



# Arabians Ltd.'s Client Seminar

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Under an expanse of blue that only Texas can showcase, the open sky fills with the joyous sounds of laughter and hugs. First-time guests are welcomed in a way that quickly allows them to meet and make new friends. In a way, this is a family reunion. This is a Client Seminar at Arabians Ltd.

Here, most people aren't related by human genealogy, but through their horses. "I have your mare's half-sister!" one new friend says to another. "Thee Desperado—he's my filly's grandsire too!" At this invitation-only, twice-yearly Seminar, the clients of Arabians Ltd. make time to come together for an exclusive weekend of teaching and learning on the tree-lined, horse-filled grounds of Arabians Ltd. While the lessons revolve around the horses, the weekend revolves around the people who have made their lives with this bloodline of horse, the treasured Egyptian Arabian.

The purpose for gathering is simple. "It's a celebration of our clients' horses," says Marketing Director John Neyer. "We believe there's real value in getting everybody together and seeing the overall quality of this whole group of horses here at Arabians Ltd."

This weekend, the emphasis is on showing, on what makes an individual horse a winner in the show ring, and how one breeds for that type of quality. Longtime General Manager Shawn Crews believes Arabians Ltd. is unique in its approach

to showing, because the farm only shows horses of its own pedigree. "It's important to us to be able to prove to our clients, and to everyone else who's watching us, that consistency and a great program sustain themselves," she states.

Shawn stays personally involved in the training and showing decisions for each horse in the competitive show barn. It's no small job, because the barn constantly has a waiting list of horses whose owners want to share in the success earned by this knowledgeable team of professionals. Their individualized training, nutrition, and exercise regimens for each horse display just how dedicated they are to showing each one to its greatest potential.

John Neyer explains a large part of the weekend's educational value is the group of industry experts brought in by the farm. "Our guests of honor are world-renowned professionals who re-affirm that what we've told our clients holds true." Each time a seminar is offered, different professionals are invited to offer a well-rounded perspective on the business and the horses.

For this day, the featured speakers include international judge Scott Benjamin. An authoritative figure in the world of Arabian horses, Benjamin judges shows all over the world and constantly evaluates fine horses who might fit into the program of Aria Arabians International, where he oversees the breeding program. He is enthusiastic about his presence for this Waco, Texas, weekend. "These are the greatest seminars in the world," he matter-of-factly states. "The quality of horses here is outstanding."

By late morning, a crowd of 100 gathers and listens to Benjamin as he gives a lesson in the new Arabian scoring system. While defining the system, Benjamin discusses the tough issues facing Arabians and their breeders today, and he challenges those listening to look the challenges straight on and continue to create the best matches they can for their prized horses. As one of the scoring system's creators, he believes that many of the issues in today's show ring can be addressed by equipping the judges with this new tool.

After brief classroom instruction, the attendees follow their teacher outside to practice what they've learned. Benjamin objectively critiques anonymous horses from the Arabians Ltd. show barn presented at halter and liberty, and invites his audience to do the same. Everyone gets a chance to learn the strengths and weaknesses of both young and mature horses. Though it might not be their owners' first idea to have someone come in to honestly point out the negative aspects of these proven champions, Arabians Ltd. believes it's a service that benefits their clients. "People need to educate themselves. In business, you never stop learning," says the farm's co-owner Jim Sirbasku.

A family is also created through a shared passion for these horses. "We bought our horses at the same time, and we've been best friends ever since," shares owner Donna Gogal of her friend Sandy Whitten. Even though she's owned her Thee Desperado daughter, Shameless Shalimar, for months, this is Donna's first time to meet the famous stallion and visit his home in person. She traveled with her new best friend, Sandy, who owns a daughter of Arabians Ltd.'s burnished chestnut stallion, Thee Asil (Thee Desperado x Alia Barakaa).

Sandy and Donna's reports of their first encounters with their mares' sires were glowing. "The stallions are simply unbelievable," gushes Donna. "I needed to see them in person to be able to make my breeding decisions. When we drove up, we saw Mishaal, and he just put on a show for us in his pasture. After I saw him a couple more times, I made the decision to breed my mare to him next year."



Top: International judge Scott Benjamin, a featured speaker at the seminar.

Bottom, left: Judy Sirbasku and granddaughter admiring the stallion, Thee Desperado.

Bottom, right: The stallion Pimlico RCA enjoying a carrot during the seminar.



Mishaal HP (Ansata Sinan x Mesoudah M) is Arabians Ltd.'s sleek, silver German import, an imposing, athletic stallion purchased by the farm to serve as a source of outcross blood for the daughters of herd sire Thee Desperado and his offspring. The cross is producing foals sought after in the United States and around the world, and Mishaal was the 2007 Egyptian Event Reserve Senior Champion Stallion, earning the title at the same time as his second crop of US foals made their mark in the ribbons.

Also among the group of Arabians Ltd. clients are Dash and Louise Crofts, an unobtrusive and friendly couple. No stranger to the best, Dash Crofts represents half of the famous soft rock duo of Seals & Crofts. According to Dash, his wife Louise possesses "a wonderful eye for beauty and balance in the horse." Her passion for Arabians led them to visit the farm after she'd spent years following Desperado and his offspring

in print. "I do research on everything that I get involved in before I commit to it," Louise says.

After gathering a mountain of magazine evidence, she and Dash were convinced that this was the best farm to partner with in order to enter the business. Over a year ago, they bought two fillies, one of them a daughter of Thee Desperado, the legendary international champion and father of international champions, the other one sired by Mishaal HP. The couple holds nothing back when it comes to Thee Desperado. "He has a charisma no other horse has," shares Dash. Louise agrees. "There is an essence you can't put a name to. It's magical, beyond definition." "It slaps you across the face like Elvis Presley, all he had to do was walk across the stage.

Desperado is the same way," states Dash. And he should know.

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Scenes from Arabians Ltd.'s client seminar.



For co-owner Judy Sirbasku, the farm's unassuming matriarch, this truly is a family affair. "When we first bought horses, I told Jim that when you sell someone a horse, you adopt them. That's how we've built Arabians Ltd. from the very beginning," Jim concurs. "We don't see anybody as competition; we see ourselves as a business where like attracts like, and where we hope people leave our farm saying, 'Wasn't that *fun*?' We don't think there are many places where you all

laugh together as part of a business." "I lost my voice from laughing this weekend," adds Dash.

The farm also believes that educating the future of the business—young people—is vital to its future success. "This seminar gives us the chance to teach people of all ages about this

business and the passion of it," shares Shawn Crews. The second day of the seminar centers around two amateur shows, one for adults and one for children. Both are judged by Scott Benjamin, who gives constructive advice, scores the show, and names champions. The Arabians Ltd. staff works hard to match up participants with horses that match their skill level, and even absolute newcomers are relaxed enough to try. "When we were in the ring, I was very comfortable because I knew I was safe," says Donna Gogal.

Shawn works closely with amateurs of all ages, and some of her young protégés are already winning multiple ribbons. "I was raised in this business from the time I was a teenager, and I had many teachers," she says. "I love being able to pass that along to youngsters who share the same love that I was born with."

And at the end of the weekend, as goodbyes are said and last carrots are fed to favorite horses, clients of all ages and from all walks of life scatter back home across the continent. They leave with new knowledge and confidence in their ability to protect and perpetuate the legacy of the world's oldest breed through their own cherished Egyptian Arabian horses. ■

Clockwise

A photo of the stallion The Sequel RCA during the client seminar.

Louise Crofts with Jim Sirbasku of Arabians Ltd.

The stallion Mishaal HP being presented during the seminar.

Dash Crofts, Shawn Crews and Dan De Russeau at the seminar's evening celebration.

