

On the road with the VZAP, Part 2



■ Abha Mahdi 2003 (Marwan Al Shaqab x Alisheeba), Spanish National Junior Champion 2006.



Traditional Values and New Horizons

The first part of our short, but thrilling tour through Mallorca ended with a magnificent sunset. What would await the group of Arabian breeders and admirers from Germany at the next two stud farms? Come and follow them into gorgeous scenery where noble mares wait beneath olive trees, and to a farm utilizing the height of modern technology.

Ses Planes

The second day begins with another highlight: Ses Planes, one of the internationally best-known and most successful Spanish studs. The prefix “Abha” (Arabic for Salas) has been a byword at the latest since the great success of the mare Abha Hamir some 20 years ago. But it all began when the present stud owner’s father, Pedro Salas, founded his stud farm Ses Rotes with four mares not far away in 1965. Here, in 1973, Abha Hamir was born, a dark bay filly that only one year later was named national female champion of Spain. In 1978, she was leased to Jay Stream in the USA, where she began an incredible

career culminating in 13 champion titles – including the Triple Crown of Scottsdale, the Canadian and the U.S. Nationals – both in hand and under saddle. It was to a large extent due to this mare that Spanish Arabians became popular in the USA, and Marieta Salas began her own stud farm La Lomita in California in the 1980s. Several years later, when the boom in the USA was over, she returned to Mallorca and purchased the farm Ses Planes quite close to Ses Rotes. Abha Hamir also returned and became the foundation mare of the stud, with three daughters and five granddaughters in the present herd. Ses Planes is overwhelming simply to look at. Spacious pastures, framed

by a picturesque mountain range, trees heavy with oranges and lemons – one may well grow just a bit envious. Marieta Salas appears a little reserved at first meeting, but this changes once it becomes clear that the visitors are real horsepeople and not just tourists coming to see a few pretty horses.

Not that what we get to see isn’t pretty. The very first scene that presents itself is breathtaking: three grey mares stand atop a wall beneath olive trees, the leaves appearing silver beneath the sun; a scene like a painting. It soon turns out that two of these mares carry the “Gual” prefix, and one of them is a daughter of our old favourite Gual Tessa. The third mare has an exotic dishy little



■ Left to right: Italian import Alfabia Damascus (WH Justice x April Carol), the broodmares JA Ultima and Gual Fendy, and the yearling filly Abha Palma (Marwan Al Shaqab x Abha Ghazali).



■ At left, the 11-year-old Spanish National Champion Abha Fadil (Rawalpyndi x Persia) under saddle; at right Marieta Salas with with yearlings by El Perfecto.

head quite unlike the Spanish horses, and she turns out to be a US import tracing to Ali Jamaal. This already indicates the breeding policy of Marieta Salas, who frequently buys or leases horses from abroad. These mares all have foals at foot; two by the studs own El Perfecto by whom we had already seen some offspring at the other farms. The American mare has a charming colt by the newly imported stallion Alfabia Damascus, also of American breeding, whom we will shortly see.

Here as everywhere on Mallorca, we are shown the horses turned loose in a sand paddock. In this case, the backdrop is almost as impressive at the horses themselves. We are presented with a real highlight right at the start: the most beautiful daughter of the great Abha Hamir, ten-year-old Abha Ghazali (by El Perfecto), followed by her two daughters: four-year-old Abha Maharani, heavily in foal, and the yearling Abha Palma, both by Marwan Al Shaqab. A wonderfully typey trio of females, all bay with no white, which great presence and excellent movements. Abha Ghazali was Spanish junior national champion as a two-year-old, and later twice senior reserve champion; Maharani was also junior national champion. Each of these three we would gladly take home; little Palma with her ultra-refined face and huge eyes is a particular favourite. As already noted, we see some very international horses here. In

2002, Marieta Salas leased then untried Marwan Al Shaqab and bred ten mares to him, and the gamble certainly paid off. Besides Ghazali's daughters and Abha Mudira, who was Top Five at Aachen in 2005, we are especially impressed by the young stallion Abha Mahdi, Spanish Junior National Champion 2006. His dam is the Ali Jamaal daughter Alisheeba. Although they all have different dams, the Marwan get are very much in the same mold.

Khidars best foals

Another prominent visitor to Ses Planes was international champion Khidar, whom Marieta Salas leased in 2004. We had already seen some of his offspring at Puig Gross and Yeguada l'Eresta, and here were see several more, including the impressive two-year-old colt Abha Otman and the enchanting filly Abha Oriental. Khidar has amply proved his merit as a sire, but we all agree: his Spanish offspring are the best!

The newest immigrant at Ses Planes is the three-year-old black grey Alfabia Damascus. He is sired by superstar WH Justice, was bred in Italy, and is owned by Marieta Salas together with his breeder. He is a very typey, imposing stallion who is already over 15.3 hh tall. His foals, of which we saw the very first, have since proved very promising. Here we also see the only ridden horse on our tour: the snow white eleven-

year-old Abha Fadil (Rawalpyndi x Persia) demonstrates some advanced dressage movements, ridden by the farm manager and trainer Pedro Soto. Fadil was Spanish National Champion and is a grandson of the international sires Carmargue and Ibn Estopa, the latter of whom he resembled a lot.

There is much more to discover during a tour of the premises. A special favourite with the visitors is the enchanting two-year-old WH Justice-Tochter Abha Opalina, Spanish Junior National Champion 2006. Who wouldn't want to take such a lovely filly home?

Two things are very noticeable on Mallorca, here as well as at the two previous studs. One is that the horses are mostly outside, either in the pasture or in sand paddocks, where they also get their hay spread on the ground. The other thing we are pleased to see is that the youngstock actually look their age. One is hardly used to seeing yearlings, much less two-year-old, that actually look like babies rather than ready for breeding – and, not to forget, this is a stud farm whose horses win at international shows.

The broodmares in the far pasture, most of them heavily in foal, are not in the least disturbed by the invasion of the visitors. Here we see the other two daughters of Abha Hamir, as well as two El Shaklan daughters from Brazil, one of whom sadly won't get in foal anymore.



■ Jason Ferrero with the homebred 2-year-old straight Egyptian colt Fer Tamek (Abbas El Dine x Techeda), Balearic Junior Champion in 2006.

As the final highlight, we visit the king of the stud: El Perfecto, arguably the most famous and most influential living Spanish sire. While he is straight Spanish, he was bred in the USA, where Marieta Salas first leased him in 1996 and bought him two years later. He was leased to Austria for a time, where he sired some well-known horses including European Champion L. M. Sadunga. Now aged 20, the old horse leads a life of leisure out in his pasture. After an accident in 2004, he no longer breeds outside mares. But his offspring are everywhere on Mallorca in any case; no less than 6 daughters are in the herd at Ses Planes, plus some granddaughters.

Here again, we find a wonderful buffet, this time in the stable. Fortunately Mallorca isn't very large, so that there is plenty time between stud visits to do justice to these occasions. None of us would want to exchange this for a blanket on the beach.

Yeguada Ferrero

Our final stop is another stud farm well known from the big shows in recent years: Yeguada Ferrero. Our host, a pleasant young man who introduced himself simply as "Jason" and speaks excellent English, meets us at a lay-by and coaches us to the farm, which is not easy to find.

The Ferrero Stud, not far from Palma, was founded in 1978 and is owned by the Ferrero family, who primarily breed Pura Raza Espaniola with considerable success. In recent years, the farm twice bred and exhibited the National Champion Andalusian Stallion. The arrays of show trophies is very impressive; and in recent years, there have been more and more won by Arabians.

Several things are different here from the other studs. For one thing, the place is absolutely crowded with horses. Jason apologizes for this, explaining that the stud is about to move to larger, better premises, which are not quite finished yet. But the

■ Fer Fiera Blanca 2004 (WH Justice x Clio Fiera Blanca), Top Ten in the 2006 World Championships.



ZUCHT * AUFGZUCHT * ANBIEDERUNG



Neu bei uns:

MUDDASSIR B' Mehamam
(Imperial Mashhar x G Ashalima) *1999
rein ägyptisch



Weitere Informationen und eine aktuelle Verkaufsliste mit Fotos finden Sie auf unserer Homepage.

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■ The stallion Abbas El Dine (Salaa El Dine x Abbas Pasha I-12), left, and the mare Martinique (Ansata Sinan x Marratxi), were both imported from Germany.

horses and the breeding practise here are also markedly different. There are very few Spanish horses among the Arabians; only the mare Martinique has a Spanish dam, but she was imported from Germany. Most of the horses are imported or have imported parents, and many of them are straight Egyptians. Best known of these is the stallion Ramino, Top Five at Aachen 2006, who is still away in training. But we get to see many other familiar faces: Martinique, European Champion MA Shadow El Sher from Italy, US import QR Excel, and the successful show mares Col Cora and the homebred Fer Fiera Blanca (by WH Justice). One horse is not so well known from the shows: the straight Egyptian stallion Abbas El Dine (Salaa El Dine x Abbas Pasha I-12), a typey, spirited grey who clearly shows his double Halim Shah breeding. Yet he is his owner's declared favourite and has the largest number of foals at the stud. "People wonder why I have no foals by Ramino or QR Excel and think there is something wrong with them," Jason explains. "But that is nonsense. Abbas El Dine's foals are so good, why should I use another stallion?" Two that we get to see are the young mare Fer Agua Magica and the two-year-old colt Fer Tamek, both show winners in Spain. We are also very impressed with the WH Justice son Aramis Moniscione, imported from Italy, whom we will surely see at the shows soon. And the seven-year-old homebred Fer Damien is a very special horse: not only a halter champion, but also a champion Doma Vaquera horse - against Andalusians!

Astonishing technique

The most unusual aspect of this stud is its breeding practise: embryo transfer on a large scale. Jason is clearly enchanted with this method; he talks about embryos like other breeders talk about foals, and proudly takes us on a tour of the laboratories. Thanks to the technical possibilities and plenty of donor mares, his favourite mare Mia expects several foals this year - none of which she will actually give birth to. This kind of mass production doesn't really appeal to our group, and seems strangely contradictory to the impression that Jason genuinely loves his horses. But he is obviously just as much in love with the technical possibilities, and this en-

thusiasm is rather disarming; especially as this method is clearly not aimed at producing masses of horses for sale. Nor does it result in "waste products". Each horse on the farm is well cared for; even the Percheron mares Jason bought as donor mares, then realized weren't suitable, but kept anyway. No wonder the farm is overcrowded and needs to find new premises!

As an encore, we also get to see one of the farm's champion Andalusian stallions, the impressive white Fer Tempranillo, who shows us what the Spanish Walk really looks like.

At the end of two exciting days we are left with almost too many impressions to process at once.

Betty Finke



■ The promising 2-year-old colt Aramis Moniscione (WH Justice x Aida Moniscione) from Italy.