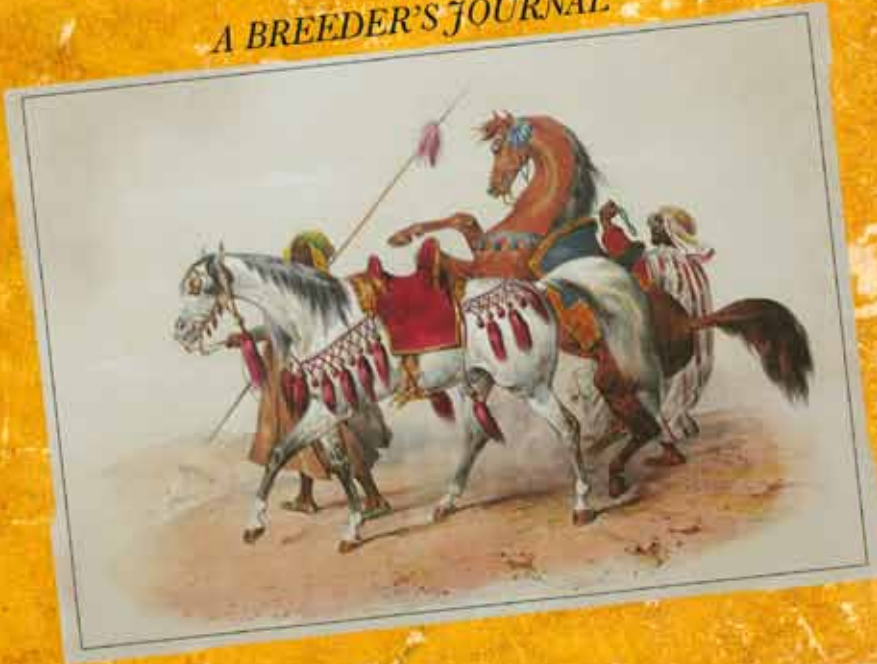


A BREEDER'S JOURNAL



THE BREED  
CHARACTERISTICS  
*of the*  
ARABIAN HORSE,  
Part 1: Type and Quality

*by Christie Metz*



*BEDOUINS LEADING HORSES*  
*Lithograph by Carl Kurtz and Johanne Baptiste Zwecker*  
*from the "Carrousel" series, published by Autenrieth, Stuttgart, 1946.*

*A Breeder's Journal*

**THE BREED  
CHARACTERISTICS**

*~ of the ~*

**ARABIAN HORSE,  
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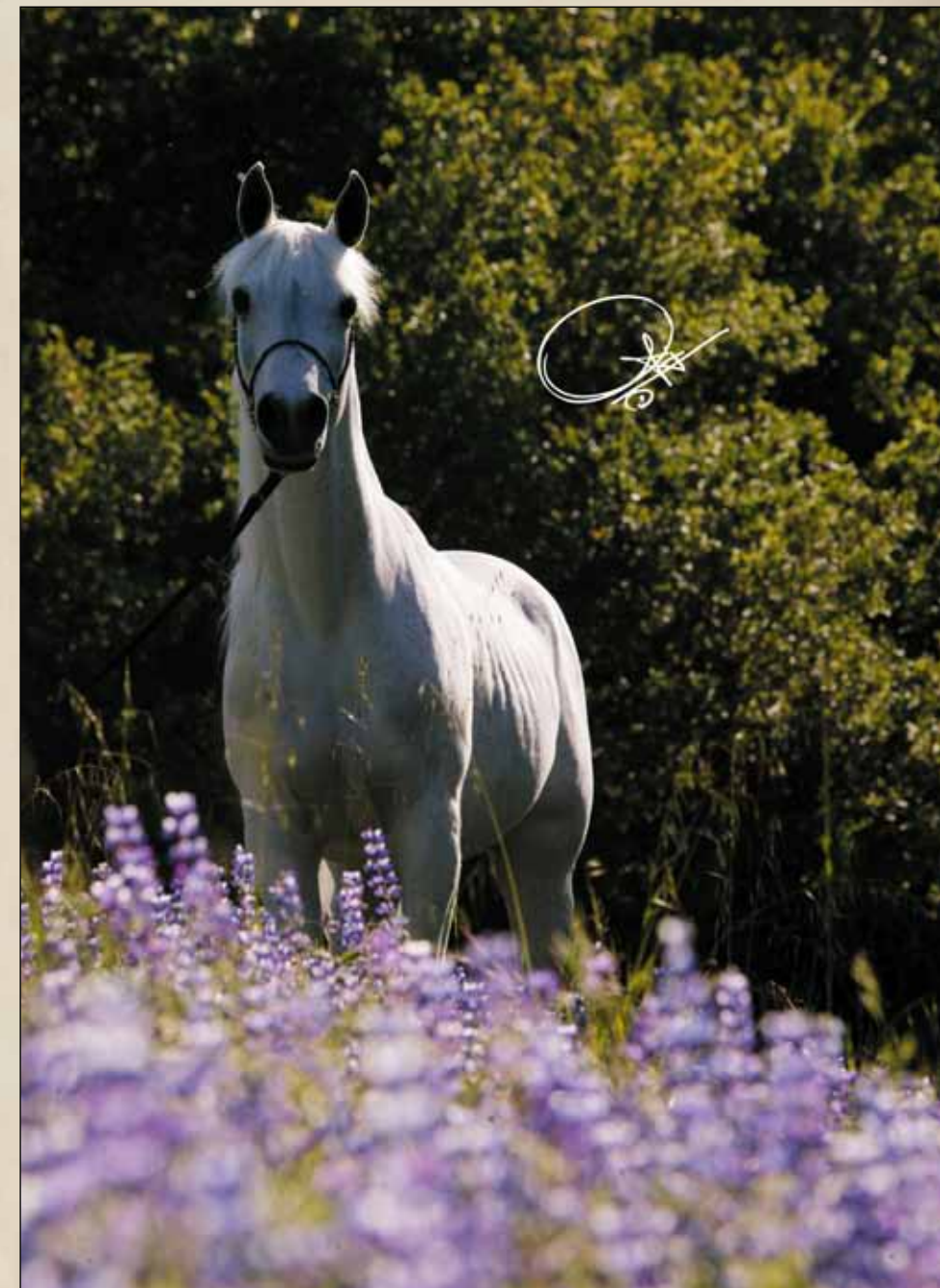
*Designer & Editor,  
Beth Ellen Hunziker*

~ INTRODUCTION ~

When I first thought of writing about Arabian horses, from a breeder's perspective, it made sense to me to start at the beginning. Like so many other people, something happened when Henry and I were first introduced to this breed, up close and personal, back in 1989. The Arabian horse captured our hearts immediately and inspired us to devote much of our lives to the breed. After all these years, they still have the same impact on us. An Arabian is ethereally beautiful, so animated and expressive in motion, yet so gentle while interacting with humans. Their physical beauty and characteristics are distinctive; no other breed of horse has this look. There is no mistaking an Arabian.

Our first impressions were profound and impacting, enough so that we began to study and learn about Arabians. The bonus was discovering the beautiful history, culture and traditions associated with breeding Arabians. In order to understand what made these amazing creatures the way they are, you need to understand where they came from and how that environment and culture contributed to the breed's very distinctive characteristics. An Arabian is a perfectly designed horse for the environs from which it originated. They existed for many, many years within the community and culture of the Bedouin. These nomadic people had a profound influence on the development of the breed and even today, generations later, that influence is still seen, but now it's on a global basis.

~ INTRODUCTION ~



*Glorietasayonaara (Ansata Abu Nazeer x Glorieta Shahlima).  
Our first straight Egyptian mare, acquired in 1990, she became our foundation mare.*

As a new person to this breed, it seemed as if I was continually being bombarded by the words, “Type” and “Quality”. I heard these words from my mentor, read them in magazines and heard them in videos and at horse shows. I listened to exclamations like, “That’s a really typey horse with great quality.”, “That horse has extreme type or quality.”, or, “That horse has NO type and terrible quality.” You might hear these same words during a current horse show, especially from owners, exhibitors, trainers and announcers, even the judges!

So, what exactly are the definitions of “Type” and “Quality”, as they apply to an Arabian horse today? Is there one set of standards used around the world? How does the word “Quality” relate to “Type?” How do these words relate to breeding Arabian horses? Well, let’s see what the experts say and how the English language defines these terms.

**QUALITY:** These are two definitions of the word Quality, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: 1.) *The standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind;* 2) *the degree of excellence of something.*

**TYPE:** Also from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, these are two of the definitions for the word Type: 1): *One having qualities of a higher category: a model upon which a species or subspecies is categorized and classified.* 2) *A distinctive mark or sign.*



*ALI SAROUKH (Ruminaja Ali x Glorietasayonaara), a stallion who represents our first generation of straight Egyptian breeding, he beautifully embodies the defining characteristics of the Arabian breed.*

Here is my own definition of “Type” and “Quality” as applied to Arabian horses, “An Arabian horse is a distinctive species, characterized by unique traits, with a high degree of excellence, which surpasses all other breeds and serves as a model for those breeds.”

~ COMPONENTS OF ARABIAN TYPE THAT CREATE QUALITY ~

Arabian horses have unique physical characteristics that distinguish them from all other breeds. These characteristic traits are the essential elements of the breed's type and they contribute to quality. Type and quality are interwoven. If you are planning to own or breed Arabian horses, it is essential to have an understanding of these two important little words.

If you look at any Arabian horse, there is a commonality of distinctive characteristics. This is a truth. However, every horse displays varying degrees of these characteristics, no matter the style of the horse, its size, or if it has fine, heavy or in-between sized bone. Still, there is no mistaking an Arabian for any other breed of horse.

Most countries around the world have an Arabian Horse Registry with its own breed standard to define "Type". For fun, look up your own country's breed standard definition or the show commission standards for judging.



~ ARABIAN HORSE CONFORMATION & BREED STANDARD ~

According to the Arabian Horse Association, AHA, the official breed registry in the United States, there are five key elements that distinguish Arabian horse type (descriptions in italics are quoted from AR 102 Breed Standards found in the 2013 USEF, United States Equestrian Federation, Rulebook):

1) *HEAD* - *Comparatively small head, profile of head straight or preferably slightly concave below the eyes; small muzzle, large nostrils, extended when in action; large, round, expressive, dark eyes set well apart (glass eyes shall be penalized in Breeding classes); comparatively short distance between eye and muzzle; deep jowls, wide between the branches; small ears (smaller in stallions than mares), thin and well shaped, tips curved slightly inward;*

2) *NECK* - *long arched neck, set on high and running well back into moderately high withers;*

3) *BACK* - *short back;*

4) *CROUP* - *croup comparatively horizontal;*

5) *TAIL* - *natural high tail carriage. Viewed from rear, tail should be carried straight.*

*The above qualities identify type in the purebred Arabian horse. If the horse has these qualities and correct conformation, we have our ideal standard.*

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
HEAD, EYES, EARS, JOWLS & MUZZLE

HEAD:

An Arabian horse has a relatively short head. Ideally, there is good width between the eyes and a slightly concave or dished area just below the eyes. If you view an Arabian's head in profile, it may appear to be very dished or straighter; either is perfectly acceptable. The tear bones of the head, leading from the eye area and ending just even with the jowl, gives a chiseled or carved appearance as this bone tapers down the skull, emphasizing the nasal and tear duct cavities. It is almost as if the horse's head was sculpted with extra attention given to this particular ridge of bone on the face.

Some horses may have a slight bulge between the eyes on the forehead. The word to describe this in Arabic is, "Jibbah", a term used by the Bedouin. The head of an Arabian horse, when viewed from the front is often described as an inverted triangle or wedge shaped. The widest part is the space between the eyes; it then tapers down to a teacup size muzzle. A narrow forehead makes for a different, somewhat unpleasant, look and of course does not provide much space for the brain!

*FACING PAGE: MAJESTIC NOBLE SMF (Marquis I x Nagda),  
has a classic Arabian head and passes his beauty on to his get and grand get.*



*Jennifer Ogden*  
©2014

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
HEAD, EYES, EARS, JOWLS & MUZZLE

EYES:

Ideally, the eyes of an Arabian horse are large, expressive, round in shape, dark and set wide apart. There are two practical aspects about eyes that I wonder if anyone even considers these days? First, when a horse's eyes are set well out on their head, they have much better vision in all directions. This was a very important trait for a Bedouin's warhorse, as well as for the horse's very survival from predators. A horse does not see above its ears or below its nose due to the width that the eyes are set apart. However, they do have a wonderful panoramic view to the sides and behind. In front, their vision fuses together at quite a distance. This gives them the ability to see clearly far away – another great trait for a warhorse.

As you look at the horse's head in profile, note the eye placement. The eyes should be placed lower on the head, set to the outside, and not up by the ear. For purposes of measurement, I personally like to be able to lay my hand flat and horizontal between the ear and eye. If there is not enough room for your hand then very likely the eye is set high on the head. I like the same hand width between the eyes on the forehead. If the eyes are close to my hand, then I consider the forehead is narrow. This makes the eyes seem as if they are close too together...a little like a cross-eyed human.

The second aspect about eyes is color. Dark eyes are much less sun sensitive than eyes with lots of white



*HAASNA SMF (Symbolic SMF x Haalani SMF),  
this mare has lovely eyes with good color and placement.*

around them. When you come from the sun-seared desert, this is essential. Blue eyes, or glass eyes, would be disastrous for a horse exposed to the intense sunlight of the desert. Amazingly, the eyelashes also have a practical role. A heavy fringe of eyelashes, extending out from the eyelid, protects eyes from debris. The long, fine lashes under the eye act as feelers and help the horse to avoid getting their eyes too close to a dangerous object. If you want to view the shape and thickness of a horse's eyelashes, stand slightly behind the horse's head and to the side.

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
HEAD, EYES, EARS, JOWLS & MUZZLE

EARS:

Arabians have a unique shape to their ears, sometimes referred to as a, “scorpion shape”, like the tail of a scorpion, curling inward. Where ears are set on the head is important to the horse’s overall expression. In my experience, Arabians will often have ears set just as wide apart as their eyes. I have seen ears that were set too low or too forward on the head. This is called, “bonnet ears”, because they look like the brim of an old-fashioned bonnet in profile. In this case, the ears point forward rather than upright. When ears are wide apart and set low on the head, it gives the appearance of hands on a steering wheel at 10 and 2 on a clock face. This is called, “lop-eared”, like a lop-eared rabbit. This is adorable on a bunny, but not on an Arabian horse.

In my experience, ears on Arabians have changed over the years we have been breeders. In the past, ears were compared to a flower - the tulip. These older fashioned ears were called tulip ears because they were more rounded, sort of fat at the bottom and thicker too...just like a tulip bulb you would plant with large leaves (ears) extending from the bulb.

Today, ears are more finely shaped, thinner, and they are placed higher on the head. Also, it seems like the bottom part of the ear is set upon a stem rather than directly on the head like a flower bulb. In my opinion, the shape of ears is much nicer today.



*KHALED KA*  
(*Makhnificent KA x Noble Sefra*),  
owned by Mr. Wael Solyman.

Now, it is common to see horses’ ears set very close together. However, I wonder if long ago, ears were more commonly set a little wider apart. Possibly, this may have helped them to hear better, perhaps it was an advantage to have bigger ears with a larger turning radius, much like wide-angle receivers. The tight, thin ears we have today would

not have that ability. In addition, I wonder if thinner ears would have been more subject to problems from the temperature changes, sun and sand. I confess that I do prefer the more finely shaped ears.

Stallions’ ears are supposed to be shorter and smaller and it is more acceptable for a mare to have larger and longer ears. Could this possibly be the reason mares were the bedouin’s preferred war horses, which we learned from their oral stories as told to Westerners?



~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
HEAD, EYES, EARS, JOWLS & MUZZLE

NOSTRILS AND MUZZLES

The nostrils of an Arabian horse should be placed on the topside of the muzzle, not to the outside, like a camel's nose. The nostrils should be flexible and of a good size when extended. I like to see large, inflated nostrils with a tiny width between them, maybe a vertical finger width. The edges should be thin, not thick, and very flexible in order to take in air quickly and efficiently. An Arabian will often lift their head into the air when galloping seeming to drink from the air. I wonder if this is where the term, "Drinkers of the Wind", originates. If the nostrils are not thin and flexible, they cannot easily open wide for air, nor can they close as effectively against sand storms.

A teacup muzzle is the comparison of choice when describing the size of the nose of an Arabian horse. There is also a reason for this tiny muzzle; and once again, it is practical. In earlier times, Arabian horses had to be able to forage effectively in the desert; quickly and nimbly eating off rough vegetation and grasping any delicate grasses that grew in the harsh regions where they roamed. Their lips and muzzle needed to be very flexible, fine and delicate in order to reach and pull off scarce pieces of forage.

I also like to see a horse's chin shaped like a teardrop on the bottom side of the lips, so I can easily cup it in my hand. When wearing a bridle, this helps to keep the



*SAMURA SMF (Anaza El Farid x Glorietasayonaara),  
a natural beauty with expressive ears, eyes and nostrils.*

horse's chinstrap in place. Sometimes a chin is a bit flat without this teardrop shape. This is not a fault, but it is a matter of preference.

Chin whiskers have a purpose as well. They serve as radar for newborn foals in finding its dam's udder. For older horses, whiskers become an early warning system not to go lower or to raise their muzzle away from danger.

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
THROAT/MITBAH, POLL, NECK & SHOULDER

THROAT/MITBAH, POLL, NECK & SHOULDER:

The neck of the Arabian horse is supposed to be long and have a lovely arch. It should be set on high, more vertically upright. What exactly does this mean? There are four distinct elements to a well-set neck: the mitbah (an Arabic term for midsection, where the neck meets the head on the underside of the neck), the poll (where the neck meets the head on the top of the neck), the shape of neck and the angle of shoulder. In English, the mitbah is most often called a throat latch. A fine throat latch on a horse is similar to a fine throat on a person – it creates a look of elegance and refinement. Regarding the poll area, it is ideal to have an extra length in the poll area because it allows for greater flexibility. This makes for a much better riding horse because it can wear a bridle more comfortably and elegantly.

The neck set and the shape of the neck is a direct result of the angle of a horse's shoulder. You can observe the relationship of neck set and shape with the angle of the shoulder if you stand near the front of the horse, position yourself in line with its front legs and look at the horse in side profile. Look to see where the neck comes out of the chest. Look closely, does the neck come out low on the chest, as if between the horse's front legs? If it comes out low, the neck is described as base wide. This placement usually gives a neck a more horizontal direction. However, the neck may still have a lovely shape.

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
THROAT/MITBAH, POLL, NECK & SHOULDER



*SIDON SMF (Ali Saroukh x Shaboura), presenting a lovely example of a clean, well defined throat, a gracefully curved neck and poll, and a strong, well shaped shoulder.*

Conversely, it may look as if the neck is upside down, with the underside of the neck curving outward when the neck comes out of the middle of the chest bulging outward. What should be on top is now underneath. The term for this is ewe necked or an inverted neck.



ALI SAROUKH (*Ruminaja Ali x Glorietasayonaara*)

In addition, if you look at the front of the horse with a neck that is base wide, it may appear very thick and wide from this perspective too. If the neck is very short, it may have an overall wedge shaped appearance from the side profile with no apparent mitbah or poll, which gives the neck and head attachment the look of the number seven (7) and no poll. This type of neck does not lend itself to wearing a bridle very well.

When observing a horse look to see, does the neck come out higher on the chest and is the bottom of the neck above the point of the shoulder? If the neck is upright this is usually because it is set higher in the chest

and comes out of the whither at a very nice angle. In this case, the neck will look vertical rather than horizontal. More than likely, the shoulder on that individual will have an angle of 45 degrees or close to that number. An additional benefit of this well-angled or laid-back shoulder is that the horse's forearm is able to reach forward easily allowing the horse to cover the ground well. An Arabian horse needed to cover ground whether for a raid or travel.

Your own forearm is a good tool of measurement for checking this angulation. When looking at the horse, and the angle of its shoulder, use your own forearm to mimic that angle. This will show you the degree of angle of the shoulder. Is the angle 45 degrees, 57 degrees or worst of all, NO angle, that is to say, a straight up and down vertical shoulder.

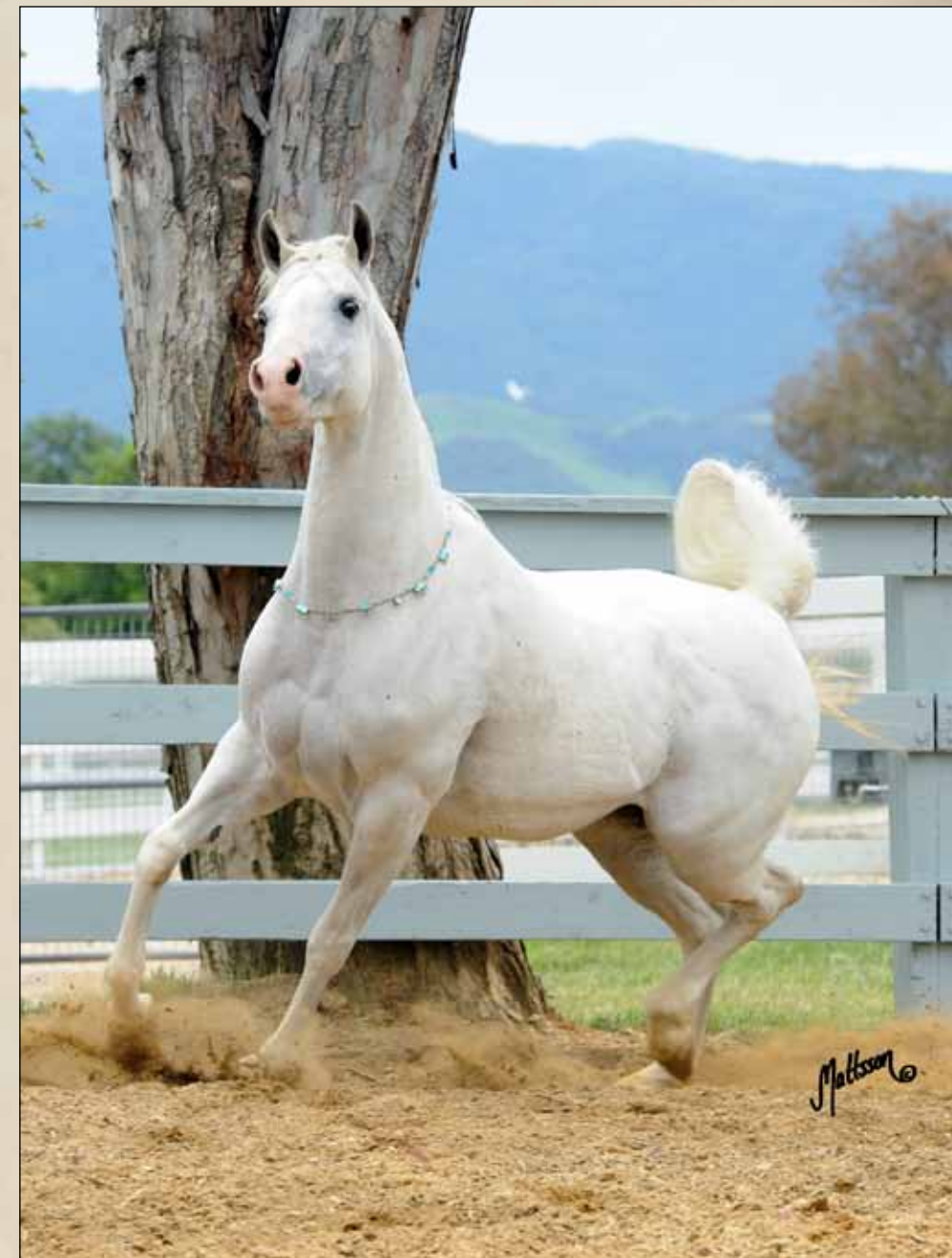
An immediate tip off to a straight shoulder is if the horse has no whither. This is called mutton-whithered, because it resembles a sheep, which is very rounded in this area. Usually, horses without a whither do have a straighter shoulder. Having a whither is an important feature of equine structure because it helps to keep a saddle in place. My favorite riding mare was mutton-whithered and it was a real pain to have to frequently dismount and tighten the saddle to keep it from slipping when we had been going up and down hills. It was a very good thing the mare was not tall because I am short! It definitely would not have been practical for Bedouins to have to climb off and on their horse to adjust a saddle during a raid or while traveling.

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
THROAT/MITBAH, POLL, NECK & SHOULDER

From the side view, you will also see that if a horse has a straighter shoulder it typically will not have a rounded, well-muscled area on the shoulder. This is because the scapula, or what we would call our shoulder blade, meets the humerus bone at a steep angle and the forearm then comes down in a straight-line from this angle. Instead of a nicely rounded joining of the scapula and humerus bones with good muscle laid over it, this area will appear quite pointy and with little flesh covering the bones.

For purposes of explanation, I have put neck and shoulder together because almost everywhere in the world today, the neck and the shoulder are judged together at shows. This makes sense because the two areas are very dependent upon one another. At one time, the head and neck were judged as one category within the point system. On a positive note, besides being more accurate, judges can reward a beautiful head on a horse without penalizing it for a poorly shaped neck and vice versa.

In addition, please note that a horse's elbows need to be free, not pinned into their sides. Pin your own elbows into your sides and see how well your forearms move.... not so nicely...it is the same with a horse. A good measurement of free elbows is to place your fist behind the elbow. If there is room for your fist, then there should be adequate space to allow the horse to move well.



*JADE LOTUS SMF (Ali Saroukh x Imdals Jade),  
a powerful moving mare due to her good shoulder and strong hindquarter.*

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
BACK, CROUP & TAIL



SIMEON SHAI (*Asfour x Simeon Safanad*),  
Scottsdale, Canadian National, U.S. National & World Champion Stallion

BACK, CROUP AND TAIL

Arabian horses are said to have one less vertebra in their spines than other breeds of horses. Naturally, this gives Arabians a shorter back. A short back is stronger and because of this, they are able to carry large amounts of weight comfortably.

An Arabian's loin is also usually very strong. If you were poised above the horse, looking down at it, the loin is like

a belt just in front of where the back connects to the hips. It must be a relatively narrow belt to keep it strong yet flexible. A rider wants the horse to be able to curve around their leg when giving directional cues. If you are a rider, imagine this when you are evaluating a horse's loin. If you are not a rider, then picture yourself above the horse looking down on to its back. If this "belt" is too wide, then the loin is weak, the horse's back will be softer, saggy or sway-backed as it ages, and it will not stay strong in this area.

Now, picture yourself standing to the side of the horse. You are looking at the side profile of the horse's body. Next, as your eye moves from the back to the tail, is the area called the croup, or the topside of a horse's hip.

I like to see a good length of croup and for this area to be balanced in proportion to the length of the back, as well as to the front end of the horse. The croup is relatively level, not flat. As Judith Forbis says in her book, *The Classic Arabian Horse*, "The horse is three equal circles: from point of shoulder to wither, length of back and loin, and croup with tail."

The tail is a balancing tool for the horse as it moves. The ideal tail set is high, as if a flowing continuation of the croup... not on a downward position. Arabians carry their tails high and straight in order to release heat from between their legs. This is an excellent design to aid in ventilation and a very good cooling system in a hot desert environment.

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
BODY, BASIC STRUCTURE

BODY, BASIC STRUCTURE:

Looking at the body of an Arabian, again from the side view, it should be smooth as it connects to the hip. A mare's underline is generally slightly longer than her topline, in order for her to have adequate space for her to carry a foal. The heart girth, or the area where a saddle girth lies, should be deep, reaching past the elbow and tapering on the underline, up to the hip connection at the loin. If the heart girth area is shallow, there is not as much room for the heart and lungs and the horse will have less stamina. It will also give the appearance of a tubular body as in all one width from front to back. From the front view, you would not see the roundness of the ribs. Instead, the horse would look narrow with sides that are flat. If you were sitting on this horse, your legs would not curve gently around its barrel, but lay flat against its sides.

A horse's hips need to be angled forward slightly so the pelvis is in the right position for a mare to give birth easily. The conformation of the pelvic area is a critical reproduction concern for mares and their owners. Poor conformation in this area contributes to endless problems in breeding, foaling and overall reproductive health. If a horse's hips are too straight up and down, it greatly affects the angulation of the back legs. If a pelvis is tipped forward too far, it affects the angulation of the back legs even more. The way the back legs go into the pelvis, and



*MAJESTIC NOBLE SMF (Marquis I x Nagda),  
is stallion who is animated and spirited, yet kind and gentle -  
a great example of Arabian Character .*

the angle, affects movement and soundness. Any horse that is not well conformed in this area will not be able to move well from behind. Typically, it will have weak impulsion. If this was a car with drive ratio, you want a 60/40 split, with forty in the front and sixty in the back. More motor behind means movement that is more powerful.

Today, the universal measurement used to calculate the height of a horse is a "Hand". This measurement term, which originated in Egypt, describes a hand's width from tip of little finger to extended thumb. Now, it is the whole hand with fingers together. Mathematically, a hand is equal to four inches or 101.6 millimeters in length.

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
LEGS & FEET

LEGS AND FEET

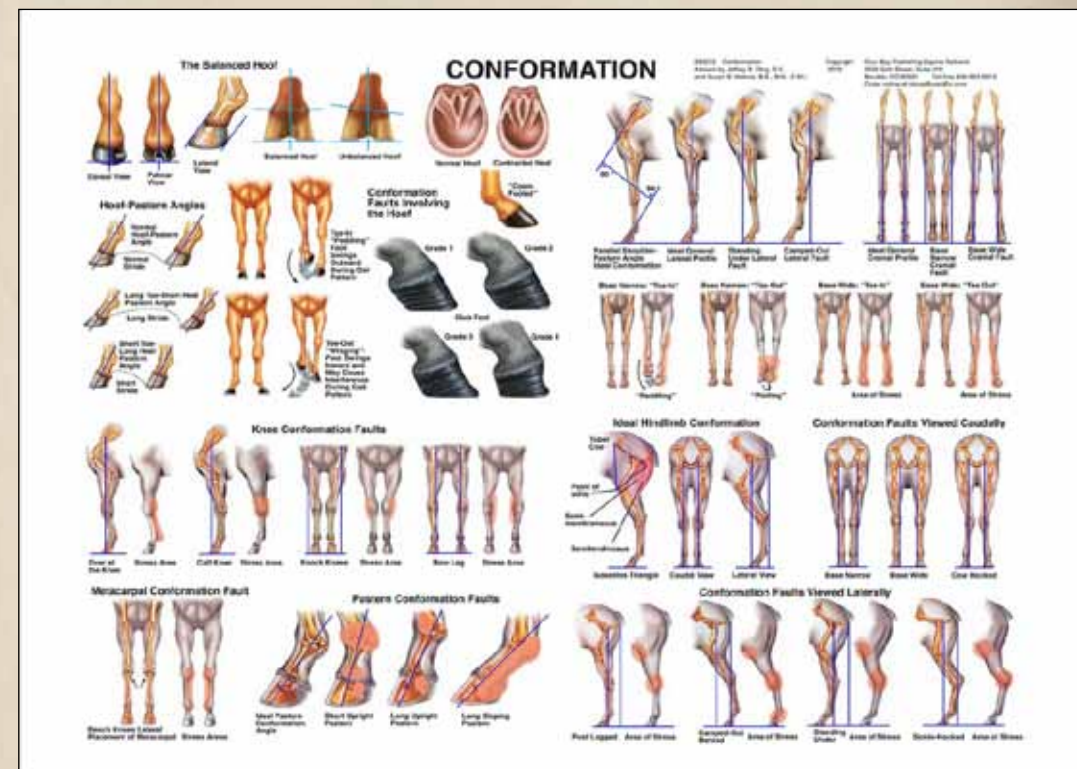
Ideally, and in general, a horse will have all four legs set well out on the corners of its body, positioned squarely with the body, and perpendicular to the body. The bone of the legs should be clean and not too thin or too heavy but balanced for the horse. The legs should have well-defined joints that are flat, not lumpy and round. I think it is important to understand legs because they are the pillars, the foundation for your horse. They will serve the horse well for many years if correctly conformed.

Proportionately, the forearm needs to be two thirds as long as the canon bone, (the human equivalent of the shin). A good measurement is eight inches around for the canon; this demonstrates good bone density, or strength of bone. Canon bones should go into the knees in the middle of the joint – straight on – not to the inside or outside and not be too long. This is true for the back canon bones as well, but they will be a bit longer than the front ones.

The fetlock joints, (the same as a human's ankle), should be round with pastern bones that slope, or angle, at approximately 45 degrees, to the foot. This angle allows for shock absorption when the horse's foot hits the ground. This is once again true for both front and back legs.

From behind, the back legs should be well muscled in the gaskin area that leads upwardly into the stifle (knee) and down into the hock (ankle). The stifle leads upwards

LEG AND FEET CONFORMATION



*This is an Equine Conformation Chart by Lake Forest Anatomicals Educational Models. It and many other educational equine conformation charts are available on amazon.com. The conformational points illustrated on this chart can be applied to all breeds of horses.*

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
LEGS & FEET

into the hip joint. All of these bones have a proper angulation that affects movement and reproduction, especially for a mare. When you view a horse from behind, it should not look as if the inside of the back legs are a wishbone, smooth with no muscling.

Improper angulation of hind limbs will affect a horse's gaits and it will not be a comfortable horse to ride. For mares, an improper angle of the hips is reproductively devastating because it places the pelvis at an inward tilted position, which causes a cascade of traumatic reproductive events. The most traumatic situation that occurs is a difficult delivery due to this abnormal anatomy and poor conformation. This is an instance where outward appearances – the position of the hips and the back legs – can actually reveal dangerous inward physical concerns.

There are many resources available on the Internet to aid breeders and owners in learning about equine anatomy. I encourage everyone to learn as much as you possibly can about your Arabian horse, so that you can care for them and enjoy them for many, many years.

*FACING PAGE: HAALANI SMF (Ali Saroukh x Ansata Haalah),  
this beautiful mare has been a top producer for Silver Maple Farm.*





~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
MOVEMENT



*BINT BINT SAYO (Ali Saroukh x Ansata Haalah),  
and SHEIKH SAMI, a 2014 colt by MAJESTIC NOBLE SMF*

MOVEMENT

The ability to move well and freely is dependent on the horse's conformation. Arabians are supposed to have forward motion along with ground-eating strides. They are also supposed to have a light springy step, even at the walk. One of the best descriptions and explanations I have heard came from Jenni Ogden, a friend, amazing breeder and equine photographer. If Bedouins of long ago were riding an Arabian horse in a raid, or trying to get away from danger, would they have wanted the horse to be heavy on their feet?

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
MOVEMENT

I am sure they would have preferred the horse to have almost no sound and move as if light as air. Jenni suggested I turn around and listen when our horses are loose in a presentation... and I did. It is very interesting to put your horses to the test, try this theory out sometime. The more athletic horse is definitely lighter on its feet!



*SAYO SAHRAN SMF (Makhnificent KA x Bint Bint Sayo),  
a 2010 straight Egyptian stallion shows very nice movement.*

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
REFINEMENT & PROPORTION

REFINEMENT AND PROPORTION

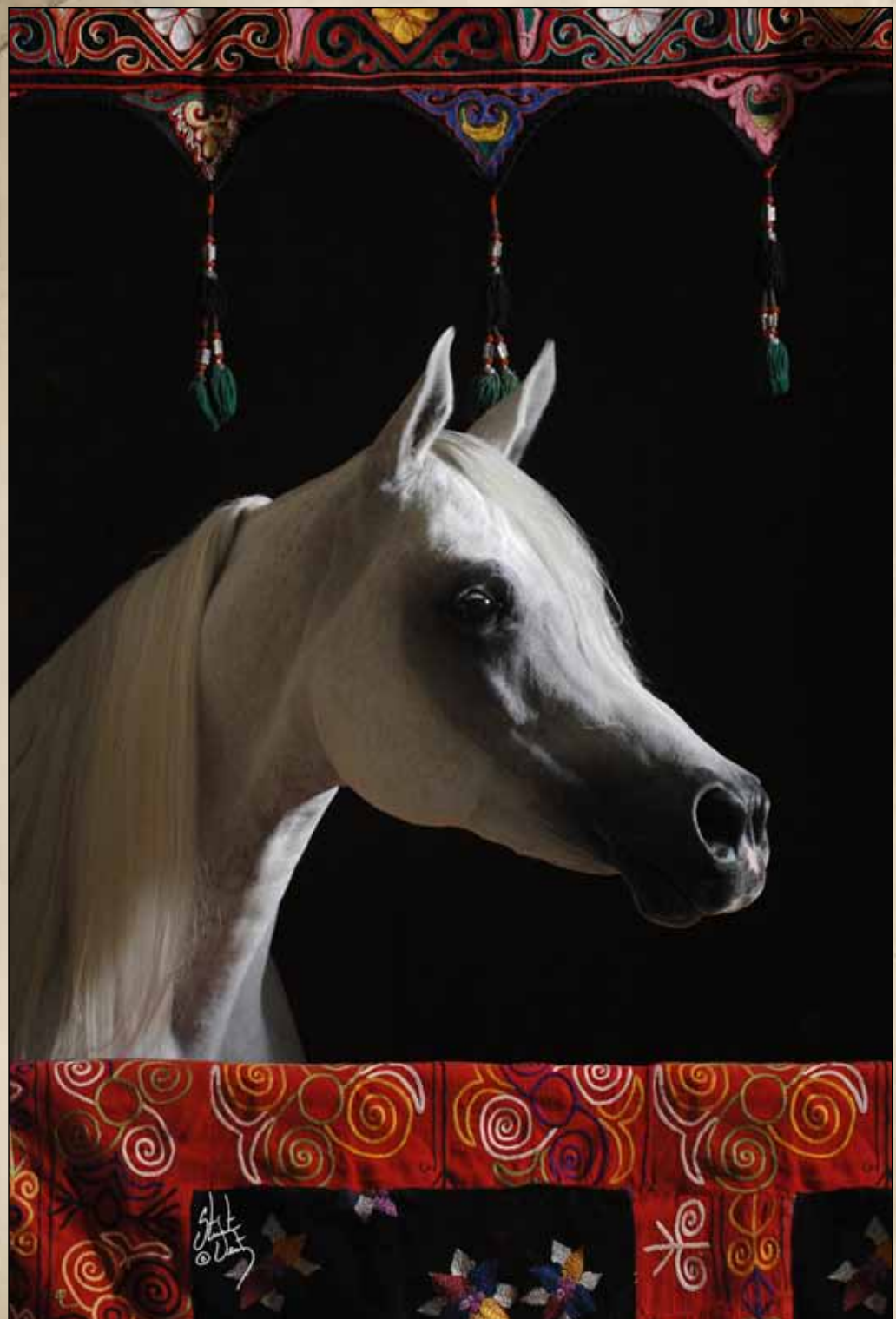
The characteristics of Refinement and Proportion go hand-in-hand with Quality and Type. Refinement generally includes hair coat texture and skin. Teeth are included in refinement, but this is in general for all breeds. Some people also include the heaviness or lightness of bone when speaking of refinement. This is an age-old conversation. Too heavy of bone makes a horse look coarse, but too light of bone creates weaknesses and infirmities. It is up to us to breed healthy horses with good sound structure.

The Arabian horse has, or should have, a silken hair coat with thin, fine skin - not rough like a cow's hide. When the hair coat is fine and the skin is thin, the veins are readily visible as the horse exercises or exerts itself, acting as cooling agents.

An Arabian horse will get a longer hair coat as daylight decreases seasonally, but it should not look like a pony's heavy, woolly, coarse hair coat. The Arabian horse has very unique skin - it needs to be black with pigment because this provides important protection from the sun. The physical proportions of the Arabian horse are distinctive to the breed.

*FACING PAGE: SYMBOLIC SMF (Majestic Noble SMF x Shaboura),  
a 2006 straight Egyptian stallion proving to be an extraordinary sire  
of truly exceptional foals.*





#### IN CLOSING

This is a lot of information for a new breeder or owner to take in, but I believe it will be well worth your effort to review. Hopefully this opens your eyes to the importance of the distinctive physical traits of the Arabian horse. I wanted to explain how those traits set our breed apart from others and if I have done my job well, you will have learned how these traits relate to the meaning of quality and type in an Arabian horse.

Whether you are already a breeder, or are on your way to becoming one, it is essential to understand just how and why the Arabian breed developed as it did. If you are an owner of Arabian show horses, then this just may help you to understand the different categories used for judging Arabians. Most of all, I hope it shows readers how and why the Arabian horse is a vision of harmony and balance, a picture of beauty and near perfection. These characteristics give the Arabian the ability to ignite our imaginations and capture our hearts like no other horse on earth.

~ FINI ~

*FACING PAGE: SHABOURA (PVA Karim x Sabine),  
an exquisite mare who left a legacy of beauty and strength at Silver Maple Farm.*

~ DISTINCTIVE TRAITS OF AN ARABIAN HORSE ~  
REFERENCES & RESOURCES

I wish to acknowledge and thank the following people whose knowledge, skills and talents helped to make this project possible:

- AHA website: *www.arabianhorses.org*
- Judith Forbis, breeder & author:  
*The Classic Arabian Horse*
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*www.merriam-webster.com*

~

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Private collection of Christie and Henry Metz

Equine Conformation Chart  
by Lake Forest Anatomicals Educational Models,  
available on *amazon.com*

*FACING PAGE: SIDON SMF (Ali Saroukh x Shaboura),  
an exciting straight Egyptian stallion who epitomizes  
the beauty and character of the Arabian horse.*





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