at nearly the exact age as her mother in 1992. Jordan is also joining them, marking his first World Championships experience as well. As if it couldn't get any better, Shelley, Mindy's aunt who birthed Mindy's start in horses, will be rounding out their group. The four will create memories and be touched by that pink Parisian light in the best way possible: Together.



Wajit®

Homebred mare **Southern Belle MP**
(Eden C x Belle Song HVP)



OM El Sariyana
(Al Lahab x Om El Saari)

*... Because the only problem with Paris is that
it never really lets you go.*



Kendyl Peters





Jordan Heathcott and Elihandro MP
by EKS Alihandro

Mindy Peters Arabians extends its heartfelt wishes for a joyful and successful show to all the breeders, owners and handlers of the horses competing in this year's Arabian Horse World Championships at the Salon du Cheval in Paris.



Sweira Al Jassimya - out of Baraka MP
Unanimous Gold Champion filly - Menton