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WHAT IN THE WORLD

The Santa Ynez Gelding Futurity

Honoring our best and loyal friends —
Arabian geldings.



MAXWELL PHOTO

All the entries are required to be shown by an amateur with strict presentation guidelines, and are judged not only on Arabian type but also as future, sound, sport horses. Here, a contestant performs in the in-hand trail class at the 2013 show.

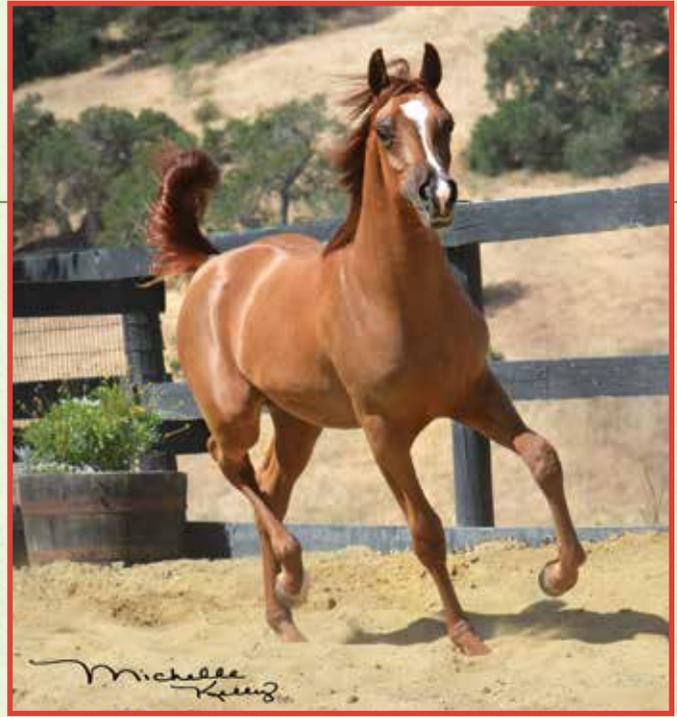
by Emma Maxwell

The Santa Ynez Valley has been something of a promised land of Arabian horses for well over half a century, a long time in an ever-accelerating world. The equine riches of the area are equaled by the “people power,” and the Santa Ynez Valley Arabian Horse Association (SYVAHA), chaired by Kimberly Shackelford, which has been behind some great initiatives, including a popular annual tour of the many headline breeders in the area. Last year they debuted the Arabian Foal Festival, a foal and yearling show for amateur handlers only, where the judges also explained their choices afterwards. The show was directed toward bringing new people into the Arabian breeders’ world at a more local, educational, and fun level.

A recent arrival in the area is Sheikh Jassim Bin Khalifa Al Thani’s Aljassimya Farm. Based in Qatar, Sheikh Jassim and his



Last year's Gold Champion Gelding Yearling Performance winner **HS EXCUSE MY DUST** (MI Afire Dream x HS Bianca Rose), owned by High Star Farms, Las Vegas, Nevada.



Trail competitor at the 2013 Arabian Foal Festival **MIQDAD AJF** (*Monther Al Nasser x Toscana PGA), one of the 2014 Santa Ynez Gelding Futurity lots offered on July 29th.

manager Bart Van Buggenhout recognized the unique attributes of the Valley as a base for maximizing the opportunities for their famous leased stallions. The Valley also offers spacious rolling pastures that provide the best form of nurture for young horses to lead a full and sound life: outdoor grazing in groups.

For this year Sheikh Jassim and Bart have thought out a new concept based around those pillars of the community — which every farm produces but not every farm promotes — geldings. They believe breeders need to be responsible for every horse they breed and find them a dignified role in the world. Furthermore, Arabian geldings have been a wonderful introduction to the breed for so many people and as an industry we need them to be ambassadors to as many new people as possible.

The SYVAHA fully supports these goals and has created for this year the very first Santa Ynez Gelding Futurity. Geldings that were foaled in 2013 within 50 miles of Santa Ynez are nominated by their breeders to the sale — held by Addis Online Auctions on Tuesday, July 29, 2014; and the new owner gets a horse that comes with a Futurity Right that has payouts in 2014, 2015, and 2016, solely at the Santa Ynez Arabian Foal Festival.

The Futurity is funded by the breeders who pay in for nomination and who also commit the sale price directly to the prize pot. Over \$7,000 is already available at this year's show in October for geldings sold in the upcoming sale, where they will be judged on Arabian type and suitability as a sport horse.

Over \$11,000 is up for grabs next year for two-year-olds, who will have to compete in an in-hand trail class at the show, demonstrating their willingness to work with their handler. In 2016, over \$11,000 is available for this same group of geldings as three-year-olds who will have to compete in a pre-performance class in long lines. The total money in the pot will enlarge after the sale, and please remember that in compliance with the rules at the Foal Festival, all handlers for all three years must be amateurs!

For the breeders, paying into the system is a loss leader, but it is designed to create a multiple payoff in the long run. Firstly, developing a purpose for people to buy yearling geldings instead of keeping them yourself until they are three. Secondly, providing a bit of fun competition that actually prepares those geldings in a practical manner to be well-loved riding horses. It also creates the opportunity to develop a more trusting clientele who can buy a vetted horse from a scheme that has the potential to defray their costs of competition if they put some time into it. In short, encouraging the middle-class, riding, fun-loving family owner to come back into the business to enjoy using the horses created by passionate breeders.

Looked at from the other side, for every aspiring teenage Arabian horse owner in California — it's a dream come true! Choose a young gelding you can bring on yourself with the chance that he pays his own way because of the time you put into him. I can't think of a better way to celebrate and honor our loyal friend the Arabian gelding.