

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

Arabian Breeders' Celebration III

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Valley Oak Arabians pictures clockwise from far left: Manny and Diana Vierra; Dumka; Granada; the barn at Valley Oak Arabians (background).

Following the Arabian Breeders' Alliance World Cup in Las Vegas in April, a strong contingent of dedicated Arabian horse enthusiasts headed to the Santa Ynez Valley in California. Home to some of the most renowned Arabian horse studs in the world, this year saw the third running of the Santa Ynez Valley Arabian Breeders' Celebration. For a few wonderful days, Om El Arab, Silver Maple Farms, Day Dream Arabians, HB Arabians, Gallun Farms and Jade Creek Arabians opened their doors to visitors and helped create the magical memories which will stay with many forever.



With its post-tour visit to Valley Oak Arabians in Brentwood, the Breeders' Celebration allows guests access to around 150 horses, including new-born foals, and the studs which open their doors are truly world-revered. This event is a unique opportunity to travel as part



A horse being led into one of the Valley Oak barns.

Breeders' Alliance World Cup Champion Mare Amateur to Handle title just days before with Janina Merz, another resident of the Valley.

Manny is passionate about breeding horses and very proud to show off the latest foal crop. With the horses at his farm winning titles in western, halter, hunter and so on, there truly is something for everyone here and the Jade Creek horses prove that the Arabian is a versatile, adaptable horse which can excel in the halter ring one week and the performance ring the next. Manny is also a wonderful host and he likes to open the Celebration in his own inimitable style.

While not collective breeders in their own right, Gallun Farms are an integral part of the Celebration. Not only are they home to some of the finest halter horses that the Arabian world has to offer, the farm stands some of the most revered stallions and as such, a visit here is an important part of a breeders' tour. Stallions standing at Gallun Farms include Escape Ibn Navarrone-D (AS Sinans Pascha x Navarrone), MPA Giovanni (Da Vinci FM x Glitzy), Pershahn El Jamaal (Ali Jamaal x Perfectshahn SRA), Enzo (Padrons Psyche x RD Bey Shahmpane) and his son Eden C (ex Silken Sable). There truly is a horse for every style of breeder, as well as the ever-popular Pianissima (Gazal Al Shaqab x Pianosa), who makes an

Enzo at Gallun Farms.



of a large group on an organised tour and see the hidden treasures of these farms up close.

With such a high number of horses to be seen and enjoyed, I have decided to cover the highlights of the Celebration rather than the normal in depth coverage. The Celebration will be running again in 2012 and I really would encourage you to come along; it is the perfect add-on to Las Vegas, and also the perfect antidote to the bright lights of the city that never sleeps. For in the Valley, peace, tranquillity and beautiful horses await you.

The tour began at Jade Creek Arabians, owned by Manny Lawrence, on the Monday night. With the horses shown in the stable area, visitors were treated to an intimate presentation including Manny's very successful stallions Jake Jamaal JCA (Jullyen El Jamaal x Von Herte Only One) and Brandon Bey JCA (Versace x Hushahby Bey). The presentation also included the beautiful Fellada JCA (Jake Jamaal JCA x Fallada), who had taken the Arabian



appearance at the very end and will happily allow you to be photographed with her, as long as she receives her carrots!

Greg and Nancy Gallún are always welcoming and happy for Celebration guests to wander around the barns, see certain horses out and to generally enjoy the experience of being among one of the most prized collections of Arabian horses on the planet. This year's latest addition to that collection was FA El Shawan (Marwan Al Shaqab x Foxbriar Shakita), the big winner in Las Vegas and a six-year-old stallion who earned the highest score in the show's history.

From there, the Celebration moved on to an Egyptian theme with the always highly-anticipated visit to Silver Maple Farm. Owners/founders Henry and Christie Metz have bred an incredible collection of straight Egyptian and Egyptian-related Arabians and at the heart of the stud is the stallion Simeon Shai (Raadin Royal Star x Simeon Safanad), who was celebrating his 27th birthday this year. It is always special to see this charismatic stallion and certainly, Silver Maple pulled one of the biggest crowds of the Celebration this year, due in no part to Simeon Shai's birthday celebrations.

Majestic Noble SMF (Marquis I x Nagda) always opens the Silver Maple presentation and this year was no exception. His foals are always interesting to see and he stamps his stock so well, they are easily recognisable. Family groups were then presented, including beautiful new-born foals, and the presentation allowed guests to see how each family had developed as the new generations were born. The presentation of just under 30 horses ended with Om El Shahdream (Dreamcatcher SMF x Om El Shadina), a mare sired by a Silver Maple-bred stallion by Om El Arab International and is a 'Valley horse' in the true sense of the word.

Simeon Shai closed proceedings, enjoying a specially-baked birthday cake, before visitors spent a lot of time wandering through the barns and inspecting the foals.

Silver Maple is always a joy to visit and the cupcakes Christie bought in for the humans to enjoy in honour of Simeon Shai's birthday seemed to fly off the plate! People always linger at Silver Maple and together, Christie and Henry offer a wealth of information about the bloodlines and history of their horses, something which is always fascinating for an Arabian enthusiast.

Tuesday evening was given over to HB Arabians, a new addition to the Celebration and one that visitors enjoyed very much. Owned by Christine Bruce and John Hilliard, HB Arabians is found just outside Santa Ynez at Lompoc, and the farm is world-known for breeding HB Bessolea (Besson Carol x Credit to Society), dam of World Champion Baanderos (by Marwan Al Shaqab). HB Arabians still own Credit to Society (Enchanter Magic FHP x JA High Society) and it was wonderful for visitors to see this renowned mare. HB Arabians also own Brixx IA (Gazal Al Shaqab x Bella Versace), a very showy stallion who did well in Las Vegas, and he was presented on the lawn in the twilight.

HB Arabians was a popular addition to the tour and visitors enjoyed their wonderful hospitality, including wine from their own vineyard, as well as the beautifully-presented stables and intimate courtyard. Hopefully, HB Arabians will become a regular feature on the Santa Ynez Breeders' Celebration as they have much to offer.

Wednesday was the final day in Santa Ynez with Carol Steppe's Day Dream Arabians in the morning and Om El Arab International in the afternoon. The evening would be spent enjoying dinner at Om El Arab for their 40th anniversary celebrations and it was with much relief that the day dawned sunny and bright.

Day Dream Arabians is always a highlight as, like Jade Creek Arabians, there is a strong focus on performance as well as halter. Owner Carole Steppe brings an emotional enthusiasm to the Celebration and she is passionate about her horses, the welfare of horses in general and the preservation of the breed.

The highlight at Day Dream is always the chance to see and enjoy Showkayce (Fame VF x Kay), a phenomenal 19-year-old grey stallion with a host of accolades to his name including the honoured WAHO Trophy. Showkayce



Clockwise from below: Simeon Shai at Silver Maple Farm; Brixx IA at HB Arabians; Jade Lotus SMF being led towards the arena at Silver Maple Farm.



Mattsson

Clockwise from right: Eden C; FA El Shawan after his recent successes in Las Vegas; Strike with his donkey friends and Greg and Nancy Gallún; trophies and garland from the Arabian Breeders' World Cup; TF Royal Shabazz (background photo); Pershahn El Jamaal; MPA Giovanni.

exemplifies Carol's belief in having a performance horse and a halter horse in the same equine and from there, the presentation only got better.

As a special treat, visitors were able to see HI Hello Boy (Don El Chall x Greta Rach) this year, having seen his foals in previous years. Imported from Brazil, HI Hello Boy has had a terrific impact on Day Dream Arabians' breeding programme, most notably through the



gorgeous Hello Darling (ex Charlotte DDA), who many of us saw as a yearling.

The final visit in Santa Ynez was to Om El Arab and the largest group of the week gathered together to enjoy the horses and hospitality of Sigi Siller and Janina Merz. For many people, visiting Om El Arab is something of a pilgrimage and with this year's 40th anniversary celebrations, the farm was bustling with a sense of anticipation.

Opening proceedings was El Nabila B (Kubinec x 218 Elf Layla Walayla), owned by El Nabila B Partnership and standing at Om El Arab. El Nabila B is the newly-crowned US National Champion Stallion and, at 15 years of age, he is retired from the public show-ring, so visitors were especially keen to see this household name.

From there, Om El Arab groups were presented in families, ending with three treasured Estopa offspring: 26-year-old Estopasan (by Rastano x Estopa), 22-year-old Om El Shaina (by Carmargue) and Om El Beneera (by Sharem El Sheikh). It is always emotional to see Estopa children, such as the legend and legacy of this mare, and this year was no exception.

Visitors lingered, enjoying walking the barns, and then a special dinner was held in the indoor arena before an informal, but thrilling, talk from Sigi and Janina, hosted by Scott Benjamin who is one of the organisers of the Celebration. The focus of the talk was the worldwide influence of Om El Arab and it was at times very emotional. For many of the breeders seated in the darkness, enjoying the images displayed



on the big screen, the success of Om El Arab globally is something they can aspire to. Those enjoying their first-time visit to the hallowed home of Om El Arab and the Estopa lines certainly found the evening inspiring, informative and invigorating.

That night, as people prepared to leave the Valley and either head home or to Valley Oak, two foals were born at Om El Arab, showing that the life of a breeding farm is never a quiet one. One of the foals was a much-anticipated filly out of Bint Bint Estopa (Sanadik El Shaklan x Bint Estopa). By Om El Shahmaan (Sandik El Shaklan x Om El Shaina), the newly-named Om El Berenese will certainly be one to watch.

An early start the next morning and a beautiful drive to Brentwood, home of Manny and Diana Vierra's Valley Oak Arabians. A stunning property with an incredible barn, Valley Oak is home to predominantly Polish lines and highlights of the impressive presentation included El Euphoria VO (Ecaho x El Dorada), a very regal five-year-old mare, as well as Emigrant (Ararat x Emigrantka). Emigrant is now 20 years old and is a living legend. It was a wonderful opportunity to see him turned loose and also to see the obvious bond Manny and Diana have with their horses. While Brentwood might be a four-hour drive away from Santa Ynez Valley, this tour add-on is well worth the trip.

The third running of the Santa Ynez Arabian Breeders' Celebration was a success, with a tremendous spirit among the guests throughout the week. The Celebration is the brainchild of Anette Mattsson and Scott Benjamin who, along with Joaquin Bin of Haras de Cardenas, wanted to emulate the Polish Arabian tours in Europe. However, the Celebration could not be run without the huge support of the farms involved, who do everything possible to make sure that all guests feel welcome and to put on wonderful,

engaging displays of their Arabian horses. The hospitality offered by all farms is second to none, and repeat visitors have the added bonus of seeing how horses have matured on each year.

Next year's Celebration will once again be run after the World Cup in Last Vegas; save the date now! 23 April 2012 will be a travel day to Santa Ynez, with the tour starting on 24 April. The Celebration continues to grow in popularity and updates will be posted throughout the year on www.arabiannbreederscelebration.com.

To be part of this wonderful community, start making plans now and we look forward to seeing you in the Valley in 2012! ❖



Clockwise from above: El Nabila B; Om El Bint Shaina; Om El Sanadeed; Om El Belarosa; Om El Jinaah; Om El Shadeeka.

Clockwise from top right: Valley Oak horses: Eminent VO; Moonlit Chances VO; Halima; Manny and Emigrant.